

# Justice in the Jury Box

Trace how judges, jurors, and courts work during a criminal trial.

**SS.7.CG.2.5** "Describe the trial process and the role of juries in the administration of justice at the state and federal levels."

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## 1 READ AND MARK \_\_\_\_\_ Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** Underline each phrase that tells what the judge does, circle each phrase that tells what jurors do, and number three trial steps in the order they occur.

### From Charges to Verdict

- ① When a person is accused of a crime, the case may be tried in a state or federal court. State courts usually handle crimes that break state laws, such as robbery under a state statute. Federal courts hear criminal cases involving federal law, including certain crimes on federal property or across state lines. Before a trial, the accused is informed of the charges and may enter a plea. If the case goes to trial, both sides prepare evidence and witnesses for a judge and, often, a jury.
- ② At trial, lawyers for each side give opening statements, question witnesses, and present evidence. The defense can challenge the government's evidence and present its own evidence. The judge manages the courtroom, rules on legal questions, and tells jurors which law applies. Jurors listen carefully, consider only the evidence admitted in court, and decide the facts. In a criminal case, the prosecution must prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. The jury's verdict may be guilty or not guilty.
- ③ Jurors are chosen through a process called voir dire, in which the judge and lawyers ask questions to find people who can be fair and impartial. Citizens called for jury service have a civic responsibility to appear unless excused. After closing arguments and the judge's instructions, jurors meet privately to deliberate. They discuss the evidence and work toward a verdict. Federal criminal juries generally have twelve members and must reach a unanimous verdict. State jury sizes can differ, but juries in both state and federal courts must be unanimous to convict someone of a serious crime.

**2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE** \_\_\_\_\_ Use the passage

**1** Which court would usually handle a crime that breaks a state law? Which court could hear a crime on federal property?

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**2** How do the judge's job and the jurors' job differ during a trial?

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**3** What must the prosecution prove in a criminal case, and what are the two possible verdicts named in the passage?

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**4** How does voir dire help create a fair jury?

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**3 YOUR TURN** \_\_\_\_\_ Your own words

Write a four-sentence courtroom guide for a person facing a criminal trial. Use your own example to explain why a case could be in state or federal court, what the judge does, what jurors decide, and how jurors reach a verdict.

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**PART 1 • READ AND MARK**

Underline each phrase that tells what the judge does, circle each phrase that tells what jurors do, and number three trial steps in the order they occur. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

**PART 2 • ANSWERS**

| # | QUESTION                                                                                                              | ANSWER                                                                                                                                          |
|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Which court would usually handle a crime that breaks a state law? Which court could hear a crime on federal property? | <b>A state court would usually handle a crime that breaks a state law. A federal court could hear a crime on federal property.</b>              |
| 2 | How do the judge's job and the jurors' job differ during a trial?                                                     | <b>The judge manages the courtroom, rules on legal questions, and explains the law. Jurors consider admitted evidence and decide the facts.</b> |
| 3 | What must the prosecution prove in a criminal case, and what are the two possible verdicts named in the passage?      | <b>The prosecution must prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. The verdict may be guilty or not guilty.</b>                                     |
| 4 | How does voir dire help create a fair jury?                                                                           | <b>During voir dire, the judge and lawyers ask questions to identify people who can be fair and impartial.</b>                                  |

**PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)**

A charge for a crime on federal property could be tried in federal court. The judge rules on legal questions and explains the law to jurors. Jurors decide the facts by considering only admitted evidence. After deliberating, a federal criminal jury generally must reach a unanimous guilty or not guilty verdict.

Accept equivalent descriptions of court jurisdiction and trial roles that match the passage. For the open response, check for four sentences that include all four requested ideas and an accurate example.