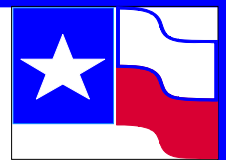
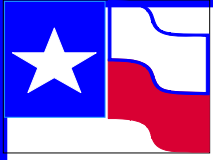




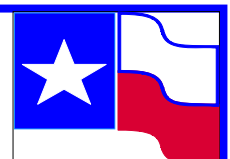
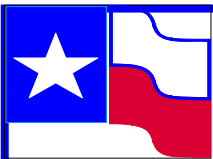
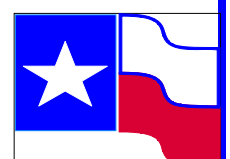
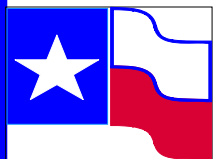
Houston Bar Association  
Teach Texas Program

Handout for Lesson Plan 2

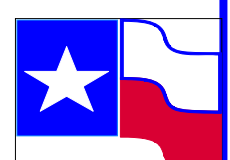
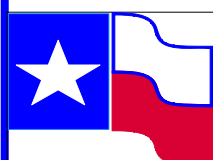
Print 7 sets of these pages for Lesson Plan 2



# Supreme Court of Texas

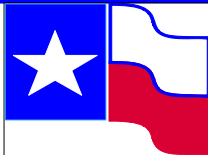
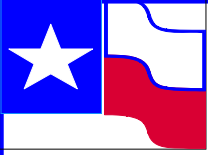


In Texas, the Supreme Court of Texas is one of the two highest courts in our state. It differs from the other high court in that it hears civil cases (not criminal cases) that come on appeal from the Courts of Appeals. Additionally, these justices handle the appeals of all juvenile cases from the Courts of Appeals.

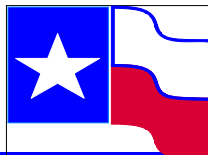
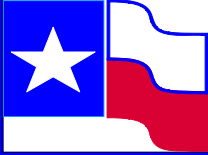




# Court of Criminal Appeals

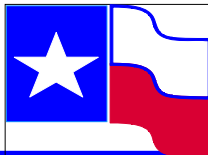
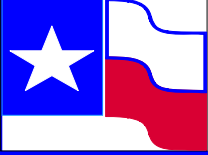


In Texas, the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals is one of the two highest courts in our state. It differs from the other high court in that it only hears criminal cases (not civil cases). While most of the cases that it hears come on appeal from the Courts of Appeals, if the case involved the death penalty (given by the district courts) it would bypass the Courts of Appeals and go directly to this court.

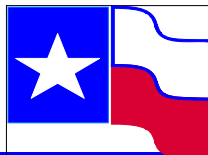
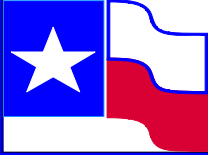




# Courts of Appeals

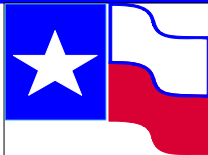
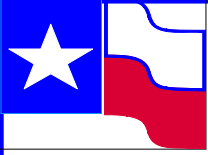


These courts exercise what is known as appellate jurisdiction, which means they hear cases that have already been heard and discussed in a lower court. There are 14 of these courts that are situated throughout the state of Texas. These justices hear all civil cases and criminal cases that are appealed from district or county courts, with the exception of death penalty cases. They also handle the appeals of juvenile cases.





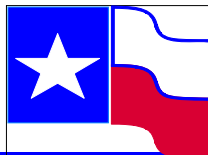
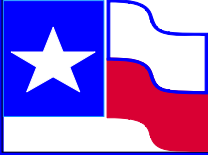
# District Courts



The district courts are trial courts and there are approximately 396 district courts throughout the state of Texas. The trials in these courts have original jurisdiction in the following areas:

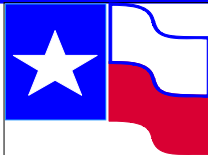
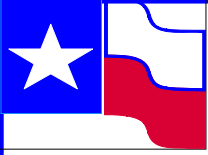
- Civil cases that involve damages over \$200
- Divorce and child custody cases
- Criminal cases that are considered felonies
- Juvenile cases

Cases from these courts are appealed to the Courts of Appeals, with the exception of the death penalty. Those appeals go directly to the Court of Criminal Appeals.



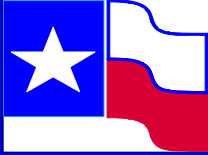
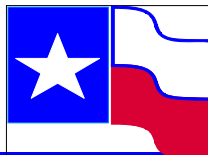


# County Level Courts



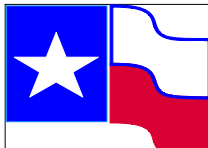
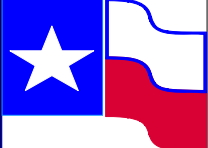
These courts fall under the district courts in the court structure and are also trial courts.

The county level courts generally can hear cases in the following areas:

- Civil cases that usually involve damages between \$200 and \$100,000
  - Wills and estates (known as a probate case)
  - Criminal cases with fines of \$500 or more and jail time up to one year
  - Retrials of cases appealed from justice of the peace or municipal courts
  - Juvenile matters
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# Justice of the Peace Courts



Each county in the state of Texas will have at least one of these courts. They can hear cases and exercise responsibilities in the following areas:

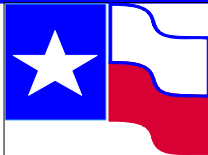
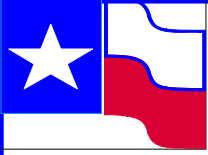
- Lawsuits involving damages of not more than \$5000
- Share responsibility with municipal courts for misdemeanors that are punishable by a fine, but no jail time
- Issue search and arrest warrants
- Conduct weddings

Cases from this court can be appealed to the county courts.

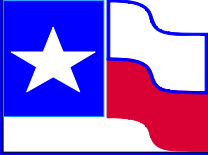




# Municipal Courts



These city courts have original and exclusive jurisdiction over violations of city ordinances, which usually involve traffic or fire offenses. They share responsibility with justice of the peace courts for misdemeanors that are punishable by a fine (not exceeding \$500), but have no jail time. In addition, they handle the following:

- Criminal violations in cases involving the health and public safety of the citizens of the city
  - Civil cases that involve dangerous dogs
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