

The Law-Related Education Academy is sponsored by the Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education with funding made possible by the Arizona Department of Education.

“CSI: Cracking the Case with Forensic Science” Academy
(Middle/High School)

Witness Interviewing Lesson Plan

Please obtain administrator approval prior to implementing this lesson.

Objectives: Students will...

- practice the proper sequence of steps when first arriving at a crime scene.
- practice photographing, measuring, and sketching a crime scene.
- understand why each step is important to preserving the investigation.

Protective Factor Developed: Critical Reasoning Skills

Materials:

- ✓ Witness sheets (1 of each for the volunteer playing the witness)
- ✓ Case overview handouts (1 per group)
- ✓ Chart paper (1 per group)
- ✓ Markers (1 per person)
- ✓ Paper and writing utensil (1 per person)

Prior to the Lesson: Use the **witness sheets** to familiarize yourself with the 3 witness roles. (Optional: Bring in other staff members to act as witnesses.)

Timeframe: 60 Minutes

Team Teaching: For effective implementation of Law Related Education (LRE), team teach with the classroom teacher by...

- Having both the officer and teacher rotate among students and to different groups. Both instructors will provide positive feedback and engage in friendly conversations with students. This procedure will help reduce classroom disruptions, increase student engagement, and build supportive relationships with students.
- Encouraging classroom teachers to participate in all activities by injecting clarification statements by relating relevant content to their curriculum. In this method, students will see more connections to their student life and be willing to carry over concepts and skills learned in LRE.
- Assigning the classroom teacher part of the lesson instructions. Team teaching with the classroom teacher enables the students to further see the importance of LRE lessons. It also provides an

opportunity for the classroom teacher to demonstrate teaching skills conducive to effective teaching. Student attention can be maintained more easily with different voices and personalities experienced throughout the lesson.

Lesson:

1. Explain that students will work in small groups to brainstorm questions for witnesses. Next, the whole class will interview the witnesses together.
2. Divide the class into small groups of 3-4 students in each and distribute a **case overview handout**, **chart paper**, and **markers** to each group.
3. Explain that they will be interviewing at least two witnesses: Betty, the neighbor who discovered the scene and called police, and Craig, the victim's coworker who stopped by the night before.
4. Instruct groups to draw a line down the middle of their chart paper to divide it into two sections: Betty and Craig. They should brainstorm questions they would like to ask the witnesses and write them on their chart paper.
5. Distribute **paper** and a **writing utensil** to each student. Explain that the class will conduct a group interview with the first witness. Emphasize that as new information is revealed, they should:
 - a. Write new questions on their chart paper using a different color marker.
 - b. Take notes on their paper, such as: facts revealed, inconsistencies, general observations, when they would call for Miranda rights, what warrants they may want to pursue, or new witnesses they would want to bring in.
6. Explain how the questioning will work: The class will work together to question the witness, acting as one investigator. Each group will select a representative. Representatives will take turns asking the witness questions.
7. The teacher will act as the witness using the information from the **witness sheets**. (Optional: bring in other teachers or staff to act as witnesses.)
8. Bring in the first witness - Betty. As representatives are interviewing the witness, all students should take notes and add new questions to their chart paper.
9. Allow 10 minutes per witness.
10. After the first witness, give groups time to discuss their notes with their small group and see if they need to make any modifications
11. Debrief the Betty interview by asking a student from each group to share a fact or observation they wrote down in their notes. Then ask the class if anyone thinks Miranda rights should be called, a warrant pursued, or additional witnesses contacted.
12. Repeat the process with the second witness - Craig. (Note: The person acting as Craig may mention Stacy if asked the right questions. Craig knows about a fight the victim, Michelle, recently got into with Stacy.)
13. If a group requests to bring in Stacy as a witness, give them a few minutes to brainstorm questions they will ask. They should write these on the other side of their chart paper. Then repeat the process of steps 8-11 with Stacy.

14. If no group requests to bring in Stacy, explain that there was a third witness that could have been called in if the investigator had asked the right questions to Craig. Craig knew about a fight that the victim had recently been in with Michelle.
 - a. If groups did not ask to interview Stacy, ask the groups to brainstorm what questions would have been helpful to ask Craig to discover the 3rd witness. *Possible Answers: Did you see anyone else in or near the house that night? Is there anyone you know of who was upset with Michelle? Is there anyone you know of who Michelle was upset with?*
15. Emphasize that thorough and strategic questioning can uncover key evidence and guide an investigation.
16. Debrief by leading a whole group discussion: Why is asking the right questions so important?

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Arizona State Standards Correlations

Social Studies

8.SP3.7 Construct and present explanations using reasoning, correct sequence, examples, details with relevant information and data, while acknowledging the strengths and weaknesses of the explanations.

8.SP3.8 Present arguments and explanations on topics of interest to others to reach multiple audiences in and outside of the classroom print, oral, and digital technologies.

HS.SP3.8 Present arguments and explanations that feature ideas and perspectives on issues and topics to reach a range of audiences and venues using print, oral, and digital technologies.

English Language Arts

7.SL.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.

7.SL.4 Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with pertinent descriptions, appropriate vocabulary, facts, details, and examples; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

8.SL.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.

8.SL.4 Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

9-10.SL.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

9-10.SL.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence in an organized, developed style appropriate to purpose, audience, and task, allowing listeners to follow the speaker’s line of reasoning, message, and any alternative perspectives.

11-12.SL.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

11-12.SL.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence in an organized, developed style appropriate to purpose, audience, and task, allowing listeners to follow the speaker’s line of reasoning, message, and any alternative perspectives.