

Do You Have Questions About the Law? LawForKids.org Speak Up!

Abstract:

The Law is an important but complicated part of our lives. Professional Lawyers attend school and study for years before they can be certified to practice in specific areas of the law. Even highly trained lawyers with years of experience must convince judges and even members of a jury that their understanding of the law is correct. While it is nearly impossible for anyone to know every part of every law, we are nevertheless held accountable for our actions if we break any part of the law. And, the excuse "But I didn't know I was breaking the law" doesn't hold up in court.

What if kids can't find information about the law?

If you can't find an answer to your questions about the law, just Speak Up! The Speak Up! section of LawForKids.org allows anyone to anonymously ask any question about the law. Once a question is submitted, it is answered by a qualified attorney and posted to LawForKids.org.

Objectives:

As a result of this lesson, students will:

1. Successfully navigate the internet to find LawForKids.org
2. Identify important Arizona youth laws
3. Develop questions about the law
4. Learn the answer to their questions about the law
5. Understand that "Ignorance of the law excuses no one"

Audience:

The basic approach of this lesson using the Web Site LawForKids.org, can be used at any level from Elementary to high school. However, content on LawForKids.org is focused for kids ages 11-18.

Time required:

- *Preparation* - 30 minutes to 1 hour for teacher to familiarize them self with LawForKids.org, particularly the Speak Up! section, and reserve time in computer lab
- *Class time* - Two Class Periods at least one week apart

Materials Needed:

1. Computer with a connection to the Internet and Internet Browser software enabled to view the website <http://www.LawForKids.org>. Optimally, each student should have a computer to work on, but in cases where there are not enough computers for each student, students can work two or three to a computer.
2. Sheet of notebook paper for notes and an index card for each student.

Procedure:

First Class Period

1. Prior to this lesson, a teacher should familiarize them self with LawForKids.org and the legal terms used on the site and featured in the LawForKids.org glossary
2. Provide background into the U.S. legal system and the basis for law and order in society. Students should be familiar with legal terms, which are listed in the Youth Laws Glossary section of LawForKids.org.
3. Take students into computer lab, and instruct them to open the website <http://www.lawforkids.org>
4. At the beginning of the lesson, give a brief overview of the Youth Laws, Stories and Speak Up! section of LawForKids.org.
5. Explain that students will need to identify at least 1 law that they did not know about before visiting LawForKids.org, and be prepared to talk about it with the group. Allow students to browse LawForKids.org for 10 to 15 minutes.
6. After students have identified a new law that they have learned, have them share it with the class. Share for 10-15 minutes.
7. Review the criteria for posing a question on the Speak Up section of LawForKids.org.
8. Now, challenge students to come up with a question about the law. Give them a couple of minutes to come up with a question about the law. Make the students write the question on an index card, along with their name and class period.
9. After students have considered questions about the law, discuss with the group what these questions are. Ask the students what they think the answers will be. Have them write what they think the answer to their question will be.
10. Have students pose their question on the "Ask a ?" page of the LawFiorKids.org Speak Up! section. Have the students turn in their index cards until next class.

Second Class Period (at least a week later)

1. Hand out the index cards to the students and have them review their question and what they thought the answer would be.
2. Instruct students to find the answer to their question on the "Status" page of the Speak Up Section of LawForKids.org. Allow 10-15 minutes for students to look up their answer. Have them write the answer from the LawForKids.org Speak Up! section on the back of the index card.
3. After students have located their answer (some questions might not be answered because they did not meet the criteria for Speak Up Questions on the site) discuss with the group if they were surprised with the answer, and if they think the answer is fair.

Closure:

Students are likely to have more questions about the law after this exercise. Encourage them to learn as much as they possibly can about the law because "ignorance of the law is no excuse" Stress the fact that everyone is held accountable for their actions and there are consequences mandated by the law.