

West Virginia Judicial Pyramid

Subjects

West Virginia
Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia
Judicial System

Grades

8-12

Brief Description

Students will watch DVD, *The Foundation of Justice: Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia*. Students will then use the knowledge of the judicial system they have learned to identify the four levels of courts in West Virginia correctly.

Objectives

Students will

- Be actively involved in watching a DVD;
- Recognize concepts of the court system from the DVD they watched;
- Be able to identify the four courts of West Virginia.

Keywords

West Virginia, judicial system, DVD

Materials Needed

- DVD: *The Foundation of Justice: Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia*
- West Virginia Judicial Pyramid Worksheet
- Pens and/or pencils

Lesson Plan

Have students watch the DVD *The Foundations of Justice: Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia*. After the DVD, have your students answer the West Virginia Judicial Pyramid worksheet.

Additional suggestions:

Instead of filling out the worksheet, use the worksheet as the basis for a game. Draw a four-tiered pyramid on the board or on a large poster. Divide the class into small groups, about three groups in total. Ask questions about the courts. The first students to raise their hands can guess the answer. If they are correct, they may fill in the pyramid level with the court; if they are incorrect, another team may guess. The group with the most levels filled wins. In case of a tie, questions pertaining to the video may be asked to break the tie.

Possible questions:

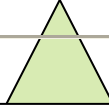
- How many justices serve on the West Virginia Supreme Court? Answer: 5
- What is the elected term length for a justice? Answer: 12 years
- Name one of the first three West Virginia justices. Possible answers: Ralph Berkshire, William Harrison, or James Henry Brown
- Where is the West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals located? Answer: Charleston, West Virginia , east wing of Capitol (any portion of answer may suffice)
- Who was the architect and designer of the West Virginia State Capitol? Answer: Cass Gilbert

Assessment

Students earn points from their worksheet which are added to students' grades; may also be used as a source of bonus points towards a test or overall grade. In case activity is used as a game, winning students may earn bonus points towards a test or participation points may be awarded to everyone.

Name: _____ Date: _____

The court system in West Virginia is like a pyramid. West Virginia has four distinct “levels” of courts. Read what is in each level of the pyramid and match the correct level of court with it.



The highest court in the state. If a criminal or civil case is lost in a lower court, it can be appealed here.

This type of court is West Virginia’s only general jurisdiction trial court of record; the courts have jurisdiction over criminal cases and over all civil cases totaling more than \$300. There are 70 judges in 31 circuits.

These courts hears disputes related to children and families. There are 45 judges in 26 circuits.

These courts are in charge of small claims. They hear misdemeanor cases, conduct preliminary examinations in felony cases, and hear civil arguments with \$5,000 or less in dispute. There are 158 magistrates, at least two in each county.