

Maggie's Civics Corner

Lesson #22 - Prosecutors



Maggie says ...

Because I am a dog, most people are friendly to me. But sometimes, people or other dogs can do something that is mean or hurtful to others. No one feels good when this happens, but who should be responsible for helping make things right?

Today's lesson is about PROSECUTORS. When people are accused of breaking the law, it is our responsibility to figure out the truth and if they really did break it, to make things right.

Everyone can have a **Defense Lawyer** represent them in court. The other attorney present in court is the **Prosecutor** – the lawyer whose job it is to represent “the people” (the citizens and the government). **Prosecutors** work with the police – who conduct the investigation and gather evidence – to prove that the **Defendant** – the person accused of breaking the law in court – is the one who committed the crime. **Prosecutors** are elected by the citizens, and because they represent us, they must obey many strict rules and have high standards of behavior.

Sticky Situation: Imagine someone comes to your school and removes all the recess equipment and toys from the building. No one knows who took them or why, but all agree it is unfair because students can no longer enjoy recess as much as they did when they had the recess equipment and toys. Do you think it is important to investigate who removed this equipment from the school, to uncover the truth? Do you think it is important to know who is responsible for taking the equipment? Do you think this is an investigation that students can handle on their own? Do you think students should seek assistance and guidance from a trusted adult? Whom would you ask for help?

What a Prosecutor Does: When someone breaks the law, it is called committing a crime. In the United States, when someone is accused of committing a crime, the government – acting on behalf of us, *the citizens* – must first figure out whether the person is actually guilty of it before punishing them for it. **The Prosecutor's** job is to work on behalf of all the citizens to find out the truth about crimes. If the **Prosecutor** thinks they have found the truth, they then go to court to convince a judge and jury that the person accused of the crime is the person who actually committed it, and therefore, should be punished for it.

Activity: If you had to choose someone in your school or community to be a **Prosecutor**, who would you choose and why? What qualities does this person have that you think would make them good in this role? On the next page, is an exercise to help you identify qualities or traits that a **Prosecutor** should have.

Continued

Think about what you have learned about *Prosecutors*, then circle the qualities and traits below you believe they should have.

Honest

Makes Good Decisions

Lazy

Responsible

Trustworthy

Fair

Willing to Help Others

Smart

Dishonest

Good Listener

Hard-working

Organized

Good Communicator

Negative

Civics Resources: To learn more about the role of *Prosecutors*, check out this fun game:

[Kid's Court](#) – *Home of the naughtiest kids in the world!*