Jury Selection

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| **Class:** American Government |
| **Unit:** Judicial Branch |
| **Lesson Title or Topic/Essential Question:**What role do juries play in the judicial system? |
| **Estimated Classroom Time Required for the Lesson:** 90 minutes (1 Block Period) |
| **Content Standard Alignment:** 9-12 G 4.1.3 Explain the central principles of the United States governmental system including a written constitution, rule of law, popular sovereignty, limited government, separation of powers, checks and balances majority rule with minority, judicial review, and federalism. 9-12 G 4.3.3 Identify ways in which citizens can participate in the political process at the local, state, and national level. |
| **Lesson Objectives/Instructional Outcomes:***Students will be able to:** Understand the basic concept surrounding the role of a jury in a trial.
* Identify how juries are chosen.
* Understand the importance of an impartial jury.
* Articulate the purpose of a jury, how jury members are chosen and finally how jury questioners are created and the purpose for them.
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| **Lesson’s Relationship to Unit Structure:** The unit goal is to demonstrate:* how the court system is set-up
* the type of law decided in each type of court
* the idea that judges must be independent and impartial
* the reasons for and role of juries
* how juries are chosen
* why it is so important to fulfill jury duty.

Students will also try to create an impartial jury questionnaire, distribute the questionnaire, and analyze the content of the responses to select an impartial jury. |
| **Instructional Materials/Resources:**An example of a jury questionnaire will be provided to the students. In addition to the example provided, students will also have access to classroom materials and Chromebooks to conduct additional research. (Contact a local defense attorney, your local Bar Association, or District Court, for examples of jury questionnaires and for a copy of a jury summons.) |
| **Methods and Instructional Strategies** |
| **Concept Prerequisites:**Students will revisit terms like rule of law, due process, and impartiality. If needed, review students’ understanding of how a case moves through the court.  |
| **Anticipated Student Misconceptions:** Students may not understand the importance of serving on a jury, or what their responsibilities might be. Students may not understand how citizens are selected for jury duty. |
| **Introduction/Anticipatory Set:*** As students enter the classroom they will be given a jury selection notification.
* Pose questions about how it feels when someone else makes decisions for them or about them.
* Discuss ways they might come to the truth of a situation.
* Do you think you could be an impartial juror?
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| **Instructional Activities:*** Each student will be given an example questionnaire to review and discuss the questions and what the purpose of each question might be.
* Students will then receive a copy of the high school dress code. They will be informed they are attorneys who are going to trial, half representing the school the other half the student on trial.
* Students will then be placed in small groups of three. Each group will be responsible for creating a jury questionnaire for this trial.
* The goal for each group will be to write questions that could reveal biases. Additionally, each group will try to find other students at their high school who could be impartial jurors.
* Each group will present their questions to the entire class for review and discussion. The entire class will then select the 10 questions they feel will work best for this case.
* If possible, the final questionnaire will be given to another class - prearranged with another teacher. Once completed, the class will review the results and select six people for their jury.
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| **Differentiation According to Student Needs:**An abbreviated version of the questionnaire may be given to some students. They may also be asked to create fewer questions for their questionnaire. |
| **Wrap Up- Synthesis/Closure:**Students will write journal entries about the experience, focusing on difficulties, things which were easy, and their overall feeling about the experience. |
| **Assessment (Formative and Summative):**  Our study of juries will be included in the unit test over the judicial branch. Journal entries will also be graded for basic understanding of the concepts examined in class (e.g., How can we best ensure that juries are impartial?). |
| **Extension and Evaluation of the Lesson** |
| Upon completion of this activity, students will participate in a Mock Trial. Each student will play a role in a case presented to an actual judge. |