

# *Student Voice, Volunteering, and Voting*

*Preparing K to 8 students to be informed and engaged*

# AGENDA

*Step1: Introduction*

*Step2: Minute Mystery*

*Step3: Overview of S.T.A.R. (Students Thinking and Acting Responsibly) Cards*

*Step4: Read-alouds and Lessons*

*Step5: The Literature-based Mock Trial*

*Step6: Q & A*

*Step 7: Parting Thoughts: What Do You Do With An Idea?*

# *The Minute Mystery*

Defined: A riddle or short scenario where students ask “yes” or “no” questions to try to solve what happened at end of the riddle/scenario. Students ask up to 10 “yes” or “no” questions.

Engages students

Gives practice in learning how to ask a “yes” or “no” question

Builds logic skills

**Let's try a sample Minute Mystery...**

# S.T.A.R. Cards: Students Thinking and Acting Responsibly

- Four different kinds of cards:
  - Red cards **build basic civic knowledge**
  - Yellow cards **promote civic engagement**
  - Blue cards **provide practice in democratic deliberation** and...
  - Blank cards **provide a space for students to identify unique needs of school or community for student engagement and/or deliberation**

**\*Samples of each category**

# *Read-alouds and Lessons*

Read-alouds can be used in all K to 12 classrooms to make complex concepts more accessible. For example, a teacher might want the students to know and understand the concept of the ***electoral college***. *The teacher* could choose to read \****Grace for President*** by Kelly DiPucchio. After students listen to the story, the teacher could ask one, some, or all of the questions from the lesson that goes with the read-aloud.

(All read-alouds that we suggest are available as read-alouds on YOUTUBE.)

## *Preparing for the Read-aloud...*

Read-aloud lessons begin with a S.T.A.R. Card that ties to the story, focuses the students on the theme, and gives some or all students an opportunity to share their point of view. The story you are about to hear highlights the theme of point of view. In this story, a boy is about to step on an ant when the little ant begins to talk and asks the boy not to step on him. The boy's friends encourage him to step on the ant. The book ends with a question that has the student audience thinking about what they would do and why. The story lends itself to an important discussion on the value of making up one's own mind.

### **S.T.A.R. Card:**

***Imagine* that a group of your *friends* have decided that the new student in your class should not be allowed to play with any of you. You do not agree with your classmates, but you do not want your friends to turn on you because you disagree with them. What would you do if you were in this situation? Be prepared to share.**

# Listen to *Hey Little Ant*

*by Phillip and Hannah Hoose*

## **Now think about and discuss the following questions:**

A. What do you already know about ants? Consider the fun facts about ants below:

- There are more than 12,000 species of ants from around the world
- Some queen ants can live for many years and have millions of babies
- Ants hear by feeling vibrations in the ground
- Ants help the environment
- Ants live in colonies
- There are many kinds of ants in a colony
- The ants in a colony have jobs that include:
  - ✓ Taking care of the eggs and the babies
  - ✓ Gathering food for the colony
  - ✓ Building the anthills or mounds

B. How do you usually react when you see an ant?

C. We know from the story and from real life that the boy and the ant are very different in size. Are there any ways in which the boy and the ant are alike? If yes, be prepared to share your answer.

D. The boy's friends urge him to squish the ant. If he decides not to, what do you think he should tell his friends?

E. What would you tell the boy to do and why?

# The Literature-Based Mock Trial Experience:

## *The Marriage of Literature and Civic Education*

- Step 1: Choose a piece of classroom or classic literature on which to base your mock trial.
- Step 2: Decide if you want to use a scripted trial or if you want to have your students write their own trial.
- Step 3: Assess what the students already know about the language of the courtroom.

**\*Directions:** On the right-hand side is a list of many of the words with which we will become familiar during our Mock Trial experience. On the left-hand side are the definitions for the words. \*Match the words on the right with its definition on the left.

**Judge**

**The person who calls  
Court to order and swears  
in the witnesses**

**Statute**

**A group who listen  
to witnesses and decide  
if the defendant is guilty**

**Court Clerk/Bailiff**

**A preliminary exam of a  
juror by the judge or lawyer**

**Defendant**

**The lawyer who represents  
the State in a criminal trial**

**Plaintiff**

**A written law that is  
created by the government**

**Defense Attorney**

**A person who tells the jury  
what he/she knows about  
the case**

**Prosecuting Attorney**

**The person accused of  
a crime**

**Witness**

**The person who is in charge  
of the Court and interprets  
the law if needed**

**Verdict**

**A person who starts a  
lawsuit in a civil case**

**Jury**

**The lawyer who represents  
the defendant**

**Voir Dire**

**What the jury decides**



# Direct and Leading Questions

## Step 4: Learn about and practice questioning techniques

- **Direct Questions** allow each witness to tell what they know about the Defendant and/or what they know about the Defendant's connection to the crime
- **Leading Questions** suggest a "yes" or "no" answer and contain information the attorney is looking to confirm.

Directions: Think about to whom you are asking your questions. What kind of questions do you ask the witnesses on your side? What kind of questions do you ask the witnesses on the other side? For practice, listen to the following questions and decide which ones are Direct Questions and which ones are Leading Question.

- |  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| 1. Describe what you saw happening right before the fight broke out.             | Leading or Direct |
| 2. You dropped your wallet, correct?   | Leading or Direct |
| 3. Isn't it true that you went to the wrong address?                             | Leading or Direct |
| 4. Would you describe the scene as chaotic?                                      | Leading or Direct |
| 5. Can you tell us what happened to the wallet after you dropped it.?            | Leading or Direct |
| 6. Twenty people tried to help you, is that right?                               | Leading or Direct |
| 7. Isn't it true that you forgot to tell the police about the knife?             | Leading or Direct |
| 8. Explain why you did not go to school on the day of the incident.              | Leading or Direct |
| 9. You said that you hid the wallet behind a tree, is that right?                | Leading or Direct |
| 10. Your relationship with Goldie Locks is a good one. Can you tell us about it? | Leading or Direct |

# A Sample Fact Pattern

## *The State vs Steven Miller*

**Step 5:** Have the students read and discuss the **\*Fact Pattern** of the case.  
(A Fact Pattern is the summary of the key facts of the case.)

The Mock Trial we are about to argue is based on the book *A Chair for My Mother* by Vera B. Williams. In the book, a little girl, her mother, and her grandmother live in a house that has been destroyed by fire. The mother is a waitress at a diner. She decides to save all her tips from work in a big jar until she raises enough money to buy a new chair for her mother. She also encourages her daughter and her mother to save any extra money they get as well.

A few years later, the diner catches fire and the owner, Ms. Josephine Heller, decides to use the same method to raise money. She puts a big jar on the counter at the diner, explains to her customers what happened, and asks if they might support her effort to repair or replace the equipment that was broken or destroyed in the fire. The jar fills up quickly. Twenty-five hundred dollars is raised. Then one day, right before Josephine is about to cash in the coins, someone steals the jar.

The police identify the thief as Steven Miller, a former employee of the diner. Steven lives in the community with his sister and his mother. Steven's sister has a serious illness, and he and his mother are always looking for a way to help her. When Steven goes to visit his old friends at the diner and sees the jar filled with coins, he decides that he could really use the money in the jar to help his sister. Josephine Heller files charges, and Steven goes to trial for stealing the \$2500 that had been raised to fix the kitchen at the diner.

**Jury, your job is to decide if you think Steven Miller should be found guilty or not guilty. According to Pennsylvania Law, taking something that is valued at or above \$2500 is considered a second-degree felony. The penalty for this crime is 5 to 10 years in prison and a fine of up to \$25,000.**

# The State vs Steven Miller

## Step 6: A Sample from a Literature-based Mock Trial

**Bailiff/Court Clerk:** All rise. The Court of Room 1 is now in session. The Honorable Judge \_\_\_\_\_ presiding.

**Judge:** Please be seated. Today we will hear the case of The State v Steven Miller. Prosecution are you ready?

**Prosecution:** Yes, Your Honor.

**Judge:** Is the Defense ready?

**Defense:** Yes, Your Honor.

**Judge:** Prosecution, you may proceed with your Opening Statement.

**Prosecution:** May it please the Court, Your Honor and Ladies and Gentlemen of the Jury, we are here today to prove, beyond a reasonable doubt, that Steven Miller stole the money that Ms. Josephine Heller had raised to keep her neighborhood diner open. We will hear from Ms. Heller about the day that Steven Miller, a former employee at the Blue Tile Diner, came to the Diner, saw the jar filled with several thousand dollars, and decided to take it for himself. Ms. Moore will tell the jury about how the jar of money was stolen, how many community people eat at the Diner and will miss it if it cannot reopen after the fire, and how Steven returned to the Diner after not having worked there for over a year to see what he could take. We will prove that Steven Miller must be found guilty. Thank you.

**Judge:** Defense, you may proceed with your Opening Statement.

**Defense:** May it please the Court, Your Honor and Ladies and Gentlemen of the Jury, we are here today to prove that Steven Miller is not guilty of stealing money that was not his. He will tell the jury how he only took the money to help pay for his sister's medical bills, and that he intended to replace it as soon as he could. Steven was upset at what he had done, but relieved that he had found a way to get his sister some much-needed medical help. Steven did what many of us would have done. He should not be found guilty of anything but loyalty and love for his family. Thank you.

# Deliberation

## **Step 7: Sharing and Supporting Point of View – The Deliberation of the Jury**

**Defense:** Your Honor, and Ladies and Gentlemen of the Jury, Steven Miller is not a criminal. Steven Miller is a caring son and brother who saw a chance to help his sick sister. We heard from Steven that he intended to return the money as soon as he could. Steven should be found not guilty. Then he can arrange with the Court to start to pay Josephine Heller back as quickly as possible. Thank you.

**Prosecution:** Steven Miller stole over \$2500 from Josephine Heller. We heard him say that he did not think about Ms. Heller's needs, just his own. What Steven Miller did is against the law and the law is the law! Steven Miller must be found guilty. Thank you

**Judge:** (Jury Instructions) Ladies and Gentlemen of the Jury, you are the only judges of whether the witnesses are believable. As you decide this case, you should pay attention to how the witnesses looked and acted when they were testifying, to what they said, and to whether different witnesses said things that were the opposite of one another. You should pay attention to all the evidence, and you should pay attention to whether a witness might have reason to say what he/she did even though it might not be the truth. When witnesses disagree with each other, you should decide whether they disagree on something important or on something that is unimportant. Section 3901 of the Crimes Code defines theft as it is related to this case as the intent to dispose of property so as to make it unlikely that the owner will recover it. This is subsection (a.1) of Section 3901 of the Crimes Code. Except as provided in subsections (a) or (a.2), theft constitutes a felony of the second degree if the amount involved exceeds \$2000.

So, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Jury, you need to decide, when looking at the facts of this case, if Steven Miller committed theft and intended to dispose of the money that was in Ms. Heller's jar. The Jury may now leave the Courtroom to deliberate.

- Time for Questions and Answers
- Parting Thoughts: What Do You Do With An Idea? By Kobi Yamada
- Ways to stay in touch:
  - [aspector@seventy.org](mailto:aspector@seventy.org)
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