

TEACHING NOTES

Book title: What's the State Judicial Branch?

Series: First Guide to Government

What is the role of the state judicial branch? Which cases are heard in the state Supreme Court? How can you become a judge? Read What's the State Judicial Branch? to learn all about state court systems. Discover who works in a court, the different levels of courts, and the process for bringing a case to court. Explore the structure, function, and responsibilities of the state court system.



Text Structure: Cause and Effect



Explain to students that the author uses cause-and-effect text structure to organize some of the information in this book. Tell students that a cause is the reason why something happens and an effect is what happens. Direct students' attention to page 16 and have them read aloud the text. Pause to discuss what law and punishment mean. Point out that the author uses cause and effect to explain what happens if a law is broken. The cause is a law has been broken. The effect is that the person or group of people responsible for breaking a law receives a punishment. Model how to record this cause-and-effect relationship on a graphic organizer like the one on the reproducible. As students read the book, have them use the reproducible graphic organizer to record other cause-and-effect relationships. To find these relationships, students may need to look first at an effect and then find its cause.



Text Feature: Charts

Have students read page 13. Explain that charts give readers a visual understanding of the content on the page or provide extra information that may not be in the text. Then ask them to study the flow chart. Explain that this type of chart is called a flow chart because of its arrows—it is a chart that has three parts connected with arrows. This chart also includes a caption which can help students determine what the chart means. Ask students to interpret the chart by answering these questions:

What information does the chart give? (*the three courts within a state court system*)

Which court is the first level court? (*trial court*)

Which court is the highest level court? (*State Supreme Court*)

Then have student turn to other charts and determine what they are illustrating.

Examples include the table on page 5, the table on page 25, and the pyramid charts on page 26.

**Comprehension Strategy:** Paraphrasing

Explain that paraphrasing is putting the information you read into your own words. Paraphrasing helps readers make sure they understand what they just read. Ask students to turn to page 19 and read the paragraph under the heading *State Court of Appeals*. Then, have students tell a partner what they just learned. Remind students to use their own words to explain what they have learned and not the words from the text. If students cannot use their own words to say what they read, have them reread the paragraph and try again.

**Word Study:** Capitalization

Have students turn to pages 24 and 25. Ask: Which words on these pages are capitalized? (*In, Supreme Court, Judges, If, Some, The, It*). Students will probably know that the words at the beginning of sentences (*If, In, It, The, and Some*) should be capitalized. Ask students if they know why *Supreme Court* requires capitalization when it isn't at the beginning of a sentence, but why *judge* isn't capitalized when it's not at the beginning of a sentence. Elicit from students that proper names of people, places, and things need to be capitalized. Since *Supreme Court* is a proper name for a federal level court, it needs capitalization. Have students find the other proper names in the book (*Appellate Court and Court of Appeals, p.20*) and explain why these need to be capitalized, too. Curious students may wonder why headings are capitalized. In these cases, explain to students that titles of books and sections are often capitalized to show that they are important, even if the words in the headings don't usually need capitalization.

**Writing and Responding:** Story

Have students choose a photograph from the book, imagine what is going on in the photo, and write a short story about what is happening. For example, the student could choose a photo of a court room scene and write a story about it. Maybe the judge is a hero and helps a family out. Maybe the jury can't decide if the plaintiff is guilty or innocent. Have some students share their stories with the class.

 Indicates a graphic organizer is linked to this activity.

NAME _____

