



MONTEREY COLLEGE OF LAW



Elementary Law

Dear Teacher:

Thank you for deciding to be an Elementary Law Teacher this year. The Elementary Law Program will provide your fifth grade students with an exciting and informative introduction to the Monterey County judicial system and to their duties as citizens of a democracy. The program is co-sponsored by the Monterey County Bar Association and the Monterey College of Law.

Your Elementary Law Team consists of you and your Elementary Law Mentor (an attorney). All the files that both of you need are on the website. Here's a summary of the files and their description:

Files for Teacher	Files for Mentor	Description
Introduction	Introduction	This letter (which describes the three events)
Checklist	Checklist	A checklist of the necessary tasks
Vocabulary list		Definitions for words in the Trial Play
Certificate		The student participation certificate (choice of 2)
Rules	Rules	A list of rules for court etiquette
	Salaries	A summary of courtroom staff salaries

You'll choose either a Criminal Trial Play or a Civil Trial Play. The files are:

Files for Criminal Trial	Files for Civil Trial	Description
Play	Play	The actual script for the play
Cast list	Cast list	The list of cast members for the play
Prop list	Prop list	The list of props necessary for the play
Verdict form	Verdict form	The verdict decision
Questionnaire	Questionnaire	Some optional questions for after the play

The Teacher Activities Checklist on the website is a summary of the things to do during your participation in the Elementary Law program.

This letter will explain the three Elementary Law Events in which your class will be participating: the Introductory Class, the Courthouse Tour and Trial Play, and the Follow-up Class. I have left blanks in this letter for you to fill in the dates of your Events. Please contact your Mentor in the near future and set the dates for the three events. The Events may be scheduled on any three dates during the school year, which are convenient for you and your Mentor. The Courthouse Tour and Trial Play is usually held a week or two after the Introductory Class (this gives the students time to study the Trial Play). The Follow-up Class is usually held the day after the Courthouse Tour and Trial Play (while the Tour is still fresh in their minds).

The Introductory Class

The Introductory Class will be held on _____ at the hour of _____. Prior to the Introductory Class, choose either the Criminal Trial Play or the Civil Trial Play from the website and make ten photocopies. Fill out the enclosed Cast List, assigning ten students of your choice to play the ten speaking parts in the Trial Play. You have been cast in the role of Judge Robin Solomon, so write your own name on that line on the Cast List.

Please have the ten copies of the Trial Play and the completed Cast List ready for your Mentor at the Introductory Class. During the Introductory Class, your Mentor will pass out the ten copies of the Trial Play to the ten students you have selected to play the speaking parts.

Your students may ask your Mentor questions during the Introductory Class. If there are particular topics you or your class would like to hear about during the Introductory Class, let your Mentor know what they are beforehand.

The Elementary Law Vocabulary List is to prepare you and your students with words used in a courtroom setting. Please familiarize your students with the vocabulary words prior to the Introductory Class.

You may wish to use a colored marker on each Cast Member's play so that they know where their parts are in their Trial Play scripts. The Cast Members need not attempt to memorize their parts and may read their lines from the scripts during the Trial Play. Obviously, however, the better the Cast Members have studied their lines, the more realistic the Trial Play will be. Suggest they practice reading their lines at home in voices loud enough to fill a courtroom. The biggest problem we have experienced during the students' Trial Play performances has been their failure to speak loudly enough to be heard in the courtroom. Encourage your students to belt out their parts and ham them up.

The Courthouse Tour and Trial Play

The highlight of the Elementary Law Program will be the Courthouse Tour and Trial Play on _____ from noon to approximately 1:15 p.m. During the Tour, your class will visit a municipal courtroom and act out the Trial Play. Your school will be responsible for providing transportation for yourself, your students and your chaperones to and from the courthouse. Feel free to invite your school principal, your students' parents and anyone else you think might be interested in the Courthouse Tour and Trial Play.

Your class should plan to arrive at the courthouse at noon and will be leaving at approximately 1:15 p.m. to return to school. Your Mentor will meet you outside the courthouse and take you to the courtroom. It will be necessary for your students to eat their lunches before (or, if they won't get too hungry, after) the Tour.

Please be certain that your students conduct themselves properly in the courthouse and follow the Rules (also posted on the website).

Bring with you to the Courthouse Tour the Trial Props listed on the Trial Prop List, namely: completed juror name cards, twelve juror note pads, twelve juror pens, a handkerchief and two cookie crumb baggies. Any kind of cookie crumbs will do. By the way, there is no such thing as a "Fudge Farm cookie" or a "Terry Tune Snacker Doodle cookie" mentioned in the Trial Play.

What should you do about the students who are neither selected for a speaking part nor selected for the jury? Perhaps, time permitting, they could act as media reporters who interview Cast Members after the trial.

After the play, you may wish to collect the Trial Play scripts from the Cast Members for use next year.

The Elementary Law Certificate is also on the website. Make enough photocopies of the Certificate to give one to each student who attended the Courthouse Tour (whether or not the student participated in the Trial Play), then write the name of each student on his or her certificate. Bring the completed Certificates to the Follow-up Class, where your Mentor will distribute them to your students.

The Follow-Up Class

The Follow-up Class will be held on _____ at the hour of _____. During this class your Mentor will answer student questions about the Courthouse Tour, the Trial Play, and the American justice system. If there is a topic of particular interest to you or your class, let your Mentor know.

Tim Haag, our first Elementary Law Teacher, devised a follow-up questionnaire called “Let’s talk about it” for use after the Trial Play. With Mr. Haag’s permission, I have included his questionnaire on the website.

The Elementary Law Program is designed to spark the enthusiasm and imagination of your fifth grade class and to provide your students with a valuable experience in citizenship and law. Feel free to improvise. You may use the Elementary Law Program as a “stand alone” instructional unit, or may supplement it with other studies and/or activities. Your Mentor would be pleased to hear your suggestions.

Thank you for allowing your class to participate in the Elementary Law Program.

Sincerely,

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