

# Readington Township Public Schools

## Mock Trial

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**Approval Date:**  
August 20, 2024

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**Readington Township Public Schools**

[www.readington.k12.nj.us](http://www.readington.k12.nj.us)

## I. OVERVIEW

Students enrolled in this elective course will explore the legal system of the United States. Students will investigate concepts and topics that are the foundations of the U.S. legal system. Students will examine the United States Constitution and the three branches of government, as well as the difference between criminal and civil cases. Students will apply this knowledge to create their own court cases and may have the opportunity to compete statewide. Furthermore, as a case study, students will closely investigate the kidnapping and trial of Charles Lindbergh Jr, a case known as *the Trial of the Century*, which is a key part of local Hunterdon County history.

## II. STUDENT OUTCOMES ([NJSL Standards](#))

### Social Studies:

- 6.3.8.CivicsPR.2: Evaluate the effectiveness of the fundamental principles of the Constitution (i.e., consent of the governed, rule of law, federalism, limited government, separation of powers, checks and balances, and individual rights) in establishing a federal government that allows for growth and change over time.
- 6.3.8.CivicsPR.3: Take a position on an issue in which fundamental ideals and principles are in conflict (e.g., liberty, equality).
- 6.3.8.CivicsPR.5: Engage in simulated democratic processes (e.g., legislative hearings, judicial proceedings, elections) to understand how conflicting points of view are addressed in a democratic society.
- 9.2.8.CAP.1: Identify offerings such as high school and county career and technical school courses, apprenticeships, military programs, and dual enrollment courses that support career or occupational areas of interest.
- 9.2.8.CAP.2: Develop a plan that includes information about career areas of interest.
- 9.2.8.CAP.3: Explain how career choices, educational choices, skills, economic conditions, and personal behavior affect income.
- 9.2.8.CAP.4: Explain how an individual's online behavior (e.g., social networking, photo exchanges, video postings) may impact opportunities for employment or advancement.
- 9.2.8.CAP.6: Compare the costs of postsecondary education with the potential increase in income from a career of choice.
- 9.2.8.CAP.7: Devise a strategy to minimize costs of postsecondary education.
- 9.2.8.CAP.8: Compare education and training requirements, income potential, and primary duties of at least two jobs of interest.
- 9.2.8.CAP.9: Analyze how a variety of activities related to career preparation (e.g., volunteering, apprenticeships, structured learning experiences, dual enrollment, job search, scholarships) impacts postsecondary options.
- 9.2.8.CAP.11: Analyze potential career opportunities by considering different types of resources, including occupation databases, and state and national labor market statistics.
- 9.2.8.CAP.12: Assess personal strengths, talents, values, and interests to appropriate jobs and careers to maximize career potential.

### English Language Arts:

- W.8.1. Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
  - A. Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.
  - B. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.
  - C. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

- D. Establish and maintain a formal style.
- E. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.
- W.8.6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas efficiently as well as to interact and collaborate with others.
- W.8.7. Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.
- W.8.8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.
- SL.8.2. Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation.
- SL.8.3. Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and relevance and sufficiency of the evidence and identifying when irrelevant evidence is introduced.
- SL.8.4. Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.
- SL.8.5. Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest.
- SL.8.6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

### **III. COURSE OBJECTIVES**

#### **Unit 1: Human Nature, Rules, and Power: The Origins of Law**

- Essential Questions:
  - Why do people create laws?
  - How and why is power divided in the U.S. legal system?
  - How and why has the concept of "we the people" changed over time?
  - What processes can be used to uphold or change laws?
  - What are the roles of professionals and youth in maintaining the rule of law?
- Students will be able to:
  - Explain why people create laws to protect the rights of individuals and to address the needs of society.
  - Demonstrate how the branches of the U.S. government were designed to separate and balance the powers of creating, enforcing, and interpreting the law.
  - Illustrate the concept of "we the people" has expanded over time as a result of struggles to achieve equity and justice in a democratic society.
  - Paraphrase how professionals, as well as youth and other members of the public, play a vital role in making, enforcing, and interpreting rules and laws.
  - Find relevant and credible research sources.
  - Use evidence to support a position.
  - Create a persuasive argument using appropriate rhetoric.
  - Deliver an organized, persuasive speech with appropriate volume, body language, and eye contact.
  - Synthesize information from multiple sources.

#### **Unit 2: Criminal Law and the Pursuit of Justice**

- Essential Questions:
  - What is crime? How is crime defined?
  - What happens after a person is accused of committing a crime?
  - What does justice look like?
  - Is justice “blind”?
  - How does the criminal justice system ensure that the rights of both the victims and the perpetrators of a crime are protected?
  - What does *beyond a reasonable doubt* mean?
  - What is punishment? What is cruel and unusual punishment?
  - How have national views of capital punishment changed over time?
- Students will be able to:
  - Reflect on how crimes are defined in a collection of written laws that represent a society’s prevailing views about wrongdoing and justice.
  - Summarize how the criminal justice system seeks to promote public safety, hold people accountable for criminal wrongdoing, and protect the constitutional rights of the accused.
  - Depict how the perceptions of the criminal justice system may be shaped by personal experience, the media, data, and differing approaches to justice.
  - Examine how the ideals and legal safeguards of the criminal justice system are not always consistently applied, accessed, and interpreted.
  - Explain how professionals in law, law enforcement, and advocacy, as well as youth, may play vital roles in promoting justice and ensuring that criminal laws are enforced equitably and fairly.
  - Assess the relevancy of evidence in the case it is presented.
  - Work individually and collaboratively to obtain, synthesize, and evaluate information.
  - Interpret primary and secondary source information to draw reasoned conclusions.
  - Define the roles of attorneys, witnesses, jurors, bailiffs, court reporters, observers, and judges.

### **Unit 3: Lawsuits and Liability: The Civil Justice System**

- Essential Questions:
  - How does the civil justice system hold people and corporations accountable for their actions?
  - How does civil law compare and contrast with criminal law?
  - What is the role of civil litigation and liability in U.S. society?
  - What is negligence?
  - Is U.S. society too litigious?
  - What does “*preponderance of the evidence*” mean?
- Students will be able to:
  - Explain how the Civil Justice System seeks to regulate relationships, remedy harms, and resolve disputes among individuals, corporations, and government entities.
  - Argue how civil litigation can promote individual corporate and government accountability, as well as impose costs on society.
  - Detail how law and public policy related to tort liability are shaped by the experiences and perceptions of public special interest groups, advocacy organizations, and the media.
  - Discuss how professionals working in the Civil Justice System advocate for the rights of individuals, corporations, and government entities involved in legal disputes.
  - Create a civil case applying the Bill of Rights to a hypothetical injustice.
  - Argue for the defense or the plaintiff with supporting evidence and testimony.
  - Practice the art of rhetoric using ethos, pathos, and logos.
  - Provide reasoned legal arguments and respond to counterarguments.
  - Discuss controversial topics in a respectful manner.
  - Evaluate testimony and source credibility.

- Apply elements of law to the facts of a case.

#### **Unit 4: Hunterdon County's Trial of the Century - The Lindbergh Kidnapping**

- Essential Questions:
  - How did the kidnapping and murder of Charles Lindbergh Jr. affect Hunterdon County?
  - Who was Charles Lindbergh? Why did he move to Hunterdon County?
  - What elements of this crime are unanswered?
  - Did Bruno Hauptman actually murder Charles Lindbergh Jr.?
  - Was the Lindbergh Trial a true representation of justice?
  - What new information has come to light 100 years after the *Trial of the Century*? How has the field of forensic science changed since 1935?
- Students will be able to:
  - Empathize with Hunterdon County residents during the Great Depression
  - Question the fairness of the legal system in this high-profile case
  - Explain the importance of this case to Hunterdon County's history
  - Analyze primary source reports of the Lindbergh Trial
  - Justify or condemn the use of capital punishment
  - Hypothesize alternate theories of the crime
  - Create an artwork or multimedia presentation detailing aspects of the Lindbergh Trial.

#### **IV. STRATEGIES**

Strategies may include but are not limited to:

- Interviews with guest speakers
- Group discussions
- Teacher presentation
- Student projects
- Guided groups
- Individualized instruction
- Interactive SmartBoard lessons
- Tutorials
- Online practice

#### **V. EVALUATION**

Assessments may include but are not limited to:

- Teacher Observations
- Class Participation
- Class Discussions
- Class Assignments
- Homework Assignments
- Student Notebooks & Reflections
- Student Projects
- Tests and Quizzes
- Anecdotal Records
- Presentations

#### **VI. REQUIRED RESOURCES**

- Bryant, Jen. *The Trial: A Novel*. Yearling, 2005.
- Online and print activities from [iCivics.org](http://iCivics.org)
- [Law and Justice EDC](#)

- New Jersey State Bar Foundation's [Law Adventure Competition](#)

Supplemental Resources may include, but are not limited to:

- Publications from the NJ State Bar Foundation
  - Legal Eagle Newsletter and [Blog](#)
- Historical reprints of the *Hunterdon County Democrat* 1932-1935
- Teacher created materials
- Materials from New Jersey Center for Civic Education, Rutgers University, Piscataway, NJ
- Ted Ed Videos
- InnovatingJustice.org
- Youth.gov
- Zorn, Robert E. *Cemetery John: The Undiscovered Mastermind of the Lindbergh Kidnapping*. Overlook Press, 2013.

## **VII. SCOPE AND SEQUENCE**

- Unit 1: (8-10 lessons) Human Nature, Rules, and Power: The Origins of Law
- Unit 2: (11-25 lessons) Criminal Law and the Pursuit of Justice
- Unit 3: (26-35 lessons) Lawsuits and Liability: The Civil Justice System
- Unit 4: (36-45 lessons) Hunterdon County's Trial of the Century - The Lindbergh Kidnapping