

JURY TRIALS

The sixth amendment of the constitution guarantees an accused the right to a jury trial in all criminal prosecutions. Jury trials are trials of an issue of fact before a jury. The parties present their evidence to the jury, the Judge then instruct the jury how the law applies to their findings of fact. The Jury weighs the evidence and testimony to determine the question of fact. The jury then deliberates and presents its verdict. In civil cases, the jury consists of 6-12 jurors. In all federal criminal trials the jury consists of 12 members. In these cases, proof beyond a reasonable doubt must be established by the unanimous vote of all 12 jurors.

To be a juror:

- One must be a United States citizen
- At least eighteen years old
- Reside in the district for at least one year
- Adequate proficiency in English
- No disqualifying mental or physical conditions
- Not currently subject to felony charges
- Never convicted of a felony

Qualifications for Being a Juror

Read through the following descriptions and determine whether the people described should be able to serve on a jury. Write "Y" for yes and "N" for no. Be sure to include a brief explanation after each one. After you have recorded your initial impressions, your teacher will review them and together the class will draft a list of qualifications based on the discussion of the descriptions.

_____ 1.

Knut received a notice to serve on a jury in Washington, D.C. He is a resident of Washington, D.C., and is a German citizen.

Explain:

_____ 2.

Elia received a notice to serve on a jury in her town. She is 17 and a student at the local high school.

Explain:

_____ 3.

Juan received a notice to serve on a jury in his area. He speaks only Spanish.

Explain:

4.

Jackie received a notice to serve on a jury in her city. She has been living in the judicial district for two years. She is a waitress in a local diner and has never been convicted of a felony.

Explain:

_____ 5.

Roger received a notice to serve on a jury. He is currently in a hospital receiving treatment for schizophrenia.

Explain:

_____ 6.

Elizabeth received a notice to serve on a jury. She is a lawyer in town and knows the defendant in the trial.

EL/Civics Lesson Plan

Explain:

Based on your class discussion of the descriptions above, draft a list of qualifications for being a juror: