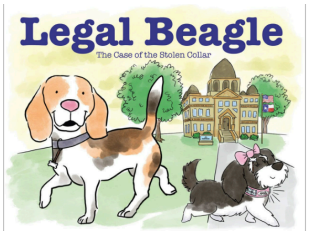
Presentation Guide for



Legal Beagle–The Case of the Stolen Collar

About the Project:

Legal Beagle–The Case of the Stolen Collar takes students through the legal system and the people involved in a successful trial.

It's *Take Your Dogs to Work Day*, and excitement fills the air as four-legged companions join their humans in the courtroom. The day's trial revolves around a mystery. Harley the Havanese has lost her valuable diamond-studded collar, which disappeared one night while her owners, the Hoppers, were fast asleep. The prime suspect is Al Ledge, whose involvement raises suspicions and doubts. Legal Beagle, the narrator and the judge's dog, guides readers through the intricacies of the legal process, introducing the characters who play pivotal roles in the trial. Vocabulary terms with definitions along the borders of the pages help students better understand the judicial system. Throughout the book, students will analyze facts to build a case for a verdict, identify characters' viewpoints, apply legal terminology, and use problem-solving and decision-making skills to reach the verdict.

Suggested Audience:

- Students in Grades 4-5

Project Resources Available:

- The digital version of the project, available in English and Spanish, can be accessed through the website. A PDF copy of the book in both is also available for download from the same site. Finally, the book can be read to students in either English or Spanish.

Request Materials:

Contact the Law Related Education office jan.miller@texasbar.com to request a hard copy of the book, Jury Stickers and Legal Beagle hand puppet to use during the presentation.

Presentation Outline:

Things to do before the presentation:

- Visit https://texaslre.org/legal-beagle/ to familiarize yourself with the book.
- Discuss the time and location of the presentation.
- Determine the number of students in the class to ensure appropriate resources are available.

- Verify that the classroom has a computer with Internet access available for your use.
- Prepare the necessary materials before the visit, including copies of any of the resources you plan to use.

Follow the presentation steps:

- Opening Remarks (5 minutes)
    - Introduce yourself and provide a brief explanation of what a lawyer does.
    - Set the stage by asking the following questions: Ask students if they've ever watched a courtroom trial on TV. Allow students time to share their experiences.
    - Explain that the purpose of your presentation is to explore how the legal system functions and the individuals who contribute to its success.
- Launch the website, to access the book or use your copy of the book to read with the students. (10-15 minutes)
    - Set the stage by asking the students to look at the cover and infer what they think the book is about. What do you think the dog has to do with the story? Be sure they understand the meaning of the key words–crime and trial before beginning

    - As you read the book, pause at the end of a page to address any vocabulary in the margins. It is also a good practice to have the students summarize what they learned about the case during these pauses. Allow the students to ask questions. NOTE–With the older students and the teacher's approval, you might have certain students read a page.
- Engage your audience (10-15 minutes)(Pass out Jury Stickers)
    - After the reading, share with the students that they are now members of the jury and have the opportunity to deliberate on the guilt or innocence of Al Ledge. The following statement is a suggestion of how you might introduce this activity: "Members of the jury, you have heard all the testimony concerning this case. It is now up to you to determine the facts and decide on the fate of Al Ledge. You will need to decide if Al Ledge is "Guilty, beyond a reasonable doubt" or "Not Guilty, because the prosecutor did not prove his guilt beyond a reasonable doubt." Note–you may need to illustrate what you mean by "beyond a reasonable doubt."
    - If time allows, explain that a jury in a criminal trial must be unanimous. One at a time, have a person in each group explain the reason for his/her group's verdict. Ask the students to vote again based on the arguments they heard. If a unanimous verdict can't be reached, explain this is a "hung" jury and what would happen next.

Questions and Discussions to Engage the Audience: Suggestions for questions to engage the audience are provided for use while reading the book. The following questions are suggested to wrap up the presentation:

- What did you learn about the people involved in a trial? If you could be any character in a courtroom, which one would you choose and why?
- What did you learn about a trial?
- Was it difficult to reach a verdict? Explain why.

End with: How would you describe the legal system or trial to someone who wasn't here today?

Report your Presentation:

- We would love to hear about your presentation. Go to Report Your Presentation

Suggested Content TEKS:

4.15, 4.19BCD, 4.21ABCD, 4.22; 5.17, 5.19, 5.23BCD, 5.25ACD, 5.26