

Case Pathways

Trace the major stages of an adult criminal case in Georgia.

SS8CG4.d "Explain the steps in the adult criminal justice system beginning with arrest."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each named stage in the adult case process. Then write the numbers 1 through 9 beside these stages in order: arrest, booking, first appearance, preliminary hearing, formal charge, arraignment, trial, sentencing, and appeal.

From Arrest to Appeal

- ① An adult criminal case can begin when an officer makes an arrest based on a warrant or probable cause. At booking, officers record identifying information, take fingerprints and photographs, and list the alleged offense. At the first appearance, usually before a magistrate judge, the accused person hears the charge and learns basic rights, including the right to a lawyer. The judge also considers release conditions, such as bond. For a felony case that has not yet been formally charged, a preliminary hearing may follow.
- ② At a preliminary hearing, the judge decides whether probable cause supports continuing the felony case. This hearing is not a trial and does not decide guilt. Next, prosecutors bring a formal charge. In many felony cases, a grand jury reviews the evidence and may issue an indictment. At arraignment, the defendant is told the formal charge and enters a plea, such as guilty, not guilty, or no contest. Before trial, both sides prepare evidence and may ask the judge to decide legal questions.
- ③ If the case goes to trial, the prosecutor must prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. A judge or jury decides the verdict, guilty or not guilty. After a guilty verdict or a guilty plea, the judge imposes a sentence, which can include incarceration, probation, fines, or other lawful conditions. A defendant may appeal by asking a higher court to review claimed legal errors. The appellate court may affirm the result, reverse it, or send the case back to a lower court for further action.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What happens at booking? At the first appearance, what two categories of matters does the judge address?

2 Why might a preliminary hearing occur, and what does the judge decide at that hearing? What formal charge may a grand jury issue next?

3 How do arraignment and trial have different jobs in the criminal justice process? Include the plea and the verdict in your answer.

4 What happens during sentencing after a guilty result? Name the three decisions an appellate court may make after reviewing claimed legal errors.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Create a six-sentence case path for an adult felony defendant. Begin with arrest and include booking, first appearance, preliminary hearing, indictment, arraignment, trial, sentencing, and appeal. Explain what happens at the preliminary hearing and at the appeal.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each named stage in the adult case process. Then write the numbers 1 through 9 beside these stages in order: arrest, booking, first appearance, preliminary hearing, formal charge, arraignment, trial, sentencing, and appeal. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What happens at booking? At the first appearance, what two categories of matters does the judge address?	At booking, officers record identifying information, take fingerprints and photographs, and list the alleged offense. At first appearance, the judge addresses the charge and rights, then considers release conditions such as bond.
2	Why might a preliminary hearing occur, and what does the judge decide at that hearing? What formal charge may a grand jury issue next?	A preliminary hearing may occur in a felony case that has not yet been formally charged. The judge decides whether probable cause supports continuing the case. A grand jury may issue an indictment.
3	How do arraignment and trial have different jobs in the criminal justice process? Include the plea and the verdict in your answer.	At arraignment, the defendant hears the formal charge and enters a plea. At trial, the prosecutor must prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt, and a judge or jury decides the guilty or not guilty verdict.
4	What happens during sentencing after a guilty result? Name the three decisions an appellate court may make after reviewing claimed legal errors.	The judge imposes a sentence, which may include incarceration, probation, fines, or other lawful conditions. An appellate court may affirm the result, reverse it, or send the case back to a lower court for further action.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Police arrest Jordan after finding probable cause, and officers book Jordan by recording information and taking fingerprints. At first appearance, a magistrate states the charge, explains rights, and considers bond. At the preliminary hearing, the judge finds probable cause to continue the felony case. A grand jury then returns an indictment, and at arraignment Jordan enters a not-guilty plea. At trial, the prosecutor proves guilt beyond a reasonable doubt, the jury returns a guilty verdict, and the judge sentences Jordan to probation. Jordan appeals a claimed legal error, and the appellate court affirms the result.

Accept accurate wording that preserves the sequence and functions of the stages in the passage. For the open response, accept a different realistic outcome at the preliminary hearing, trial, sentencing, or appeal if all required stages appear in order.