Criminal Justice teacher pack

Separate allegation, evidence, procedural decisions and a finding of guilt.

For learners around age 14 and curious adults. Three 40-minute sessions. Use with the current AHA Criminal Justice manuscript. References use chapter titles so they work in both print and ebook.

Learning goals

Separate allegation, evidence, procedural decisions and a finding of guilt.

Use the terms allegation; charge; evidence; burden; verdict; appeal. Show the reasoning behind an answer and identify where the example stops applying.

Reading route

1. A headline is not a verdict

2. A standard belongs to a decision

3. The grand jury does not decide guilt

Teaching plan

Session 1: Ask the opening question before reading (5 minutes). Read the first selected chapter together (15). Draw the mechanism or compare two possible explanations (15). End with a one-sentence explanation (5).

Session 2: Read the remaining selected material (10 minutes). Complete the worksheet individually, then compare reasoning in pairs (20). Discuss the common wrong turn (10).

Session 3: Revisit one uncertain answer (10 minutes). Try the extension (15). Give a two-minute explanation without the book (10). Use the exit question (5).

Materials and access

Paper, pencil, the book and an optional calculator. Read diagrams aloud, allow spoken or drawn responses, and give extra time for vocabulary. No real accounts or specialist equipment are needed.

Criminal Justice learner worksheet

Opening question

Does an arrest establish that someone committed the charged offense?

Investigation

In a fictional bicycle case, a camera shows someone near a rack, a witness reports a missing bike, and a person says they had permission to borrow it. Make columns for observations, inferences, disputed questions and decisions. Do not decide guilt from the short scenario.

1. What does the camera observation establish by itself?

Show your reasoning, label units or evidence, and state any assumptions.

2. What additional questions matter?

Show your reasoning, label units or evidence, and state any assumptions.

3. Why must the decision and its legal standard be named?

Show your reasoning, label units or evidence, and state any assumptions.

Transfer question

Write a neutral headline that reports an allegation without announcing guilt. Identify the source and procedural stage.

Exit question

What would you now check before accepting a claim about this topic? Name one specific check and explain why.

Criminal Justice answers and teaching notes

Answer 1

It places someone near the rack, subject to the recording's reliability and identification. It does not alone establish all elements of an offense.

Answer 2

Identity, ownership, permission, conduct, intent where required and the reliability of each item of evidence.

Answer 3

Different procedural decisions have different purposes and standards. A charging decision is not a trial verdict.

Common wrong turn

This book gives a general US orientation. Procedures vary by jurisdiction; no classroom scenario is legal advice.

Extension discussion

Write a neutral headline that reports an allegation without announcing guilt. Identify the source and procedural stage.

Assess the explanation

Give one point each for a correct conclusion, visible reasoning, correct units or evidence, and a relevant limitation. A correct number with no explanation is not a complete answer. Accept equivalent wording and well-supported alternative interpretations where the question allows them.

If the learner gets stuck

Return to the diagram or the smallest example. Ask what is being counted, compared or transferred. Let the learner revise the answer after explaining the mistake; do not reward speed over understanding.

Family connection

Discuss a fictional story rather than family cases or classmates. Allow learners to opt out of personal or distressing discussion.