

Maggie's Civics Corner

Lesson #21 – Defense Lawyers



Maggie says ...

As a dog, it is extra important for me to be friendly and follow the rules. But we all make mistakes. And sometimes other people make the mistake but say that I did it even though I didn't. When that happens, I feel sad and think it's unfair. I want the chance to defend myself.

Today's lesson is about DEFENSE LAWYERS. When people are accused of breaking the law, it is called *committing a crime*.

Everyone in the United States is allowed to have a lawyer represent them when they are accused of something. A **Defense Lawyer's** job is to protect and defend people who have been accused of a crime.

Sticky Situation: Imagine that all the sports equipment, balls, and recess toys were taken from your school so you can no longer play with them during recess. One of your fellow students is accused of taking them. How do we know that they did it? What if they didn't do it? Is it fair to accuse them before we know the truth? Do you think that students should be allowed to defend themselves?

What a Defense Lawyer Does: When someone is accused of a crime, that person has a **Defense Lawyer** to help them show they did not commit the crime. The *Defense Lawyer* gathers as much information – called evidence – as they can to show that the person didn't commit the crime. In the United States, the **Constitution** guarantees everyone the right to a *Defense Lawyer* because we believe everyone should be given the chance to defend themselves. If the person accused of the crime cannot afford to pay a lawyer to defend them, the **Court** appoints a **Public Defender** to assist them in this effort.

Activity: Imagine someone has accused you of taking all the recess equipment at your school. Would your school leaders give you the chance to defend yourself and prove that you didn't take the sporting equipment? Do you think it would help you to have someone assist in gathering the information that shows you didn't take it; someone who can help you to present this information? In what other ways could this *Defense Lawyer* be of help to you? Be prepared to explain your answer. This exercise is designed to help you understand why we give everyone in the United States a *Defense Lawyer*.

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

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

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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!*

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Lesson #23 - Presidents



Maggie says ...

In these difficult times, as our nation and the world pull together, it is more important than ever to understand our role as a citizen.

Today's lesson is learning about being a PRESIDENT. I always like to see dogs in the media. I really liked learning about President Obama's dog Bo. Since presidents are leaders, Bo must be a special dog to be chosen to be a president's pet. I was the First Dog of Pennsylvania when my Dad was Governor. Check out information on all [presidential pets](#).

Sticky Situation: Your school has decided to create a Student Council, a group of student leaders who meet regularly to discuss school issues. A student who is new to your class has decided to run for President of your Student Council. Some of your classmates think it is a good idea to have someone with a new point of view become a leader in your school. Others feel that the person who is President of the Student Council should be someone who knows a lot about the school and the people who are in it. What do you think and what could you say to convince others to agree with you?

Activity: I am not just interested in the pets our Presidents have had over the years, although some of them have been pretty interesting. I am also interested in other facts about our Presidents. As a dog, every one of my years is counted as 7 years in human life. I often wonder if I get smarter with age, or if I was smarter when I was younger. Think about this: There are three requirements for running for President of the United States, 1.) an individual must be at least 35 years of age, 2.) an individual must be a natural-born U.S. citizen, and 3.) an individual must have been a resident of the U.S. for at least 14 years. Do you think 35 is a good age requirement or should it be higher or lower? Be prepared to support your answer.

Civics Resources: Visit the [White House website](#) to learn more about the role of the U.S. President.

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Lesson #24 - Leaders & Heroes



Maggie says ...

In these difficult times, as our nation and the world pull together, it is more important than ever to understand our role as a citizen.

Today's lesson is about LEADERS & HEROES. As a dog, I have many heroes in my life. The crossing guard who makes my walk safe is one of my heroes. Thinking about today's world, I would put all of the doctors, nurses, and firstresponders on my list of heroes.

Sticky Situation: I love when someone reads to me. One of my favorite fairy tales is *Jack and the Beanstalk*. I have listened to that fairy tale many times. Every time I hear it, I wonder if Jack is a hero or a villain. Read the story below. After reading it yourself or having someone read the story to you, do you think Jack is a hero or a villain? Be prepared to support your point of view.

Jack and the Beanstalk

Jack is a very poor young boy who lives in a forest with his mother. Jack and his mother have a cow, whose milk provides them with most of what they need to eat or drink. One day, the cow is no longer able to give milk, so Jack's mom decides Jack should take the cow to the market and sell it in exchange for money and food.

As Jack heads toward the market, he meets a man who offers him beans - *magic* beans - that he says will grow very, very tall in only one night. Jack decides to give the man the cow in exchange for the magic beans.

When Jack arrives home, he tells his mother what he has done, expecting her to be as excited as he is. His mother, however, grows very angry and throws the beans out the window. She sends Jack to his room without dinner and tells him to go to bed. When Jack finally wakes up in the morning and looks out the window, he sees that the beans have grown into a very, very, very tall beanstalk.

A curious young boy, Jack decides to see where the beanstalk ends. He climbs the beanstalk to its very top where he sees a great castle. Jack enters the castle and sees a giant woman. He asks the woman for food. She gives him food but warns him that he must go before her husband - a Giant who eats children - arrives home. Jack agrees, but not before he sees that there are bags of gold in the house.

When Jack hears the Giant coming, he runs and hides in the oven. While in the oven, Jack listens to hear when the Giant has fallen asleep. Once he hears the Giant snoring, Jack sneaks out of the oven, grabs a bag of gold, and heads down the beanstalk.

Continued

You can imagine how happy Jack's mother is when Jack shows her the bag of gold. With all that gold, Jack's mother realizes they will never have to go hungry again.

Jack decides he has not taken his last trip up the beanstalk and returns to the Giant's Castle two more times. On the first of these two trips, Jack steals a goose that lays golden eggs. On his second trip, Jack is stealing a golden harp, when suddenly, he hears the steps of the Giant and races to the beanstalk. The Giant knows that Jack has been breaking in and what he has stolen, so he chases after Jack. Jack reaches the beanstalk first and scrambles down as fast as he can. Once back on land, he cuts down the beanstalk, causing the Giant to fall to his death. With the Giant gone and all that wealth, Jack and his mother live happily ever after.

SO...Is Jack a Hero or a Villain? You decide!!!

Activity: Think about and discuss the following questions. Be prepared to support your answer.

1. Are all "heroes" leaders?
2. Are all "leaders" heroes?
3. Who are some people you consider heroes from history? Why?
4. Who are some people you consider leaders from history? Why?
5. Now, let's think about today. Who are your heroes, and why? How could you let them know that you think they are a hero? Would you write a letter? Make a poster, or draw a picture? Get your teacher to post your work on the bulletin board or door in your classroom, or post it somewhere in your home. That makes you a hero, too!

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Lesson #25 – Identifying Leaders



Maggie says ...

Maggie Says... Think back to your last day at school. Who unlocked the doors to the school that morning? Who locked the doors that night when your school closed? A school needs leaders to operate – principals, teachers, and administrators. There are a lot of adults in your school who sacrifice and use their words and actions for good. I love hearing my people talk about wonderful

teachers and principals in my home! I know those same teachers and principals are working hard to try and help their students even though they may not be around them.

Today's lesson is about IDENTIFYING LEADERS – AT YOUR SCHOOL. This is a great way to reflect on the adults who have made a difference in your life at school. These adults are still working hard and thinking of you every day. Make them proud today by working hard on this lesson.

Sticky Situation: Your favorite teacher tells you that they will be absent from school tomorrow because they have jury duty. **Jury duty** is a responsibility every U.S. citizen must fulfill when they are called. Your teacher tells you that a substitute teacher that has “similar leadership traits” will be filling in during their absence. (“Traits” are characteristics or behaviors).

Activity: What are your favorite teacher's best leadership traits? Write them below.

Next, write a letter to your favorite teacher, and let them know that you appreciate their leadership style. Make sure to write down the specific things that you appreciate about their leadership.

Dear _____,

Civics Resources: Watch this [video of middle school students thanking their teacher](#) to gain ideas for ways for you to express gratitude to your favorite teacher.

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Lesson #26 – Education Policy



Maggie says ...

In these difficult times, as our nation and the world pull together, it is more important than ever to understand our role as a citizen.

Today's lesson is about EDUCATION POLICY. I know there are many issues in which the candidates for President of the United States are interested. One of the issues I am interested in is that of Education. I loved it when Judge Rendell or Governor Rendell would take me to school to learn obedience.

Sticky Situation: I like watching kids playing. So... imagine that your school has a very popular junior basketball team. You have just reached the grade where you are eligible to participate on the team, and you have been looking forward to trying out for it. However, in order to prevent the elimination of other activities, your School Board is considering requiring students on athletic teams to have to pay to participate. Do you think this is a good idea? Why or why not? What could you do to make your opinion known about this subject?

Activity: Did you know that a School Board monitors the budgets and spending activities for all the schools in that school district? The decision about whether to charge a student who wants to play on a school team ...sometimes called pay-to-play... would come from a school board. Do you think it is a good idea for a school board to require students of its district that participate on an athletic team – softball, basketball, football, tennis, etc. – to have to pay in order to play on a team? Prepare a speech that you would like to give to your School Board about your opinion on this subject.

Civics Resources: Here are examples of Education Policies published by a few 2020 presidential candidates. After reviewing each, discuss the key takeaways from each. Then, consider how the plans/policies compare to one another. How are they different?

[Joe Biden – The Biden Plan for Educators, Students, and Our Future](#)

[Donald Trump – Executive Order on Establishing the President's Advisory 1776 Commission](#)

[Bernie Sanders – A Thurgood Marshall Plan for Public Education](#)

Maggie's Civics Corner

Lesson #27 – President's Day



*Today's lesson is about PRESIDENT'S DAY. Since its founding, the United States has had over 40 people serve as president of our country. The President of the United States is the leader of our country and has many responsibilities. The President represents the United States internationally, is in charge of U.S. troops, and has the power to make laws through special, **Executive Orders**. President's Day is the chance for all citizens to celebrate the people who have served our country as president and the contributions they made. We celebrate this holiday every year on the third Monday in February.*

Sticky Situation: Presidents have many responsibilities, including addressing the nation during major events and holidays. Imagine that you are the President of the United States, and the U.S. Olympic swimming team has just won the gold medal. You want to honor the team for doing so well, so you decide to write a speech to congratulate them. Now, write that speech, and include comments telling the team how proud you are of them for representing our country so well. Then deliver the speech you wrote to your class, a friend, or your parents. Was writing this speech easy or difficult to put together? How did you like reading the speech out loud? Do you think that addressing the country is an important role of the president's job?

Activity: Do research on a U.S. president about whom you want to learn more. When your research is complete, answer the following questions:

1. When did this president serve in office? (What years?)
2. How many terms did this president serve?
3. What were this president's contributions to the United States?
4. Who served as the vice president during this president's term(s)?
5. If you were old enough to vote at the time this president served, would you cast your vote for them? Be prepared to explain your answer.

Bonus Activity: Read the book or watch the YouTube video of the read-aloud *If I Were President* by Catherine Stier (illustrated by Diane DiSalvo-Ryan), then check out our [Read Aloud Lesson](#) for the book

Maggie's Civics Corner

Lesson #28 – George Washington



Maggie says ...

As a dog, I must listen to my human family members when they try to keep me out of trouble. They lead our family to keep us safe and to help us with the different challenges we face every day.

Today's lesson is about GEORGE WASHINGTON. George Washington was the first leader of our country. He was picked to be the first leader because the people at that time thought he would do the right things to protect our country, to help us face

the difficult challenges that a young country has, and to help the country to grow and expand. Most people believe that George Washington did a good job; therefore, he is still considered one of the best presidents and leaders the USA has ever had.

Sticky Situation: Imagine while you are in school a fire alarm goes off. It can be really loud and scary when that occurs, am I right? What is the first thing you should do when you hear the fire alarm go off at school??? Listen to your teacher. Correct! We listen to what our teachers tell us because they are smart and responsible people, and they know what to do to protect all the members of your class and help to keep them safe.

The same thing is true regarding the people we elect to be President of the United States of America. We try to elect people whom we think will do what is best for our country and all its citizens. When our country was first started, the citizens thought that George Washington was the best person to lead the newly formed United States.

Who Was George Washington? George Washington was our country's first president. After the Revolutionary War ended and our country became free, our country was still figuring out how our government should work. At first, there was no single person who acted as our national leader. This created a bunch of problems because no one was there to coordinate the running of our country. To get all new states to act like one country, the leaders of the time created the Constitution, which is the most important document in our country because it lays out all the basic rules for how our government should work, including the job of the president. Because George Washington was a great leader during the Revolutionary War, the 13 states' representatives chose him to lead the entire country. Washington served as president for eight years – 1789 to 1797. Today, George Washington is considered "the" example for other US presidents and leaders across our nation to exemplify.

Continued

Activity: Think about the qualities you think a good leader should have. Circle those traits below, and any others you think they should have, too.

Honest

Makes Good Decisions

Lazy

Responsible

Trustworthy

Fair

Willing to Help Others

Smart

Dishonest

Good Listener

Hard-working

Organized

Good Communicator

Negative

Many people believe George Washington had many of the qualities listed above. As you learn more about him, what do you think? Was he the type of leader we could use today?

Civics Resources: Visit the following sites to learn more about the first leader of our nation:

[CoolKidFacts – George Washington Biography](#)

[National Geographic Kids – George Washington](#)

[George Washington's Mount Vernon](#)

Maggie's Civics Corner

Lesson #29 – Abraham Lincoln



Maggie says ...

As a dog, I must listen to my human family members when they try to keep me out of trouble. They lead our family to keep us safe and to help us with the different challenges we face every day.

Today's lesson is about ABRAHAM LINCOLN. Abraham Lincoln was the 16th president of the United States. "Honest Abe" as he was called, became president during a very difficult time in American

history, a time when people disagreed so much over how our country should be run that they started a war – our Civil War. President Lincoln worked hard to keep our country together during that crisis, and to make sure our country started to treat everyone more equally.

Sticky Situation: Imagine your class is trying to decide what movie to watch. Half of the class wants to watch *The Lion King*, while the other half wants to watch *The Little Mermaid*. Some classmates get so mad that the movie chosen will be one they don't like, they say they will leave the class than watch a movie they don't like. What do you think of the position of these classmates? Do you agree or disagree with them? Be prepared to explain your answer, and when you do, be sure to do it respectfully. Do you think it would help to have someone everyone trusts and respects to help resolve this disagreement? Whom might that be in your class?

Who Was Abraham Lincoln? Abe Lincoln was born into a very poor family. He worked very hard and eventually taught himself enough to become a lawyer, political leader, and ultimately the 16th President of the United States. Lincoln served as president during the Civil War, which started after some of the states decided to try to leave the country. Despite making enemies on his path to the presidency, Lincoln fought to keep the U.S. together and to fight for truth, our system of government, democracy, and most importantly, equal rights and freedom for ALL citizens. Abraham Lincoln led our country to victory during this difficult and terrible war, but sadly was one of its casualties – he was killed by a person who disagreed with him and his policies for our country. Today, we remember Lincoln for his honesty, leadership, and strength, and as one of the best presidents ever in the history of the United States. Many people in our country and the world view Lincoln as a role model not just for presidents or government leaders, but for everyone.

Activity: Have you ever done "the **right thing**" even though you knew someone might be mad at you for doing it? What did you do, or what opinion did you have with which others didn't agree? Do you think it is important for our leaders to do the right thing even though it might make some people mad? Thinking about these questions will help you understand why Abraham Lincoln is one of our country's most famous and beloved presidents.

Civics Resources: Check out these sites for additional information about Abraham Lincoln:

[Scholastic's The Teacher Store](#) has wonderful books about Lincoln for all reading levels

[National Geographic Kids – Abraham Lincoln](#)

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Lesson #30 – (Leadership) Doing My Part by Helping at Home

Maggie says ...

In these difficult times, as our nation and the world pull together, it is more important than ever to understand our role as a citizen.

Today's lesson is about how HELPING CAN SHOW

LEADERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITY. One characteristic shared by many leaders is their ability to take initiative to lend a helping hand (or paw) to others. This is a great time to think of the many ways that you can enhance your leadership skills by taking initiative to help your family around the house. Even as the family dog, I found a way to help at my house by fetching the newspaper

every morning! There are many things you can do to help around the house. By taking initiative and asking your family how you can help, you will be showing leadership and responsibility.

Sticky Situation: When it is springtime, many families around the country give their homes a thorough cleaning, participating in what is commonly known as “*Spring Cleaning*”. During dinner, you heard your family discuss their plans for cleaning your home. Each person in your family has been given certain tasks to do except for you. In the past, no one had asked you to do any tasks during your family’s annual spring cleaning, but this year, you believe that you can do your part and contribute to the family’s “*Spring Cleaning*” efforts.

As dinner draws to an end, you have a chance to tell your family that you want to help. What do you say to them to convince them of your interest and ability? What kind of tasks would you tell them you can accomplish?

By taking the **initiative** to help your family clean your home, you are developing an important characteristic for leadership because **leaders** are people who always seek ways to help others like their family, friends, and classmates.

Activity: Show some “*Spring Cleaning*” initiative! Walk around your house and make a list of things that could be cleaned, vacuumed, or dusted. When you are finished listing everything, rank the tasks by difficulty – put the easiest tasks first and the harder tasks after. Show the list to your family and ask if you can try your hand at some of the tasks on the list, suggesting you start with the easiest tasks first.

Your family will thank you for showing some spring-cleaning initiative and will be impressed with your leadership skills! Contributing to your family’s spring cleaning is a great way to have fun and spend family time together. As we all spend more time at home, it is more important than ever to support and lean on your family.

Civics Resources: Check out this video from RocketKids about how [Taking the Initiative is Cool](#).