

Legal Comm II

Ambrosi

Holt

Willard

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Learning Target: Students will explore the roles of jury trials in criminal procedures.

Let's Get Started: Read the following prompt. Do you agree or disagree? Create a brainstorm pro-con list to start your thinking!

Does the jury selection process get an accurate representation of the population?

Costs & Trends

Yesterday we examined the history of jury trials. We also looked at how juries work.

Today we will explore the financial aspect, or costs, associated with jury trials. We will also examine the concept of plea deals and current trend of not using jury trials.

Costs of Jury Trials

While you watch this video, please record answers to the following questions:

- Why does Mr. Rein say that the system would break down if we relied only on jury trials?
- What are common complaints from people asked to serve on a jury?
- How do jury trials impose costs on the court system?
- Explain how attorneys try to influence the jury selection process.

Here is the link to the video: <https://www.c-span.org/video/?c4738474/costs-jury-trials&cliptool>

Plea Deals and the Decrease in Jury Trials

Next, as we watch this video, please record answers to the following questions:

- Why are fewer people accused of crimes exercising their right to a jury trial?
- Describe the plea bargain process.
- How is the power in favor of the prosecutor in criminal cases? What problems does this cause?
- According to Mr. Kramer, how does this criminal process disproportionately affect certain groups?

Here is the link to the video:

<https://www.c-span.org/video/standalone/?c4754196&noMax&nobookmark#>

Writing Activity

Using the information from the previous video clips, respond to the following prompt. Support your stance with examples and evidence from the video clips.

- *Should federal and state governments pass legislation to encourage more criminal jury trials?*

Additional Activities

1. Find someone who has been selected for jury duty. Interview them and ask questions to learn about their experiences as a juror. Possible questions could include: *What was the process like? Were they selected for a trial? How long was the process? What did they learn from this experience?*
2. Find and research a court case that is in the news. Choose either the prosecution or defense and be a jury expert for that side. Write a summary of characteristics of potential jurors who your side would like on the jury and a list of characteristics of potential juror who your side would not like on the jury. Develop a series of questions that you might ask to find this information out.

Additional Resources

11 Must-Dos from a Voir Dire Master

<https://www.americanbar.org/news/abanews/publications/youraba/2019/march-2019/11-tips-for-effectively-conducting-voir-dire/>

Standard Voir Dire Questions

https://www.ilnd.uscourts.gov/_assets/_documents/_forms/_judges/SCHENKIER/Standard%20Voir%20Dire%20Questions.pdf