



HS Intro to Public Services

Wednesday, April 22, 2020



HS Intro to Public Services

Lesson for Wednesday, April 22: Pre-Law Pathway - Roles in the Court System - Prosecutors

Learning Target:

Students will identify the role of prosecutors in the criminal justice system, the different variables that can go into charging someone with a crime and how their role is a political position.



Definitions

- **Prosecutor**: The attorney who investigates or prosecutes criminal cases, or who provides legal advice regarding a criminal matter to government lawyers, agents, or offices participating in the investigation or prosecution of criminal cases. (*Source: American Bar Association*)
 - **District Attorney**: Top prosecutor for a government body (*city, county, etc.*)
- **Defense attorney** (counsel): Any attorney (private or public defender) who acts on behalf of a client being investigated or prosecuted for alleged criminal conduct, or a client seeking legal advice regarding a potential, ongoing or past criminal matter or subpoena. (*Source: American Bar Association*)



Opening Exercise

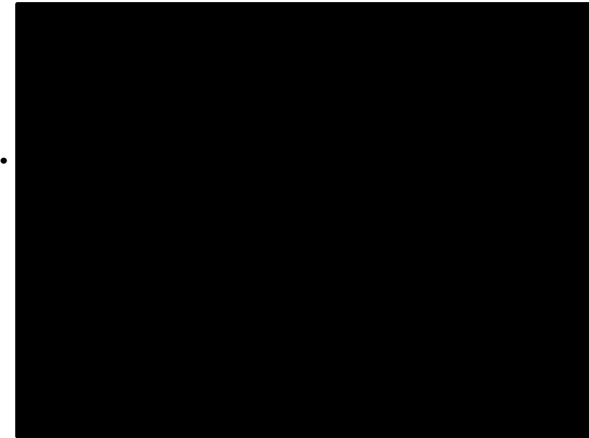
- Read [this](#) Q&A with the Connecticut Chief State's Attorney.

Then, reflect on this question:

- *He mentions that the COVID-19 pandemic “should be first and foremost” in a prosecutor’s mind when setting a defendant’s bond amount. Given the circumstances we’re living in right now, do you feel like this is the correct approach? Why/why not?*

Activity #1

- Watch the video included on this slide with Myles Perry, assistant prosecutor for Platte County, MO, talking about the difference between a prosecutor and a defense attorney. following questions on a Google Doc or your own paper:
 - 1) What does he say a prosecutor is trying to do in a case that neither the defense attorney nor the judge is trying to do?
 - 2) He talks about how a prosecutor has to weigh the potential impact of an allegation against a suspect *and* a victim. How do you feel like you would handle that responsibility?
 - 3) What's the burden a prosecutor has to prove in a criminal case?
 - 4) After listening to the interview, put yourself in the shoes of a prosecutor. Describe how it might feel to try to explain to a victim why a jury didn't convict a suspect(s).
 - 5) If you were going to become a lawyer, do you feel like you'd like to be in a courtroom? Why/why not?





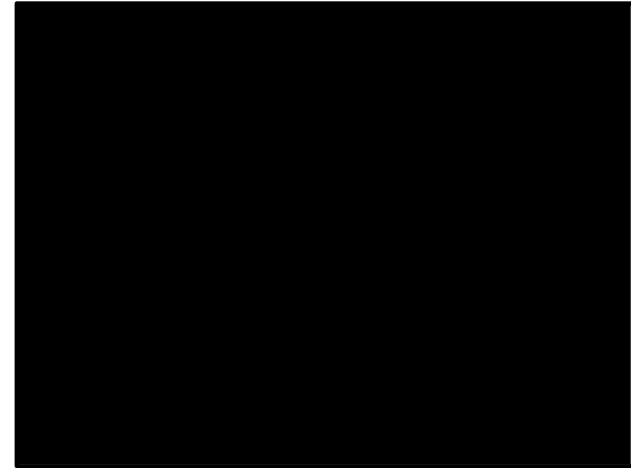
Activity #1 - ANSWERS

- Watch the video with Myles Perry, assistant prosecutor for Platte County, MO, talking about the difference between a prosecutor and a defense attorney. Then, answer the following questions on a Google Doc or your own paper:
 - 1) What does he say a prosecutor is trying to do in a case that neither the defense attorney nor the judge is trying to do? *Get a just result*
 - 2) He talks about how a prosecutor has to weigh the potential impact of an allegation against a suspect **and** a victim. How do you feel like **you** would handle that responsibility? *Answers will vary, but should be well thought out*
 - 3) What's the burden a prosecutor has to prove in a criminal case? *That the suspect(s) committed the crime beyond a reasonable doubt.*
 - 4) After listening to the interview, put yourself in the shoes of a prosecutor. Describe how it might feel to try to explain to a victim why a jury didn't convict a suspect(s). *Answers will vary, but should be well thought out*
 - 5) If you were going to become a lawyer, do you feel like you'd like to be in a courtroom? Why/why not? *Answers will vary, but should be well thought out*



Activity #2

- Watch the video included on this slide with Jacob Shellabarger, prosecutor for Audrain County, MO talking some about his perspective on his job. Then, answer the following questions on a Google Doc or your own paper:
 - 1) What kind of conversations does he say he has with juries?
 - 2) He says being a prosecutor is a lifestyle not a job. Do you feel like you would be able to give that kind of a commitment to a job? Why/why not?
 - 3) He talks about meeting people on what might be the worst day of your life, and trying to get them to re-tell it, but not re-live it. Do you think that would be possible to do? How would you approach that situation?





Activity #2 - ANSWERS

- Watch the video with Jacob Shellabarger, prosecutor for Audrain County, MO talking some about his perspective on his job. Then, answer the following questions on a Google Doc or your own paper:
 - 1) What kind of conversations does he say he has with juries? *That if he proves the facts of the case that led to the result, then they must find the party guilty. (If he proves A, B & C, then they must find that D has happened.)*
 - 2) He says being a prosecutor is a lifestyle not a job. Do you feel like you would be able to give that kind of a commitment to a job? Why/why not? *Answers will vary, but should be well thought-out.*
 - 3) He talks about meeting people on what might be the worst day of your life, and trying to get them to re-tell it, but not re-live it. Do you think that would be possible to do? How would you approach that situation? *Answers will vary, but should be well thought-out.*

Activity #3

- In county government in Missouri, the role of prosecutor/district attorney is an elected position. Listen to both Mr. Shellabarger and Mr. Perry talk about navigating the dynamic of serving in an elected office while also trying to serve justice. Then, answer the following questions on a Google Doc or your own paper.
 - 1) How do both Shellabarger and Perry said they try to deal with defendants that takes the politics out of the proceedings?
 - 2) Do you feel the office of prosecutor should be a partisan position? Why/why not?





Activity #3 - ANSWERS

- In county government in Missouri, the role of prosecutor/district attorney is an elected position. Listen to both Mr. Shellabarger and Mr. Perry talk about navigating the dynamic of serving in an elected office while also trying to serve justice. Then, answer the following questions on a Google Doc or your own paper.
 - 1) How do both Shellabarger and Perry said they try to deal with defendants that takes the politics out of the proceedings? *They try to deal with all defendants fairly.*
 - 2) Do you feel the office of prosecutor should be a partisan position? Why/why not? *Answers will vary, but should be well thought-out.*



Additional Resources/Perspectives

- [Missouri Association of Prosecuting Attorneys](#)
 - [MAPA COVID-19](#)