# Juvenile Delinquency

**Teaching Guide**

**Students will:**

* Understand the purpose of the juvenile delinquency system
* Become familiar with the juvenile delinquency procedure
* Understand the reasoning that underlies judges’ decisions

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Lesson Grid** | **Individual** | **Small Group** | **Large Group** |
| **Lesson 1: Introduction to Juvenile Delinquency** |  |  |  |
| * The Law |  |  |  |
| * Activity: What do you think? | X |  |  |
| * Activity: Juvenile Justice Poll | X | X | X |
| **Lesson 2: Juvenile Delinquency Process** | | | |
| * The Law |  |  |  |
| * Questions | X | X |  |
| * Activity: Ordering | X | X |  |
| **Lesson 3: Extended Jurisdiction Juvenile** | | | |
| * The Law |  |  |  |
| * Questions | X | X |  |
| * Activity: You Decide | X | X |  |
| **Lesson 4: Juvenile Certification** | | | |
| * The Law |  |  |  |
| * Questions | X | X |  |
| * Activity: You Decide | X | X |  |
| * Activity: Case Study | X | X |  |
| * Activity: You Decide | X | X |  |
| **Lesson 5: Juvenile Sentencing** |  |  |  |
| * The Law |  |  |  |
| * Activity: You Decide | X | X |  |
| * Activity: Youth Forum |  | X | X |

**Teaching Tips**

**Outside Resource Persons**

These lessons would be enhanced by the participation of juvenile lawyers and judges. In particular, the “Juvenile Sentencing” lesson will be more meaningful if the students can explore the reasons why a judge selects a particular sentence because this is an area that seems to depend a great deal on the individual desires and opinions of the judges.

**Lesson 1: Introduction to Juvenile Delinquency**

This lesson asks the students to think about the history and purpose of the juvenile system and to decide how they feel about specific issues currently facing the juvenile justice system. The “Juvenile Justice Poll” can be used with groups outside of the class and the answers can be tabulated and the results shared.

**Lesson 2: Juvenile Delinquency Process**

The Steps in a Juvenile Delinquency case are described. This lesson enhances the lesson on the Juvenile Court in The Legal System unit. The questions and the “Ordering” activity help the students learn the procedure. The steps in the procedure can also be used in a “Human Continuum” activity.

**Lesson 3: Extended Jurisdiction Juvenile**

This lesson describes a relatively new process that has the juvenile in both the juvenile system and adult system. It has been described as “a foot in each system.” This system is experiencing success and will be evaluated in the next few years. How a juvenile becomes EJJ, what the court looks as in making its decision, and what happens if the juvenile does not complete the juvenile sentence are the topics of the lesson. The Questions guide the student through the information and the “You Decide” activities ask the students to apply what they have learned.

**Lesson 4: Juvenile Certification**

Certification is described, including presumptive and non-presumptive certification. The activity “You Decide” asks students to decide whether cases would be presumptive or non-presumptive and to identify the factors that would be considered in the certification process. The “Case Study” asks them to determine whether a juvenile should be certified and to explain the reasons for the decision. In the final “You Decide” activity the students analyze four cases and decide if the juvenile stays in juvenile court, becomes an EJJ, or is certified to adult court. The students are asked to provide their reasons. This activity requires that the other lessons in the unit be completed first.

**Lesson 5: Juvenile Sentencing**

The disposition of a case (sentencing) is the focus of this lesson, including a description of the process and the options open to the court. In the “You Decide” activity, students serve as the judge and determine what the sentence will be in a hypothetical case. They are asked to provide the reasons for their decision.

The final activity has students participating in a “Youth Forum” to consider the effectiveness of the juvenile justice system. Suggested guiding questions are included. This forum would provide an excellent opportunity to invite local juvenile justice stakeholders including prosecution and defense lawyers, judges, corrections employees, treatment professionals, victims, families, law enforcement, etc. The questions provided are adaptations of questions used by the Minnesota Supreme Court Juvenile Justice Services Task Force, during early 2000. Focus group sessions were held with all stakeholders, including youth in corrections. For more information, contact the Minnesota Supreme Court.

**Vocabulary**

**Arraignment**: A hearing during which the juvenile admits or denies the allegations in the delinquency petition.

**Certification**: Proceeding in juvenile court in which the court determines if a juvenile will stand trial as an adult. If the court decides that the juvenile should be tried in adult court, the juvenile is “certified” to adult court.

**Culpability**: Refers to how responsible someone is for the crime, level of participation in planning and carrying out the offense.

**Delinquency Petition**: A request filed with the Juvenile Court to begin a process of adjudicating a juvenile as a delinquent.

**Detention Hearing**: A hearing during which the court determines if the rules have been followed and whether the juvenile will remain in custody until the next court appearance or be released.

**Disposition**: The final outcome in a case, it is the same thing as a sentence in adult court.

**Extended Jurisdiction Juvenile** (EJJ): Process in the juvenile system that sentences a juvenile to both a juvenile and an adult sentence.

**Jurisdiction**: Control by the court over something or some area, in this case it is the control over the juvenile in the juvenile court.

**Non-presumptive Certification**: Situations in which the court must consider a variety of facts before determining that the juvenile should be tried as an adult.

**Presumptive Certification**: Situations in which it is assumed that the juvenile will be certified because of the juvenile’s age and the severity of the offense.

**Predispositional Report**: A report of an investigation of personal and family history and environment of the juvenile.