



Making Decisions by Group: The Jury System

From Unit Plan: Justice by the People
The Jury System

Subject: **Reading and Language Arts**
Grade: **5-8**
Duration: **40 Mins**
Audience: **Teachers**

Objectives:

Students will learn how to work cooperatively within a group and communicate their ideas clearly in order to reach an agreement. They will summarize their experience in writing.

Materials:

Deciding by Group: You Are the Jury (PDF) Student Reproducible-1; pen or pencil

Reproducibles:

- Deciding by Group: You Are the Jury (PDF)

Directions:

1. Explain that students will hand down a verdict of guilt or innocence based on the evidence presented. Students will first review the handout and decide on a verdict by themselves.
2. Distribute copies of Deciding by Group: You Are the Jury (PDF) Student Reproducible 1. Have students read Part 1, then answer the questions in Part 2 without discussing the case with anyone else.
3. When each student has completed Parts 1 and 2, divide the class into groups of 12. Have each group work together to come up with a unanimous verdict based on the evidence offered and through discussion among the group members. After each group has come to a unanimous decision, have students complete Part 3 of the reproducible.
4. On a separate sheet of paper, have students write a paragraph comparing and contrasting the experience of working individually and in a group. As they write, have them answer the following questions:
 - What challenges did you face while working individually? In a group?
 - What were the advantages and disadvantages of working individually? In a group?

Lesson Extension:

Have volunteers share their reactions to the activity. Ask students whether working individually or in groups better helped them to reach a decision. Finally, ask students, if they were on trial, whether they would prefer being judged by a single person or a group of people.