



# Constitution Day 2016 Lesson Plan

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The following is provided as a resource to use in classroom presentations with the National Center for State Courts' graphic novel of *Justice Case Files 6: The Case of No Pets Allowed*.

## Introduction 5 minutes

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Speaker gives introduction and provides educational and professional background and role in local community.

## Explain Court Process 5 minutes

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Explain differences between civil and criminal cases and identify participants in court proceedings.  
Explain special courts including landlord/ tenant and small claims courts.

## Graphic Novel 10 minutes

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Allow students to read graphic novel silently to themselves. After 10 minutes ask a volunteer who has finished to summarize and fill in any necessary factual blanks.

## Apply 5 minutes

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Ask generally about contracts and rules. Who reads *every detail* of a contract or list of rules?  
Make it relevant for appropriate age group. Read *all* of an insurance policy? When you hit agree on a computer agreement did you *read completely*?

## Discuss barriers and choices 5 minutes

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Have students identify the barriers to the family in the graphic novel (*language, no lawyer, lack of knowledge of laws*).  
Have them estimate rent costs with costs of an attorney. Have students identify the choices that faced the family and discuss what choice they would make.

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**Questions?** Contact Sarah Kidwell at [sarah.kidwell@courts.in.gov](mailto:sarah.kidwell@courts.in.gov)

Additional information available online: [courts.in.gov/citc/3735.htm](http://courts.in.gov/citc/3735.htm)



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## Age Appropriate Discussion *10 minutes*

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### Elementary

Focus on Alejandro's difficult decision to offer to take Queenie to the animal shelter. Talk about difficult decisions that people could have to make, which could segue into a discussion of difficult decisions courts have to make. *(10 minutes)*

### Middle School

Focus on the unfairness element of the story and how it is compounded by the language barrier. Talking about court-provided interpreters could be a way to focus on fairness and the integrity of the system. See what suggestions the students have for improving the system. *(10 minutes)*

### High School

Think of modern examples of unfairness. School? Sports? What about when failing to follow the rules has been permitted then it is not (having a pet)? *(10 minutes)*

## Discussion for all *5 minutes*

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Briefly discuss ways to get legal help using pro bono resources or other community resources.

## Closing *5 minutes*

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Allow general questions about law in general and current events. Compare gentrification to the state of race relations and police relations in our country.

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