

Law Day Graphic Organizers

Created to help increase awareness of the role
law and the courts have in our daily lives

Mary Miller, Education Services Director
New York News Publishers Association
50 Colvin Avenue, Suite 102
Albany, NY 12206



Sponsored by:

Law, Youth and Citizenship Program of the New York State Bar Association
& the New York Newspapers Foundation

All rights reserved. Copyright 2012

Law Day

Graphic Organizers

Table of Contents:

| | |
|--|------|
| • Know the Terms | 3 |
| • Law Scavenger Hunt | 4 |
| • Trials in the News | 5 |
| • Writing an Editorial: Conviction Records Sealed? | 6 |
| • Editorial Cartoon | 7 |
| • Burden of Proof..... | 8 |
| • Conflict Resolution Tips/Conflict Resolution organizer | 9-10 |
| Web resources & Answer Key | 11 |
| Constitutional Amendments (that relate to the rights of the accused)..... | 12 |

Know the Terms

Match these words and phrases with the appropriate definitions below:

| | Terms | Letter of the correct definition |
|----|----------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 | Appellate | |
| 2 | Attorney | |
| 3 | Defendant | |
| 4 | Due process | |
| 5 | Judge | |
| 6 | Jury | |
| 7 | Plaintiff | |
| 8 | Prosecutor | |
| 9 | Probable cause | |
| 10 | Sentence | |
| 11 | Verdict | |

- A. The punishment given to a person convicted of a crime
- B. A body of people (usually twelve in number) sworn to give a verdict in a legal case on the basis of evidence submitted to them in court
- C. Having jurisdiction to review cases on appeal and to reverse decisions of lower courts
- D. An individual, company, or institution (party) sued or accused in a court of law
- E. A decision on a disputed issue in a civil or criminal case
- F. One that initiates and carries out a legal action, especially criminal proceedings
- G. An individual, company, or institution that brings a case against another in a court of law
- H. Evidence sufficient to warrant an arrest or search and seizure
- I. A public official appointed or elected to decide cases in a court of law
- J. A fundamental, constitutional guarantee that all legal proceedings will be fair and that one will be given notice of the proceedings and an opportunity to be heard before the government acts to take away one's life, liberty of property.
- K. A professional person authorized to practice law; lawyer

Follow up: Look through the newspaper for current examples of these terms. Which did you find? Which proved difficult to find? What one new thing did you learn from this activity?

Law Scavenger Hunt

Look through the newspaper (print or electronic) for the people, places and things that are related to law. Use the chart below to keep track of what you found and where you found it.

| Item | Headline or description of photo/graphic or cartoon | Location in the paper: Section and page # |
|--|---|--|
| A story involving the police or corrections officer(s) | | |
| A story of a traffic accident or violation | | |
| A story mentioning someone breaking the law | | |
| A story of a court case | | |
| The name of a defendant or plaintiff | | |
| Bonus: Any item associated with the law, not listed | | |

Another sheet of paper can be used if more items are found.

Follow up: Did this activity take longer than you expected? What did you learn doing this activity?

Trials in the News

Look through the newspaper (print or electronic) for articles that refer to court trials. It could be local, state or national in scope. Select one article and answer the following questions.

Which newspaper is it from? _____

What is the headline of the newspaper article? _____

What kind of case is it? (criminal or civil) _____

What are the key facts reported in this article? _____

Which court is hearing or heard the case discussed in the article? Is the case in the state or federal courts? (trial or appellate) _____

Does the article state an opinion about the case? YES NO

If so, what is the opinion in the article? _____

Do you agree with the opinion? Why or why not? _____

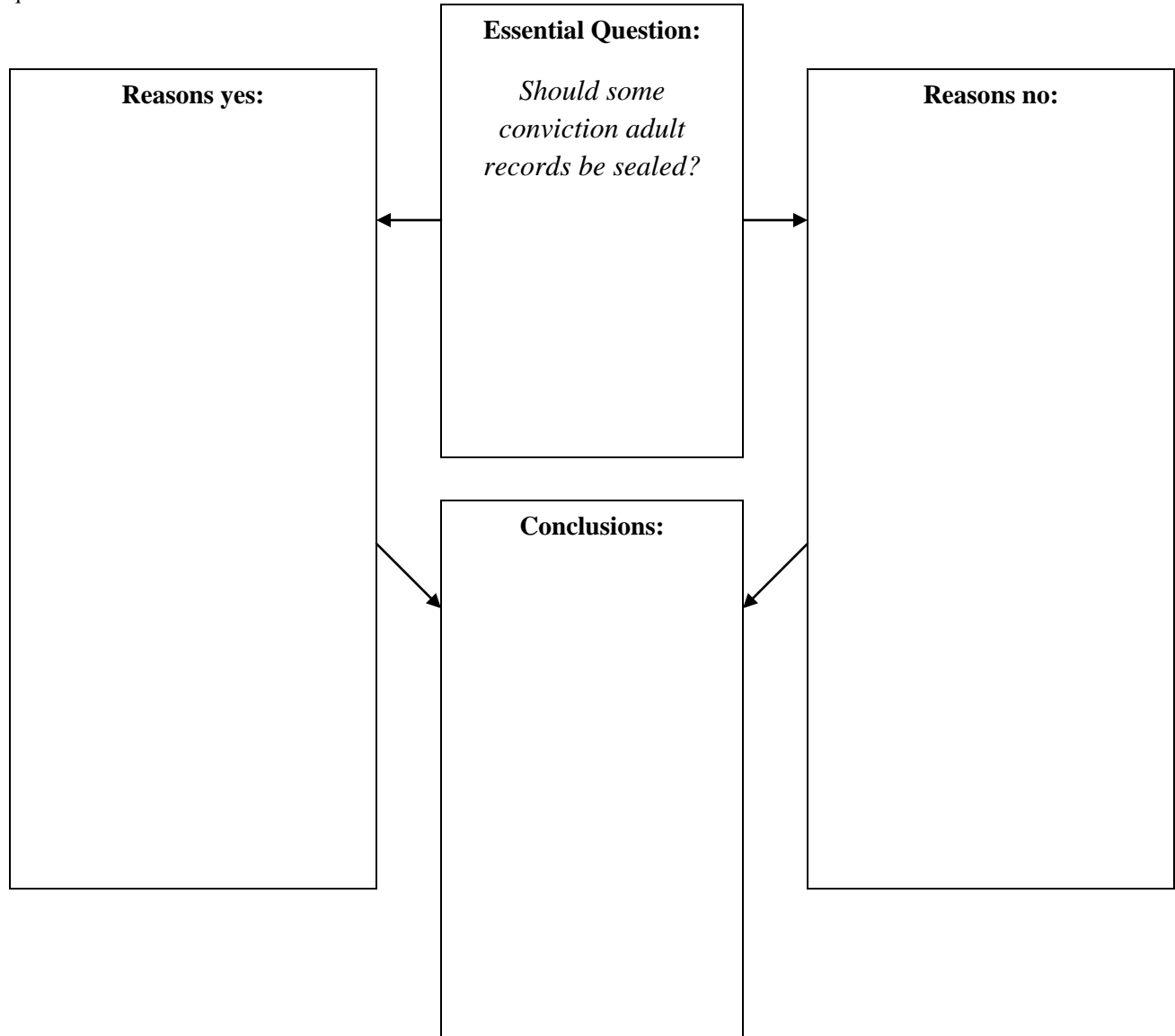
If a verdict is mentioned, do you agree with it? Why or why not? _____

Follow up: Share your observations with the class. What did you learn by completing this activity?

Writing an Editorial: Should Some Adult Conviction Records be Sealed?

Should adults convicted of a misdemeanor or even a non-violent felony be able to have their records sealed? Should courts consider whether the offender stayed out of trouble for five to eight years? Having their records sealed means that offenders can honestly state that they have never been convicted of a crime. Not having a crime on their record makes getting work easier for them, when they apply for jobs. But, what if your family looks for someone to take care of your elderly grandmother or a young child? Do you expect to know if someone has been convicted of stealing or of possessing or selling illegal drugs?

Review several newspaper editorials. Pay close attention to the writing style and content. Write your own editorial answering the question, "Should some adult conviction records be sealed?" Be sure to back up your conclusion/opinion with facts. Prepare an outline before writing. List reasons that citizens and leaders give for answering "yes" or "no" to the question.



Follow up: Can you think of instances when court records should never be sealed? When and why? Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of keeping court records from the public.

This activity was originally developed for *Community Connections with Geography and the Newspaper* curriculum guide for the NAA Foundation by Dr. Sandra Cook.

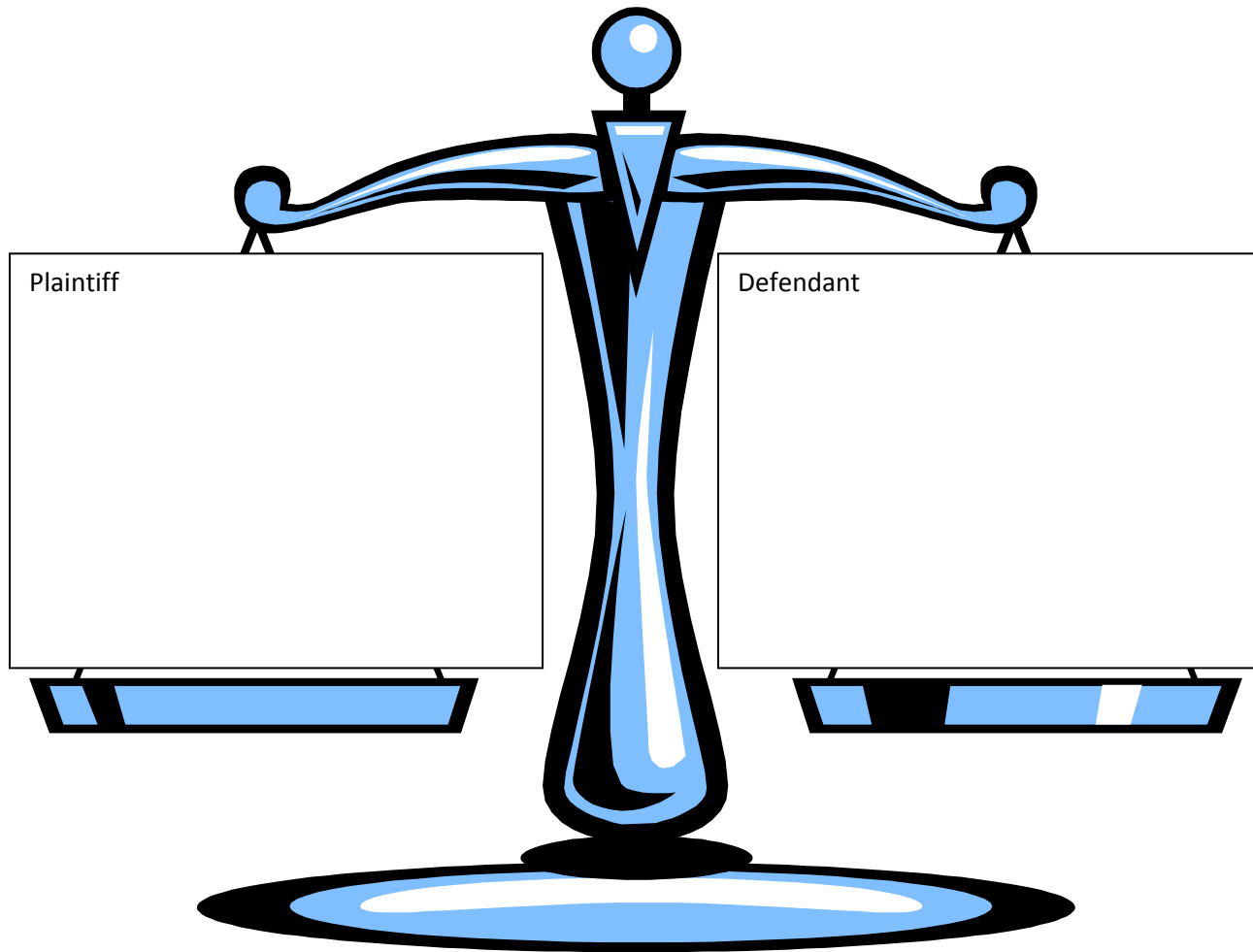
Editorial Cartoon

Now that you have a better understanding of the courts and our judicial system create your own editorial cartoon about a current court case in the news. If editorial cartoons are new to you, you might want to learn more them before you start. Visit the Association of American Editorial Cartoonist's website *Cartoons for the Classroom* at <http://nieonline.com/aaec/cftc.cfm>.

Follow up: Display the finished cartoons on a class bulletin board. Was this assignment harder or easier than you expected it would be? Why?

Burden of Proof

Select a current court case from the newspaper (print or online) or from other sources. Use the scales below and place the known facts of the case/evidence on the appropriate side. If this is a civil case one side only needs to prove their case by a “preponderance of the evidence.” (The scale only needs to tip more on one side to determine the outcome.) However if the case you are *weighing* is a criminal trial the prosecution must show enough evidence to prove the defendant guilty “beyond a reasonable doubt.”



Based on the evidence you recorded, how should the case be decided?

Follow up: Identify and share additional news stories in the coming days and weeks that provide more information on this or other court cases. Specifically what is the new information? Does it affect the outcome?

Conflict Resolution Tips

Use these tips with the Conflict Resolution graphic organizer on page 10

Behavioral Techniques

- Don't negotiate when angry.
- Forget the past and stay in the present.
- Focus on the problem not the person.
- Communicate feelings assertively, NOT aggressively. Express concerns without blaming the other side.
- Expect and accept another's right to disagree. Don't push or force anyone to think the way you do; work to develop common agreement.
- Don't view the exercise as a competition where one has to win and the other has to lose. Work toward a solution where both parties have some of their needs met. Understand that not everyone will be 100% happy with a compromise.
- Build 'power with' NOT 'power over' others.
- Thank the person for listening.

Negotiation Techniques

- Identify and define the conflict in specific terms.
- Focus on areas of common interest and potential areas for agreement.
- Never jump to conclusions or make assumptions about what another is feeling or thinking.
- Listen without interrupting; ask for feedback if needed to assure a clear understanding of the issue.
- Think of alternative solutions.
- Discuss the pros and cons of the alternatives. Listen to others, as well as state your case.
- Select the best course of action that ALL can agree upon.
- Implement only the parts of the plan that are in agreement. Remember, when only one person's needs are satisfied in a conflict, it is NOT resolved and the conflict will most likely continue.
- Follow-up to evaluate the effectiveness of the plan and make necessary adjustments.
- Look for a "win-win" solution

Source for this list of techniques was modified from a list originally used in a PBS teaching resource entitled "Briefing Paper: The Taliban and the War on Terror"

Conflict Resolution

What is the Problem/Conflict? Use the newspaper (print or online) as a resource to find a current conflict among individuals or groups of people. Identify and define the conflict in specific terms listing all parties and their concerns.

| Problem/Conflict | Parties | Concerns |
|------------------|---------|----------|
| | | |

What are some Possible Solutions?

List different solutions you develop.

What is the Best Compromise? As a class discuss the possible solutions and work on finding the best compromise. Write down what the group has agreed is the solution to the problem(s) stated above. Explain why you believe it is the best option.

Follow up: Do you think there are any unresolved issues? If so record them here and explain why.

Constitutional Amendments (that relate to the rights of the accused)

United States Constitution –

- Amendment IV - The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.
- Amendment V - No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a grand jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the militia, when in actual service in time of war or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.
- Amendment VI - In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the state and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense.
- Amendment VIII - Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

Web resources in alphabetical order:

[The Constitution and the Criminal Court](#) – a three-day lesson plan written for grades 6-8 to teach the concepts of justice and the Constitutional rights of due process and fair and equal treatment under the law

[History and Judicial Review](#) – another three-day lesson plan intended for middle school (grades 7&8) students to learn how the judiciary has helped shape our nation’s history, especially through the appellate process of the United States Supreme Court

[Justice and the Jury Experience](#) – a 4 to 5 day lesson plan for high school students to learn about and appreciate the history of the jury system, understand the role that the jury plays in the American system of justice, and appreciate the importance of citizen service on juries

The [New York State Bar Association's Law, Youth and Citizenship Program \(LYC\)](#) promotes citizenship and law-related education in schools throughout New York State. LYC assists educators in creating opportunities for students to become effective citizens able to participate fully in our democratic society.

[The New York State Courts: An Introductory Guide](#) for an overview of the state court system—what it does and how it works.

[New York State Family Court Coloring and Activity Book](#) – to help explain courts to very young children

[State Court Watch](#) (a project of the Law, Youth and Citizenship Program of the New York State Bar Association) is a resource for teachers and students interested in making connections among New York State case law, famous U.S. Supreme Court cases, and topics covered in U.S. Government and citizenship classes.

www.uscourts.gov – online educational resources developed to provide information from and about the Judicial Branch of the U.S. Government (<http://www.uscourts.gov/EducationalResources.aspx>)



For more lesson plans inspired by the 2012 theme, “No Courts, No Justice, No Freedom,” go to the [American Bar Association website](#).

Answers to Know the Terms on Page 3:

Matchups: 1,C; 2,K; 3,D; 4,J; 5,I; 6,B; 7,G; 8,F; 9,H; 10,A; 11,E