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## The Role of Juries

### Topics addressed

- ☆ American jury system
- ☆ Landmark cases affecting juries
- ☆ Qualifications of jurors

**Time needed:** 30 minutes

**Overview:** This activity explores the role and significance of juries in the American legal system.

**Group type and size:** Suited for both small and large audiences.

### Materials needed:

- ☆ **Role of Juries PowerPoint**
- ☆ **Handout: Jury Profile**
- ☆ **Handout: Landmark Cases Affecting Juries**
- ☆ **Handout: Building a Jury**

### Preparation:

- ☆ Review presenter's guide of "What to Do and Not to Do."
- ☆ Become familiar with PowerPoint and handouts, and make copies of handouts to distribute.
- ☆ Review materials on the Sixth Amendment at <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/conlaw/jurysize.html>

You may also want to review the American Bar Association's "[Dialogue on the American Jury: We the People in Action](#)" Parts I-III.

**Equipment:** Computer for PowerPoint, projector and screen. Contact event coordinator. Bring web-based materials on a flash drive and handouts for distribution. Materials available at [www.floridabar.org/benchmarks](http://www.floridabar.org/benchmarks).

## Getting Started

**Distribute copies of the Juror Profile handout.**

Ask participants as they are being seated:

- ☆ What characteristics or attributes would you want in a juror?

30  
minutes  
total



### Handouts:

- Jury Profile
- Landmark Cases
- Building a Jury

### Needed:

Laptop  
screen &  
projector



### Start by

giving out  
Juror Profile  
handout.

Ask audience:  
What matters  
to you?



5 minutes  
to write and  
share answers

- ☆ If you had been charged with a crime, what qualities, characteristics or attributes would you want in the people selected to serve on your jury?
- ☆ What matters to you?
- ☆ Would you consider their age, socioeconomic status, gender, religion, education, criminal background, citizenship status, etc.?
- ☆ Or are you more concerned with their personality and/or qualities?

Allow time for participants to write their answers and have them share with a small group. Preferably participants will be seated at round tables (ideally with five at each table) so that you will have small groups already assembled. However if round tables are not available, have participants turn to people in the immediate vicinity and form groups of three to five to discuss briefly. Debrief by asking for some of their responses and discussing.

### **Presentation**

Using the PowerPoint and participant feedback, define a jury and discuss the historical foundations of the jury system.

#### **Cases affecting juries**

Hand out "Landmark Cases Affecting Juries," BRIEFLY highlighting the main emphasis of each. See handout and presenter notes.

#### **Juror qualifications**

Walk participants through what jury qualification looks like on the state level. Based on what participants have learned about the jury system and the role and significance of juries, participants will need to analyze the qualifications to serve as a juror and determine if they think the qualifications are sufficient to fulfill the intentions of the Founders when they advocated and included a jury system in the Constitution and Bill of Rights.

#### **Distribute Build Your Jury Handout**

Participants will then individually create criteria for jurors. In small groups of three to five, they should share their responses.

Small groups should decide on their five main criteria for jurors and assess if their qualifications are constitutional based on the six landmark court cases they evaluated. Discuss with participants.



*For additional information, contact Annette Boyd Pitts, at [staff@flrea.org](mailto:staff@flrea.org). Permission is granted for Bar members to use this activity for educational presentations. Benchmark activities are available from The Florida Bar at [www.floridabar.org/Benchmarks](http://www.floridabar.org/Benchmarks).*

**Begin Power-Point,**  
reviewing  
history of  
jury system

**10 minutes**

**Distribute**  
Landmark  
Cases  
handout  
Review.

**5 minutes**



**What does it take?**

Distribute Building a Jury handout. Ask audience to analyze qualities jurors should have – first individually then as groups. Write down top criteria.

**10 minutes**