



These materials have been adapted, with permission from The Florida Bar Benchmarks Adult Civic Education Program, for use in Louisiana. Principal authors of the Florida Benchmarks Program are Annette Boyd Pitts and Richard Levenstein. For assistance with adaptation in other states, contact staff@flrea.org

THE ROLE OF JURIES

Topics addressed:

- American jury system
- Landmark cases affecting juries
- Qualifications of jurors

Time needed: 30 minutes

Overview: This activity explores the role and significance of juries in the American legal system.

Group type and size: Suited for both small and large audiences.

Materials needed:

- Role of Juries PowerPoint
- Handout: Jury Profile
- Handout: Landmark Cases Affecting Juries
- Handout: Building a Jury

Preparation:

- Review presenter's guide of "What to Do and Not to Do."
- Become familiar with PowerPoint and handouts, and make copies of handouts to distribute.
- Review materials on the Sixth Amendment at:
<http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/PROJECTS/FTRIALS/conlaw/jurysize.html>

You may also want to review the American Bar Association's "Dialogue on the American Jury: We the People in Action" Parts I-III.

Equipment: You will need a computer, projector, screen and power cords for PowerPoint. Contact event coordinator. Bring web-based materials on a flash drive and handouts for distribution.

Getting Started

Distribute copies of the Juror Profile handout.

Ask participants as they are being seated:

- What characteristics or attributes would you want in a juror?

**30
minutes
needed**



Handouts:

Jury Profile
Landmark Cases
Building a Jury

Needed:

Laptop
screen &
projector



Start by

giving out
Juror Profile
handout.
Ask audience:
What matters
to you?



**Allow 5
minutes**

to
write and
share
answers.



- If you had been charged with a crime, what qualities, characteristics or attributes would you want in the people selected to serve on your jury?
- What matters to you?
- Would you consider their age, socioeconomic status, gender, religion, education, criminal background, citizenship status, etc.?
- Or are you more concerned with their personality and/or qualities?

Allow time for participants to write their answers and have them share with a small group. Preferably participants will be seated at round tables (ideally with five at each table) so that you will have small groups already assembled. However if round tables are not available, have participants turn to people in the immediate vicinity and form groups of three to five to discuss briefly. Debrief by asking for some of their responses and discussing.

Presentation

Using the PowerPoint and participant feedback, define a jury and discuss the historical foundations of the jury system.

Cases affecting juries

Hand out “Landmark Cases Affecting Juries,” BRIEFLY highlighting the main emphasis of each. See handout and presenter notes.

Juror qualifications

Walk participants through what jury qualification looks like on the state level. Based on what participants have learned about the jury system and the role and significance of juries, participants will need to analyze the qualifications to serve as a juror and determine if they think the qualifications are sufficient to fulfill the intentions of the Founders when they advocated and included a jury system in the Constitution and Bill of Rights.

Distribute Build Your Jury Handout

Participants will then individually create criteria for jurors. In small groups of three to five, they should share their responses.

Small groups should decide on their five main criteria for jurors and assess if their qualifications are constitutional based on the six landmark court cases they evaluated. Discuss with participants.

**Begin
Power-Point,**
reviewing
history of
jury system

10 Minutes

Distribute
Landmark
Cases
handout
Review.

5 Minutes



**What does
it take?**

Distribute
Building a
Jury handout.
Ask audience
to analyze
qualities
jurors should
have – first
individually
then as
groups.
Write down
top criteria.

10 Minutes