

LESSON 5

Grade Level & Subject: High School Social Studies (History or Government)

Unit: Discovering the Rich History of the Michigan Supreme Court

Lesson: Procedures of the Court

State Standards and Benchmarks:

Social Studies. Strand III. Civic Perspective. Standard III.1 Purposes of Government. All students will identify purposes of national, state, and local governments in the United States, describe how citizens organize government to accomplish their purposes and assess their effectiveness. Standard III.3 Democracy in Action. All students will describe the political and legal processes created to make decisions, seek consensus, and resolve conflicts in a free society. Standard III.4 American Government and Politics. All students will explain how American governmental institutions at the local, state, and federal levels provide for the limitation and sharing of power and how the nation's political system provides for the exercise of power. Strand VI. Public Discourse. Standard VI.3 Persuasive Writing. All students will compose coherent written essays that express a position on a public issue and justify the position with reasoned arguments.

Unit Outcome:

When this unit is finished, students will be able to: (1) conduct historical research/investigation using both primary and secondary sources, (2) describe the importance of the Michigan Supreme Court, (3) present, verbally and in written form, informed opinions about Court decisions and procedures, and (4) recognize how the Michigan Supreme Court affects their lives.

Lesson Outcomes:

Students will be able to

- Summarize the role of the Michigan Supreme Court
- Diagram the procedure for bringing a case before the Michigan Supreme Court
- Recall the order of business for oral arguments before the Michigan Supreme Court

Rationale/Purpose for Lesson:

Students will take time learning how the Michigan Supreme Court operates. Up to this point, students have learned about the history of the Court. Today, they will learn the processes, procedures, and practices of the Court.

Resources/Materials required:

- Copies: MGTV "Order of Business" Handout
- Copies: How_A_Case_Is_Decided.doc
- Overhead of "How a case is decided"

- Video tape of a Michigan Supreme Court session (go to www.mgtv.org, OR contact MGTV at (517) 373-4250 or mgtv@mgtv.org)
- Guest Speaker (See suggestions @ [guest_speaker.doc](#))
- Visiting the Court: School groups visiting the court are provided with a tour of the Learning Center and a questions and answer session. To schedule a visit for your school group, contact the Michigan Judicial Institute at 517/373-7229.
- References: [Court_Rules.doc](#); Winters, Donald F. "Hear Ye, Hear Ye, Hear Ye, The Supreme Court of Michigan is Now in Session" Michigan State Bar Journal. March 1969. Pages 27-30. (This article was written by the Clerk of the Supreme Court and tells how to argue and hopefully win a case in the Michigan Supreme Court) [Found @ WintersArticle folder, "Hear Ye" picture files]; [Choosing_Cases.doc](#) (Any of these can be copied for students to review if the teacher so wishes)

Introduction:

Ask students if they can explain to you, as if you were an outsider visiting the classroom, exactly how a discussion works. Tell them you want to know the "written" as well as "unwritten" rules. Tell them to explain how people know when to speak and when not to. Tell them to indicate if there are any authorities in the classroom and if there are any students who are particularly skilled and experienced in the art of classroom discussion. After a few minutes of this, ask them if they know why you spent time on such seemingly trivial issues. Then indicate that they will be learning about the rules of the Michigan Supreme Court today.

Procedures:

1. Depending on the circumstances, the teacher may choose to visit the Court instead of bringing a guest speaker into the school. In this case, the lesson would consist of the introduction piece, the visit to the Court, and then some sort of quiz or writing assignment based on the tour (Make use of "bus travel time;" the students are still "in school".)
2. If there is to be a guest speaker, that person should arrive at the beginning of class. The speaker should be prepared to present their own version of the role, procedures, and processes of the Court or to present the teacher's material using their own personal touch and experience to enhance the lesson for students.
3. The speaker should make use of the video to explain exactly what goes on during a Michigan Supreme Court session by showing students what transpires.
4. Encourage students to ask questions of the guest speaker.

Closure:

Explain to students that the Court has its rules for good reason. Order must be maintained during session so that all those things that need to happen can happen. Further, consistency is important if all cases are to receive the same degree of attention

and consideration. Regarding the processes involved with bringing a case to the Michigan Supreme Court, it is important that the Court only hear the cases that are best suited for its unique venue.

Guided study/Homework

Write a one to two-page essay about the rules of the Court. Make an argument for the maintenance or for the change of one of the rules. If there is a question you have about a particular rule, use this paper to investigate that problem and to present your question.

Assessment:

1. If there is a field-trip, student participation will be credited
2. If there is a field trip, students will be given credit for their quiz scores/writing assignment
3. Students will be graded for their writing of the essay about the rules of the Court

Evaluation and Reflection: (To be completed by teacher after lesson has been implemented)

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1. Today we will visit and tour the Michigan Supreme Court in Lansing.

OR

2. Today we will have a guest speaker discuss with us the rules of the Michigan Supreme Court and explain how it operates.
3. **Homework:** Write a one to two-page essay about the rules of the Court. Make an argument for the maintenance or for the change of one of the rules. If there is a question you have about a particular rule, use this paper to investigate that problem and to present your questioning.

If you missed class, you should also:

1. Get a copy of any lecture notes
2. Get a copy of the handouts
3. Get notes about the guest speaker or meet with the teacher to find out what your assignment will be for having missed the tour of the Michigan Supreme Court