

Civics: A Christian Worldview.
Justice or Injustice? The Jury's Responsibility (15-20 minutes)

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS/KEY

Prep

- **Objective:** Students learn that juries must evaluate not only facts, but also whether the trial itself or the law is being applied justly.
- Print this page and a copy of Page 2 for each student.

Instructions

1. Hand out Page 2 to students.
2. Read the instructions aloud with the students. (Get a volunteer if possible!)
3. Give students 12-15 minute to complete the scenarios. (Running short on time? Just do 4-5 scenarios!)
4. Discuss as a class. Take turns calling on different students!

Answer Key

1. NOT GUILTY (There was no criminal intent, so this is an unjust application.)
2. GUILTY (Taking someone else's property without permission—even temporarily—is still theft. This might get some debate because the student claimed he was going to return them.)
3. GUILTY (Keeping lost property without attempting to return it is theft.)
4. DEBATABLE (Students may debate—this reinforces a jury's role in justice vs. technical law. NOTE: Remind students that this is also a statutory law/common law discussion, AND that Christians are told to "Submit...to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake" (1 Peter 2:13).
5. NOT GUILTY (The trial's fairness was compromised.)
6. Students should ask: "What is the piece of evidence that the judge refused to allow the defense to present?"
ANSWER: Another student had used his logged-in computer while he stepped away. So if students voted GUILTY, it was an injustice to the accused. POINT: Jurors should err on the side of caution!

Wrap-Up Questions to Ask Students

- Why are juries important for protecting citizens?
- Why shouldn't jurors blindly trust judges or prosecutors?
- Why might confusing or unjust laws be dangerous?
- What could happen if juries always obeyed authority without question?
- **Have a student read the first verse at the bottom of the next page:** "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord" – Proverbs 17:15. (What does this mean?)
- **Ditto for the second verse:** "Open thy mouth for the dumb [unable to speak]...judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy" – Proverbs 31:8-9. (What does this verse mean?)

Civics: A Christian Worldview. Justice or Injustice? The Jury's Responsibility

You are a juror. Your job is not only to decide whether someone broke a law, but also whether justice is done. Remember: juries help restrain unjust governments. Read each scenario, and under each one, circle GUILTY or NOT GUILTY.

Scenario 1: Tax Law. A woman fills out her taxes honestly, and later is charged with violating a complicated tax law that she didn't know existed.

GUILTY/NOT GUILTY

Why did you vote this way? _____

Scenario 2: Calculator & Cash. A student takes a Civics book and \$20 from a teacher's desk, to study for a quiz and to buy lunch. (He plans to return both later.) The teacher notices the items are missing and reports the incident. The student admits taking them, but says, "I was going to give them back."

GUILTY/NOT GUILTY

Why did you vote this way? _____

Scenario 3: The Wallet. A student finds a wallet on the floor in the hallway. It contains \$40 and an ID. The student keeps the money but throws the wallet in the trash. Security cameras later identify the student.

GUILTY/NOT GUILTY

Why did you vote this way? _____

Scenario 4: Lemonade Blues

A teenager sells lemonade without a government permit and is charged with violating a business regulation.

GUILTY/NOT GUILTY

Why did you vote this way? _____

Scenario 5: Interrupting Judge

A judge repeatedly interrupts the defense, but allows the prosecutor to speak freely.

GUILTY/NOT GUILTY

Why did you vote this way? _____

Scenario 6: The Online Threat

A student is accused of sending a threat to another student from his account. The message clearly came from his username. (The judge refused to allow a piece of evidence that the defense wants to present.)

GUILTY/NOT GUILTY

Why did you vote this way? _____

- "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord" (**Proverbs 17:15**).
- "Open thy mouth for the dumb [unable to speak]...judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy" (**Proverbs 31:8-9**).