



GRADE 6 :: Government, Courts, & You

Featuring a possible Courthouse field trip or mock trial!



Class-time: 3 – 5 class periods (*at instructor's discretion*)

Topics: American court systems, staff, and procedures

Worth noting: When available, this experience includes field-trip to courthouses where students watch live criminal proceedings and speak with judges for extensive Q&A sessions. Mock Trials and 'video visitors' (guest speakers appearing via streaming) are additional options Project REAL will help facilitate.

For more information or to request a resource, contact our Senior Director at mkamer@projectrealnv.org or 702.703.6529

Or visit:

<http://projectrealnv.org>



Government, Courts, & You: Grade 6 Experience Options & Summary

A free field trip or costumed mock trial experience for 5th grade students throughout Nevada!

Our 'Government, Courts, & You' 6th grade experience helps students gain a more refined understanding of the difference between civil and criminal court while reviewing the roles people take on in courts and the processes involved with cases. When possible, our reading material is combined with a field trip which shows students live criminal proceedings, confronting them with real consequences of making bad decisions.

Part 1: Pre-test

Students take the 10 minute pre-test before the student books are used in class. The test asks simple questions to determine how much a student knows about the courts before participating in our program.

Part 2: Student books

Students read the Your Day in Court student guides to become familiar with the roles of the courts and their processes. Students will also become familiarized with the roles of the people who make the courts work.

Part 3: Field Trip, Guest Speaker, or Mock Trial

Option 1: Students attend a field trip to local courts where they will watch live criminal proceedings, and then participate in an extensive Q&A session with a Federal Judge!

Option 2+3: If no fieldtrip dates are available, your class will sign-up for a Project REAL exclusive scripted-mock trial.

- Project REAL provides scripts & guidance for conducting the trial.
- You & your students set up the classroom to resemble a courtroom.
- Stronger readers assigned to 'speaking' roles.
- Students with developing reading skills are assigned to the jury pool.
- Students perform the a script that is unique to Project REAL's middle school experience.
- Although the reading skills required are elementary-level, Project REAL will also make the Harry Potter criminal and civil trial scripts available should they be needed
- Each trial session ends w/ student questions.
- In lieu of a mock-trial, Project REAL can also work to schedule a Q+A with a judge or local attorney

Part 4: Wrap-up

Students take the 10 minute post-test after participating in any of our 5th grade activities. The test asks simple questions to determine how much a student knows about the courts after participating in our activities. Then, they write 'thank you' letters to the judges or volunteers that helped facilitate the experience - The thank-you's and the test participation are the only requirement (and costs, if you wish to call them that) for receiving this free activity from Project REAL!

To sign-up or request more information, contact Project REAL's Program Director at mkamer@projectrealnv.org or 702.703.6529



Courthouse Fieldtrips

School Year Requirements

*Booking, Bus Reimbursement & Other Vital Info
for Teachers & Chaperones*

Dear Instructors & Field Trip Chaperones,

All Adults attending a Your Day in Court fieldtrip are required to carefully and completely read this guide. **Failure to do so may result in the school not receiving a reimbursement for the cost of the bus.** *It may also result in the school you represent being unable to make reservations for future field trips with Project REAL.*

That sounds extreme and kind of unwieldy. We get it. We have *reasons* though:

This will be the 15th consecutive year Project REAL has brought students to Nevada's courts. As each year has gone by, the popularity, frequency, and volume of attendees on those trips has continued to grow exponentially.

These days there are more than 125 field trips taking place each school year, and each trip has 60-90 students occupying the courthouses. At any given time in those courts, people's careers, freedoms, and futures are all on the line.

Given the gravity of what happens in courts, Project REAL is only able to provide these trips at the invitation of the courthouse administration and staff members. Without their support and approval, the Your Day in Court experience would not be possible.

**This guide has been designed to preserve
the future of Your Day in Court trips
for all students in Nevada.**

We need these trips to go smoothly, for the kids to be engaged, and for the courts to "see but not notice" us. ***Simply put:* We need you to carefully read this guide.**

Please carefully and completely review the contents of this packet, and help Project REAL provide thousands of young Nevadans with a unique learning opportunity for years to come.

You may also contact our Program Director Mike Kamer if there are any questions, comments, or concerns. He can be reached at mkamer@projectrealnv.org or 702.703.6529

Thank You.

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-Only for use by schools that do not maintain authorization lists!

TESTING TESTING TESTING!

(Fear not: they typically take less than 10 minutes for students to complete)



ATTN: BEFORE GIVING THE TESTS

Teachers! A FEW DAYS before giving either test, check it out for yourself: Makeup a student number, and verify that your school and your own name is included in the test responses. If it is not, email us immediately and give us at least 1 week to add you to the response options!

Pre-test: <http://bit.ly/ydicpreexam>

Please have your students take the pre-test before the field-trip AND before the book is used in class.

Post-test: <http://bit.ly/ydicpostexam>

Please have your students take the post-test after the field-trip AND after the book has been used in class. Post-tests should be completed within 45 days of the field trip and BEFORE you request the bus-transportation reimbursement for your school.

About the links:

Note: The links are cAsE SeNsItiVe. If you get a 'suspicious link' warning, that's just because they are re-directing. If you're still concerned though, consider having students take the exams in our mobile-app!

iOS: <http://bit.ly/realios>

Android: <http://bit.ly/realandroid>

Open the app → visit 'Learn w/ Project REAL' → select 'Courts & You' → Select 'Pre+Post Test'

BOOKING YOUR BUSES!

The info you need to get your busses to the right locations at the right times!

Drop Off - From School to Court: [201 E Clark Ave. 9:30am-9:50am](#)

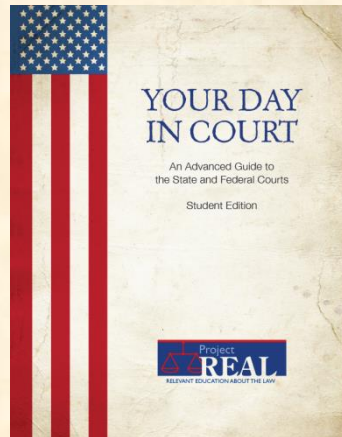
ONLY use the Clark Ave. entrance to enter. Ignore the fact that the door says jurors and lawyers only.

Pick Up - From Court back to School: [392 S. 6th St at 12:30pm \(Not Earlier!\)](#)

Bus drivers MUST be waiting for the kids on the EAST side of 6th street only: NOT the west side, and not before 12:30pm. If this is an issue, have the field-trip booking office manager contact us immediately.

Before Your Visit: Check & Review

HIT THE BOOKS



The *Your Day in Court* guides need to be read by the students *before* attending the field trip.

If you wish to re-review the guide *after* the field trip, that is welcome but not required.

Students *will* be asked if they have read the guide by Project REAL team members, and if enough say no it will invalidate a claim for bus reimbursement.



DRESS CODE

Please have kids **dress for court**.

If there are financial difficulties that prevent some of your students from doing that, we ask that a minimum dress code is adhered to:

- No shorts.
- No hats.
- No wearing hoodies in the courthouses.
- No flip flops.

Tank tops are only ok if the shoulders are covered with some other item like a button up tee or jacket of some kind.

NO FOOD, NO DRINKS, NO BACKPACKS, NO JOKE.



All snacks, lunches, drinks, and backpacks need to leave them on the buses during the fieldtrip if they are even brought along. Failure to follow these instructions will mean your school has waived their right to a bus reimbursement.

IF YOU NOTIFY US IN WRITING AT LEAST 10 DAYS IN ADVANCE: You *MAY* make lunch arraignments, but we no longer allow food to be carried through the courthouses. An adult from your group may leave the group early to secure food, but they then must wait outside the courthouse and until the end of the field trip before that food may be distributed.

We are happy to suggest locations nearby should you wish to pre-plan for lunch situations, and your students are allowed to eat at the restaurants in the courthouses after the field trips. Project REAL does not reimburse these expenses, and we cannot guarantee you will arrive back to school on time. Cutting a portion of the field trip short to facilitate lunch waives your school's claims to bus reimbursement funds.

The point of contact teacher must notify us by email at least 14 days before the field trip if there is a medical situation that requires some exemption from this policy, and receive an email acknowledgement / response from Project REAL.

SIZING YOU UP: SORT YOUR GROUPS

On page 12, you'll find instructions for group sizes.

Please have your students know what group they will be in before they arrive at the courts. Ideally, you've assigned them at least the day before the trip.

Please do not get creative with group sizes (If you have 4 groups of 10 students, we'll know you didn't read the instructions!)



PREPARE TO BE PREPARED: Are There Any Questions?

Unless we have told you that the federal portion of your field trip has been cancelled, each of your students must have a unique question ready for the Q+A sessions hosted by the federal judges. We don't want kids coming with pens and paper (it holds up security), but (while not required) it would be awesome if each student had their question written down, in their pocket, ready to go.

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!

Our new media policy that heavily encourages student participation during our post-fieldtrip broadcasts.

These help to secure new donors, which in turn make your field trips possible. The kids participating is an excellent step in the right direction, but we could still use your help.

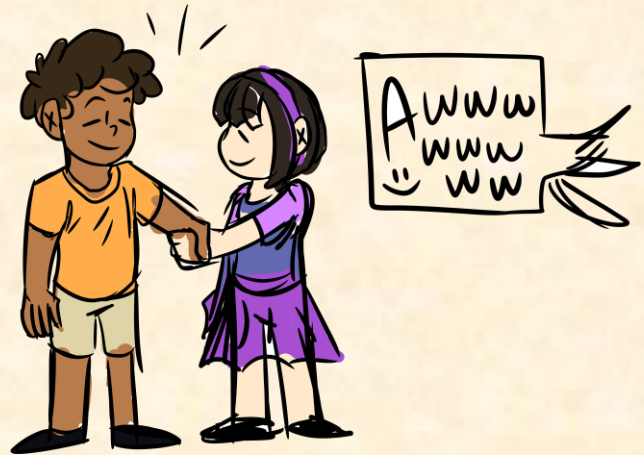
Consider having a few students pre-selected, and asking them to prepare a bit so they sound concise (but not rehearsed). Feel free to ask us for suggestions / guidance if you're willing to participate in this extra step supporting our work.



WE'VE MADE TIME FOR YOU:

Reciprocation, Respect, & Courtesy

If for some reason your group needs to leave before 12:30pm, the point of contact teacher needs to let us know at least 10 days in advance - in an email - so there is a written record. You also need to remind the field trip guide as soon as they text you on the morning of your fieldtrip.



REIMBURSEMENTS: Not A Blank Check

Any individual field trips that require more than \$400 for full reimbursement must be pre-approved by Project REAL – in an email - at least 4 weeks in advance.

CCSD schools must use CCSD transportation unless a clear case is stated well in advance (most common reason would be blackout dates) .

Unique Needs, Requests, & Accommodations

If you have a differently-abled students and service animals, mobility, behavior matters, communication issues, or other accommodations may come in to play, you **must** e-mail us with a notification **EXACTLY** 7-14 days before your trip so we can be prepared & adjust the trip as needed.

Even if you call, **you must email too** so there is a written record of the notification. **Failure to do so may void your school's entitlement to bus reimbursement.**



The Courthouse Environment



Project REAL and our field trip attendees are guests of the courts and the people that work there:

Our fieldtrip is visiting their workplace.

We are only able to host the trips at the invitation of the courts, so we cannot ask them to change how they conduct their day-to-day business. That includes asking people in the court to help censor/control certain behaviors (vulgarity, etc) or court-case content that may be age-inappropriate at times.

You also need to always remember that the courthouse is open to the public: Even though everyone entering each courthouse is screened upon entry, you are taking your class to visit a place where people dealing with mental illness or substance abuse issues may be present, and where a number of people are there to make appearances for cases related to criminal or substance abuse charges.

Project REAL has an excellent safety record, but on occasion having a large group of students has drawn the interest of people we'd rather avoid. We always take swift action to remove any questionable behaviors from the students' orbit, but we need teachers and chaperones to play active security roles as well.

If any kind of incident occurs, we need to be notified. Continue reading to gain a better understanding of this policy....



PRESENTS

GOVERNMENT, COURTS, & YOU

A guide for
Your Day in Court
State and Federal Courthouse
Field Trips

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INTRODUCTION TO THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

“Ignorance of The Law is no defense for breaking it”

— Any lawyer that’s ever passed a bar exam

No matter what grade we reach you at or what activity of ours you’re participating in, the one message we at Project REAL will repeat over-and-over to you is that you need to ‘think within the law’.

This guide is used with our *Your Day in Court* field trips. It is designed to give you a basic overview of how the state and federal courts work, and the people that work in them.

Sometime around 6th grade, students begin to have more time that is unsupervised by adults. Those amounts of time only increase as students grow older. By the time they’ve reached 12th grade, they’re well on their way to living on their own.

With growing independence comes a need to think before acting on ideas. If you think getting music for free online sounds too good to be true, that’s because it is: you’d be committing a federal crime! Graffiti may be an artistic outlet but it won’t just get you grounded; you can be charged with felony larceny depending on how much damage you do.

You may not be in a class that teaches you all of the laws you need to know about, but here is one thing you absolutely need to know: If you get caught breaking any law and explain “I didn’t know it was a crime! It’s not fair for me to be punished”, that may be true...but it won’t do you any good!

Under the law, you are still accountable for your actions and responsible for your decisions. No one can be expected to memorize every law, but you what can do is think before acting out, and exercise good judgement. If you think something might be illegal, don’t do it. If it turns out whatever you had in mind was allowable, you can always get to it after you know for certain that you won’t be putting your freedom at risk.

Good lawyers aren’t cheap, jail isn’t fun, and civil judgements (payments made after being successfully sued by someone else) are rarely affordable. Keep that in mind before you do something that you might choose not do if you were to stop and exercise a bit of caution and judgement first.

Now, let’s get you ready for your field trip!

YOUR DAY IN COURT FIELD TRIP INFORMATION

Your Day in Court is Coming...So Be Prepared!

Some of you may be participating in a field trip as part of Project REAL's Your Day in Court activity. If you are one of those students, there are a few things you need to know before going on that trip. Please carefully review the rules and instructions on the next few pages so things go smoothly for you and the other students!

Before Your Trip

Dressing for Court

When students come to their field trips dressed up for court, the judges they get to meet always appreciate the effort—and so does Project REAL!

We understand not all of you have dress clothes, so this is just a request and not a requirement.

You may not be required to dress up, but we do have rules about clothing items that are never allowed:

- No shorts
- No hats, headgear, kitty-ears,
- No hoodies (hoods must be tucked in the entire trip)
- No flip flops

Students that come with any of those items may be left to wait outside the courthouse with an adult, so dress carefully!

When you're getting dressed in the morning, also be sure to keep the weather in mind: All Project REAL field trips spend 10-15 minutes walking outside no matter what the weather is like, dress wisely!



No Food, No Drinks, No Backpacks... but YES to Empty Pockets!

All snacks, lunches, drinks, and backpacks need to be left on the bus during the field trip if they are brought along.

Better yet, just leave those things at school!

Other things you should leave at school include pens, notepads, headphones, phones (for students in grades 5-8), fidget spinners, and really anything that would be in your pocket.

Those things slow down security, so empty pockets are the best pockets on our field trips!

If you don't follow these rules, you will cause your whole class to get held up, and that may cause your group to not get to see live criminal court!



During Your Trip - The Basics

The Courthouse Environment

We are only able to host *Your Day in Court* field trips because the courts give us permission. Because we are only bringing groups to observe court, that means we cannot ask the lawyers, judges, and clients to change how they conduct their day-to-day business. That means we cannot ask the people in the courthouse to censor or control certain behaviors like swearing, and the content of the court cases you may see can be a bit shocking.

Elevator

Once all the students from your school go through security, are broken into groups, and get lined up, a Project REAL guide will brief everyone and then assign each group a set of floors to visit.

Once all groups have been assigned to their floors, you will get onto an elevator with everyone from your group. You will have to squeeze together, but everyone in your group needs to fit in one elevator!

As there are other people at courts for work and business, it is important that before stepping onto the elevators after a group has gone up, you let a group of other courthouse visitors go up before you: You're a guest, so be polite!

Bathroom

During the trip you may have to use the restroom. You will have two opportunities to use the bathroom: (1) before entering the courtroom at the Regional Justice Center and (2) upon entering the Federal Court.

You should use the restroom at these times, so you don't miss out on watching live criminal court.

Safety

Safety is our number one priority. Project REAL's field trips have maintained an excellent safety record for more than fifteen years, but that doesn't mean you don't need to worry about the rules that will keep you safe.

The courts are open to the public so even though everyone is screened upon entry, you are visiting a place where people dealing with mental illnesses or drug abuse may be present, and where a number of people are there to make appearances for cases related to criminal charges. Your field trip experience will be a safe one, but don't be surprised if the courthouse environment gets more lively than you were expecting.

Even though our field trips take students to real courthouses with real cases - including court cases involving drugs and criminal incidents - our security rules have kept everyone safe since our first field trip in 2004! That's why we need you to follow them, and they're pretty basic:

All students must be in the line-of-sight of your teacher, chaperone, or Project REAL guide, unless taking part in a restroom break. At no time will a student be able to walk through the court unattended.

If any kind of 'security incident' occurs during the trip, please report the incident to your teacher or chaperone and make sure that they contact the Project REAL field trip leader immediately. Neither you nor the adults should wait until the end of the field trip to notify Project REAL if you saw something that should be reported!

'Security Incident' example: Someone began swearing at students, and would not walk away.

'Non-Incident' example: A lawyer and a client see your group in the hallway, and even though students are present they begin to yell at each other using inappropriate language.



What are the Two Types of Cases that are Heard in Courts?

- Cases in both federal and state courts that involve the breaking of a law intended to protect society are **criminal cases** and may result in punishment including prison and/or fines.
- Cases that involve disputes between two parties are called **civil cases** and may involve a disagreement between individuals, an individual and an organization (including the state or federal government), or between two or more states. These cases may involve financial payments and damages that must be decided by a court.

In both types of cases you will see:

- Individuals or attorneys presenting their side of the argument (along with any evidence and **witness testimony**)
- The judge or jury reaching a decision as to which side has won its case
- A set procedure for deciding a punishment or an amount of payment if the person or organization is found guilty. In a **criminal case** this might involve a fine and/or jail or prison time. In a **civil case** the decision may involve one individual or organization making a payment to the other.

What are the Differences Between a Civil Case and a Criminal Case?

- The number of persons seated on a jury in a criminal trial is usually twelve. In a civil trial, the number can range between four and twelve, depending on the court and the nature of the case.
- In a **criminal case**, a conviction results in punishment of some kind (for the crime, you do the time) whereas in a civil case decision, only financial responsibility would be involved.

THE TRIAL

What are the General Steps in Any Trial?

1. **Before the trial:** Before the case starts in court the prosecutor and the defense attorney, with the approval of the judge, have the right to decide whether or not there will be a jury. If there is a jury, the judge, parties, attorneys, and potential jurors appear in the courtroom. The judge announces the case name and number and introduces the parties and attorneys.
2. **Voir dire:** The judge and attorneys question the potential jurors and a jury is selected.
3. **Opening statements:** The trial begins with the opening statements. These are speeches given by the government (U.S. Attorney or D.A.) in a criminal case or the plaintiff in a civil case. It is the prosecutor's chance to describe how they are going to prove their side. Then the defense or defendant lawyer's opening statement follows. Either lawyer may choose not to present an opening statement.
4. **Examination of witnesses and introduction of evidence:**
 - a. **Plaintiff/Prosecutor's Witnesses:** Witnesses are called for examination to tell what they know about what happened. The defense attorney can cross-examine those witnesses and the plaintiff/prosecutor may re-examine them.
 - b. **Defense Witnesses:** The defense calls in witnesses to try to disprove the plaintiff/prosecutor's case and to establish the defendant's case. They may also be **cross-examined** and then re-examined.
 - c. **Rebuttal:** When the defense has presented all its witnesses, the plaintiff/prosecutor may again call witnesses to disprove the new information introduced by the defense witnesses.
 - d. **Exhibits:** Items offered as evidence by the attorney who wishes to make them part of the case.
 - e. **Objections:** During the trial, the lawyers have the right to object to testimony or evidence. The judge makes the decision to allow the witness to continue (**objection overruled**) or ask the lawyer to reword or strike the question (**objection sustained**).
5. **Agreement of jury instructions:** If there is a jury, the lawyers and/or parties and the judge determine what instructions will be given to the jury to help it make its decision.
6. **Closing arguments:** This is the last chance the lawyers have to convince the jury to vote their way.
7. **Instructions to jurors:** The judge tells the jurors about the rules that apply to the evidence presented and the different **verdicts** the jury may reach. In civil cases, the plaintiff must prove their case by a **preponderance of the evidence**, in other words, does the plaintiff's evidence outweigh that of the defendant? In criminal cases, the prosecutor must prove the defendant **guilty beyond a reasonable doubt**. In other words there must be no question as to the defendant's guilt and all the jurors must agree.
8. **Deliberation:** In a jury trial, the jurors are then given the opportunity to discuss the evidence in private before reaching their decision. Jurors choose one representative from their group to serve as foreperson and present their **verdict** to the court.
9. **The verdict:** When the jury tells the judge it has reached a **verdict**, the parties and attorneys are summoned to the courtroom and the **verdict** is announced in open court.

10. Sentencing: In both Nevada and federal courts, the judge determines the final sentence. However, in state courts involving first-degree murder cases seeking the death penalty, the jury decides either a death sentence, or life with or without **parole**.

11. Possibility of Appeals: If the party that loses the case disagrees with the decision of the court, an **appeal** may be filed. The courts of appeals do not hold trials. Instead, the court reviews the decision of the lower court for mistakes made during the trial or in the law itself. Only the lawyers of those involved speak to the panel of judges. After hearing from both sides, the appeals court judges can affirm (agree) with the decision of the lower court or overturn that decision and grant a new trial.





REAL Movie Stars!

Lights, Camera, Action!

At the end of each field trip, Project REAL asks students to volunteer for interviews we broadcast live online. Students that participate get to speak about what they saw, learned, and enjoyed as part of their *Your Day in Court* experience!

These interviews help Project REAL show the world what we do, and sometimes the people that see students enjoying their trips decide to donate to our organization so that we can serve more students. Those donations are how we pay for the field trip you'll be attending, so obviously having students volunteer is very important! If you want to help, make sure your parents have given your school permission so you can participate in videos like the ones we'll ask you to star in!

If you want to prepare in case you are selected to be in one of our videos, you can watch what other students have said: Check out the back cover of this guide for links to Project REAL on different social media platforms, where you'll find those videos. The interviews we conduct are very important: they help teachers, adults, and supporters learn about Project REAL, so we hope you'll volunteer to help us out!

REAL Free Stuff!

Win a prize just for attending your field trip!

At the end of some of our field trips, the Project REAL representative may announce there are prizes available! Sometimes, we give away special prizes that have been donated like tickets to movies, small pizza parties, and free play at arcades; these prizes are our way of encouraging students like you to show your support for Project REAL.

All you have to do to win, is find the videos we filmed after your field trip!

You get one entry for liking the video, one entry for commenting on the video, and two entries if you follow our page. Since we post videos on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, that means you can get up to 12 entries total! Don't worry if you weren't in the video—you can still enter the drawing!

Winners will be notified by their teachers a few weeks after the field trip.

REAL Mobile

Don't stop learning: Explore more about the law and win (even more) prizes with Project REAL's app.

By the end of the field trip you take, we're certain that you'll realize the law can actually be a fun and interesting topic to learn about. For example, what if we told you there was a lady who sued a movie theatre because there was too much air in her box of candy? Or that some parking enforcement agents ended up in court after taking pizza slices as bribes in exchange for not writing traffic tickets to the pizza parlor's owner? How about the officer who wrote a ticket for an illegally parked car...when the car was just a snow sculpture? Would you like to know more?

You can learn about those REAL stories and more on our mobile app! On the app, you'll find a number of articles with stories about the cases we just described, and many other ones that are just as interesting. By having our app, you'll be notified when we have essay contests. You can win all sorts of awesome prizes just by responding to those articles during the contests!

You can download the Android version of the app here:
<http://bit.ly/realandroid>

The app is also available for Apple iOS devices here:
<http://bit.ly/realios>



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