What's my job in court?

An answer and
activity book for kids
who are going to court

Design and illustration by
Lauri Wonfor-Nolan

What's in this book?

Page

Introduction 2

The Courthouse 3

People in court:

- Judge 6
- Commonwealth's Attorney 7
- Defense lawyer 8
- Witness 12, 13
- Court reporter 14
- Clerk of the court 15
- Bailiff 17
- The jury 23

Page

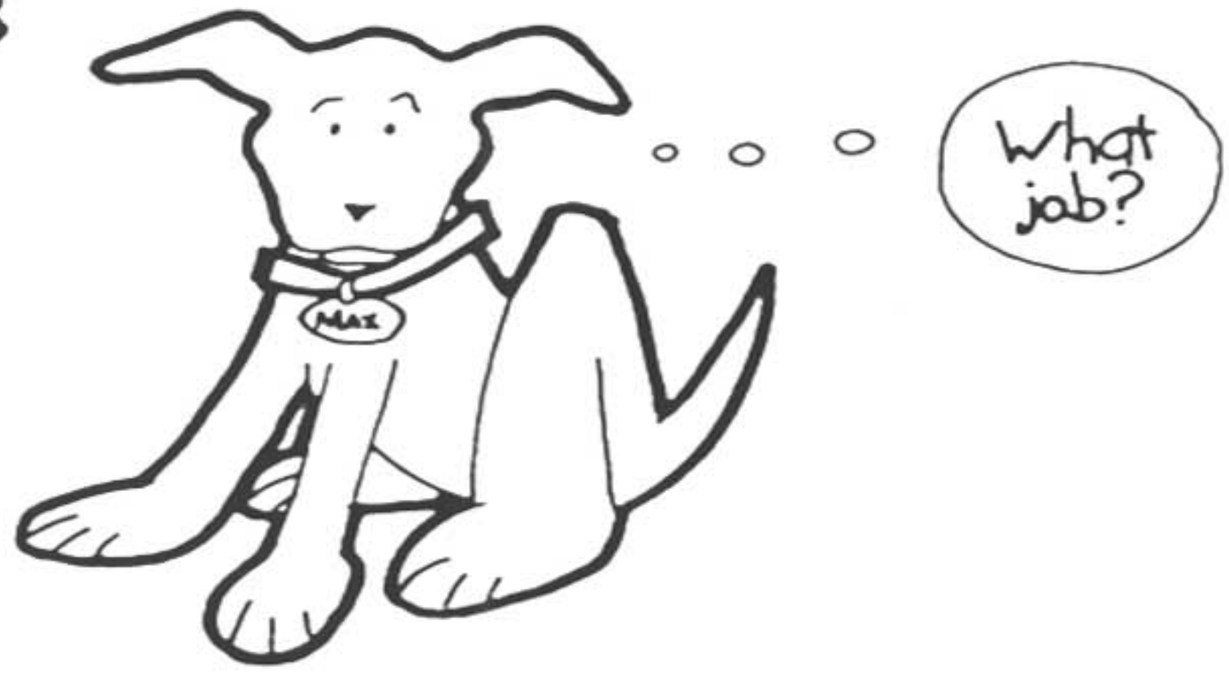
Activities:

- Maze 4
- Connect-the-dots 10
- Color fun 5, 11, 16
- What's wrong in this courtroom? 19
- Match game 20
- Find the word 21
- Courtroom crossword 25

Court rules 18
Guilty and not guilty 22
What happens when it's over 24
Answer page 27
Information for the Commonwealth 28

What does that mean? 26
(Glossary)

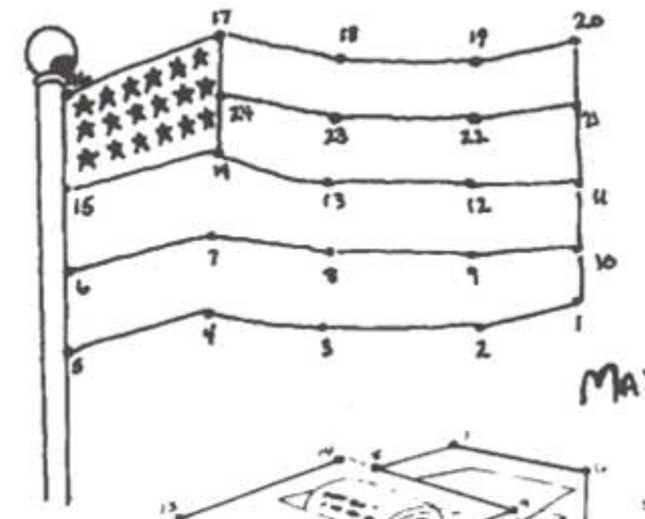
Hi, I'm Jennifer. My friends Johnny and Heather and I have an important job to do. Just like you.

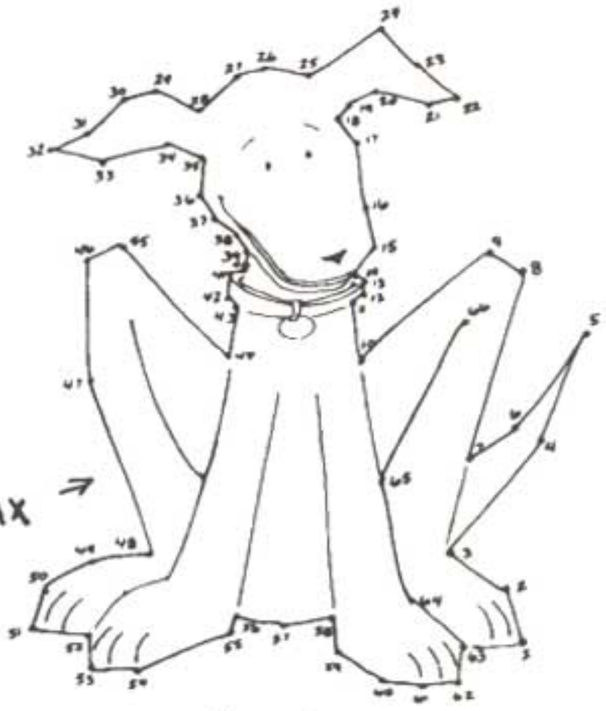


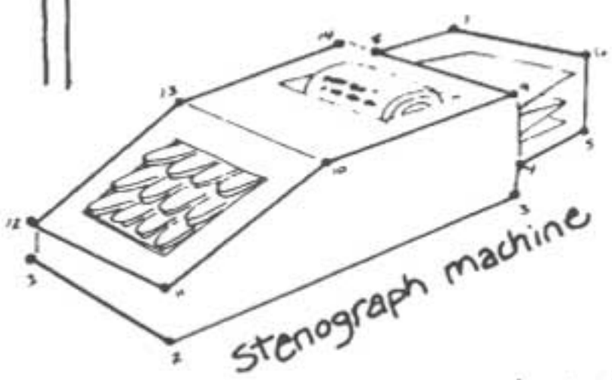
We have to go to court and tell the judge about something. Maybe it's something we saw or heard. Maybe it's something that happened to us. Whatever it is, telling the judge about it makes us witnesses.

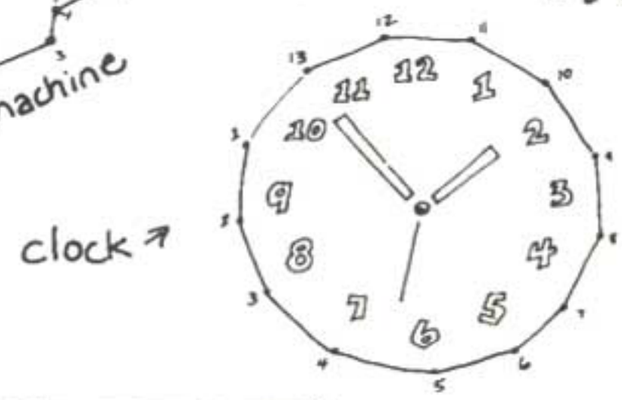
By reading this book and doing the activities, we'll learn about being witnesses. Together we'll think of questions to ask that can make our job easier. We'll also find out about court and the people who work there.

CONNECT THE DOTS:

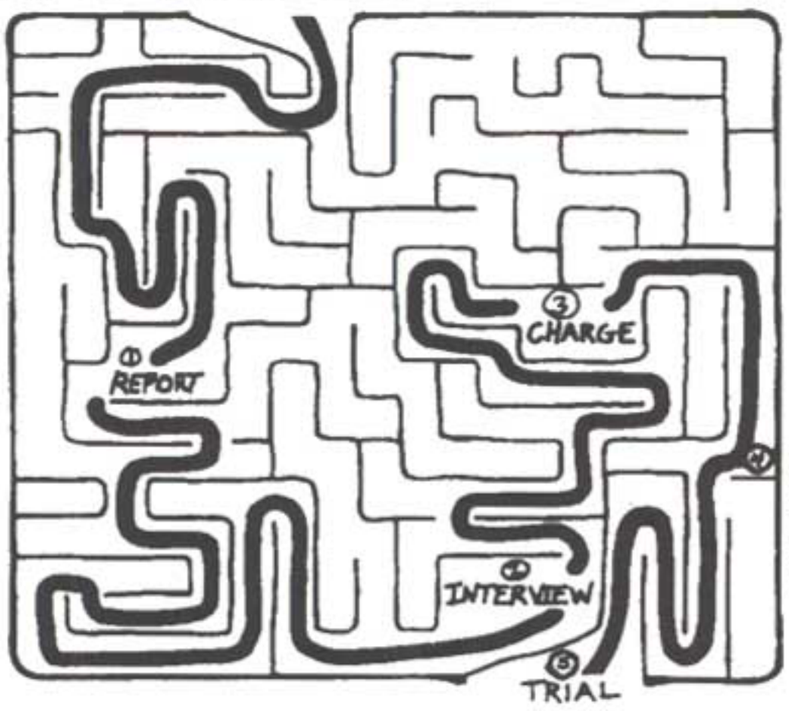








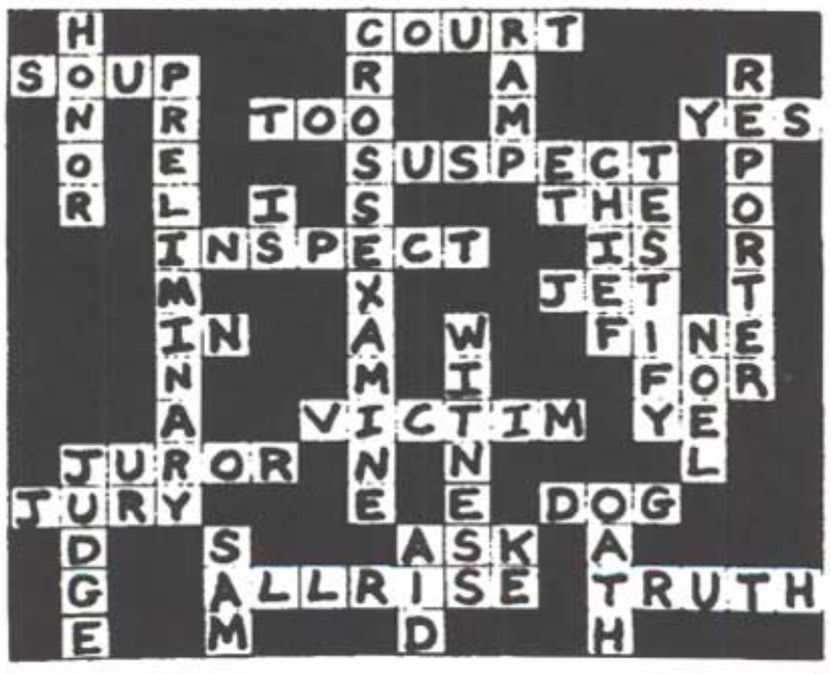
AMAZING MAZE:



FIND THE WORD:

B	C	H	A	R	G	E	S	P	L	E	A	Z	M
A	Q	R	D	E	F	E	N	S	E	E	J	P	L
I	P	B	O	A	T	H	S	C	T	R	U	T	H
L	R	S	L	W	E	E	E	T	O	M	R	T	R
S	E	N	T	E	N	C	E	P	M	U	O	A	E
T	L	A	I	T	S	A	B	J	O	T	R	N	P
A	I	L	I	O	U	A	T	U	T	L	E	T	O
T	M	W	N	B	B	C	E	T	I	D	I	E	R
E	I	C	Q	J	P	Y	S	L	O	Y	Y	C	T
M	N	L	U	E	O	U	T	C	N	R	O	E	E
E	A	E	I	C	E	S	I	Z	U	I	N	R	R
N	R	R	R	T	N	H	F	J	U	D	G	E	K
T	Y	K	Y	Y	A	Z	Y	G	U	I	L	T	Y
A	L	L	E	G	E	E	V	I	D	E	N	C	E

COURTROOM CROSSWORD:



WHAT IF...

1. If you don't understand what people are asking, say **"I don't understand."** If they repeat it and you still don't know what they mean, ask them to **say it in a different way** or an **easier way.**

2. You might be asked about things that you don't remember or about things that didn't happen. **If you don't remember, say "I don't remember." Don't guess. If you know something never happened, say so.** If you forget the order in which things happened, it's okay. The most important thing is to **tell the truth.**

3. You might be asked to talk about things that are embarrassing. That's hard to do. Remember that **judges and lawyers and everyone in court have heard people talk about embarrassing things a lot of times.** You can tell the judge you're embarrassed, but you should **tell the judge what happened even if it is embarrassing.**

4. **Lots of people cry in court. It's okay.** If you think you might cry in court, tell the Commonwealth's Attorney. The Commonwealth's Attorney can make sure there are tissues. Tell the Commonwealth's Attorney what you want to happen if you cry: do you want a break or do you want to keep on going?

5. It's always a good idea to go to the bathroom just before you go into court to be a witness. If you need to go to the bathroom while you're giving evidence, tell the judge you need a break. If you're nervous about doing this, talk to the Commonwealth's Attorney before court about what you should do. You might agree to raise your hand so that the Commonwealth's Attorney can tell the judge you need a break.

6. It is easy to get mixed up or to mix up people who are listening to you if you're asked too many questions at a time. You might tell the lawyer who is asking you questions to ask you only one thing at a time so that you can answer properly.

MATCH GAME:

JUDGE: The person who listens to all the witnesses and decides what happens in the trial.

COMMONWEALTH'S ATTORNEY: The person who helps you to be a witness in court.

DEFENSE LAWYER: The person who helps the defendant in court.

COURT REPORTER: The person who records everything in court.

BAILIFF: The person who makes sure everyone is safe in court.

JURY: Twelve people who try to decide together if the defendant is guilty or not guilty.

WITNESS: A person who tells the judge about something that happened.

DEFENDANT: The person on trial who is charged with breaking the law.

WHAT'S WRONG IN THIS COURTROOM?

1. The judge is eating a hot dog and drinking a can of soda. You should not eat in the court but it is a good idea to bring a snack with you while you wait.

2. The witness can hardly see over the witness box. If you can't see properly when you are in the witness box, ask the Commonwealth's Attorney for a different chair or a booster seat.

3. There is an apple instead of a doorknob on the courtroom door.

4. The clock only has one hand.

5. There is a flower growing out of the judge's pen holder.

6. The stripes are vertical instead of horizontal on the American flag.

7. The clerk of the court is knitting a sweater. She should be listening to what is happening in court and ready to help the judge.

8. The court reporter is blowing bubble gum. Don't chew gum in court.

9. Max is sitting in the jury box! Max didn't notice that there is a kitten in the courtroom. Pets are not allowed in court, but if you would like to bring a special toy to hold while you are waiting, that's fine. If there is someone you want to come into the courtroom with you, ask the Commonwealth's Attorney.

10. The Commonwealth's Attorney has bare feet. That may be okay to go to the beach, but in court try to be neat and comfortable, and do wear shoes!

11. The defense attorney has his feet up on the desk. Everyone should try to sit up straight in court.

12. There are only two legs on the Commonwealth's Attorney's table.

13. People sitting in the seats are talking. They should try not to talk while the judge is in court. If they have to say something, they should whisper or leave quietly and talk outside.

14. Someone is eating popcorn. This is not a movie; going to court is serious. No one should eat while in the courtroom, even if that person if just watching.

15. Someone is listening to a walkman. You shouldn't be listening to a radio in court. When you are in court, you have to listen carefully to the questions you are asked.

16. Someone is smoking. Smoking isn't allowed in the courtroom.

"What does that mean?"

In court, people use a lot of words that we may never have heard before. Here's a list of some of them:

Allegation:
Something that someone says has happened.

Charge:
The law that the police believe the defendant has broken.

Complaint:
A statement to the police accusing someone of breaking the law.

Cross-examine:
Questioning of a witness by the lawyer for the other side.

Evidence:
Things that witnesses say in court and things (such as photographs, clothes, or drawings) that are brought to court to show what happened.

Interview:
A meeting with the police or Commonwealth's Attorney.

Juror:
A person who is on the jury.

Objection:
A reason that a lawyer interrupts a witness to talk to the judge.

Plea:
The answer the defendant gives (guilty or not guilty) to the charge.

Continuance:
Put off trial until another time.

Preliminary Hearing:
A hearing where the judge decides whether there is enough evidence to hold a trial in another court.

Sentence:
The punishment the judge gives to someone found guilty of breaking the law.

Sequestration:
A rule that says witnesses cannot talk to other witnesses or hear what other people say.

Statement:
A description that a witness gives to the police and that the police write down.

Subpoena:
A piece of paper delivered by a sheriff that tells a witness when and where to come to court.

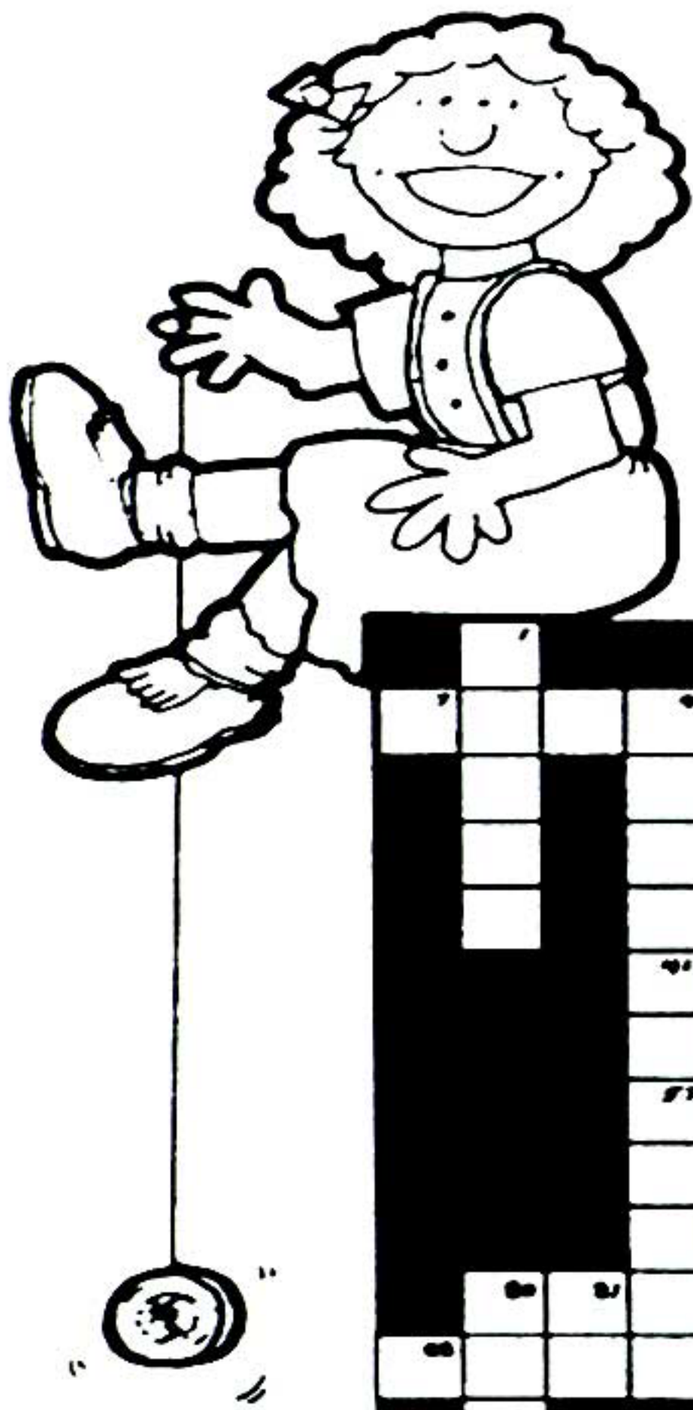
Testify:
Answer questions in court.

Testimony:
What a witness says in court.

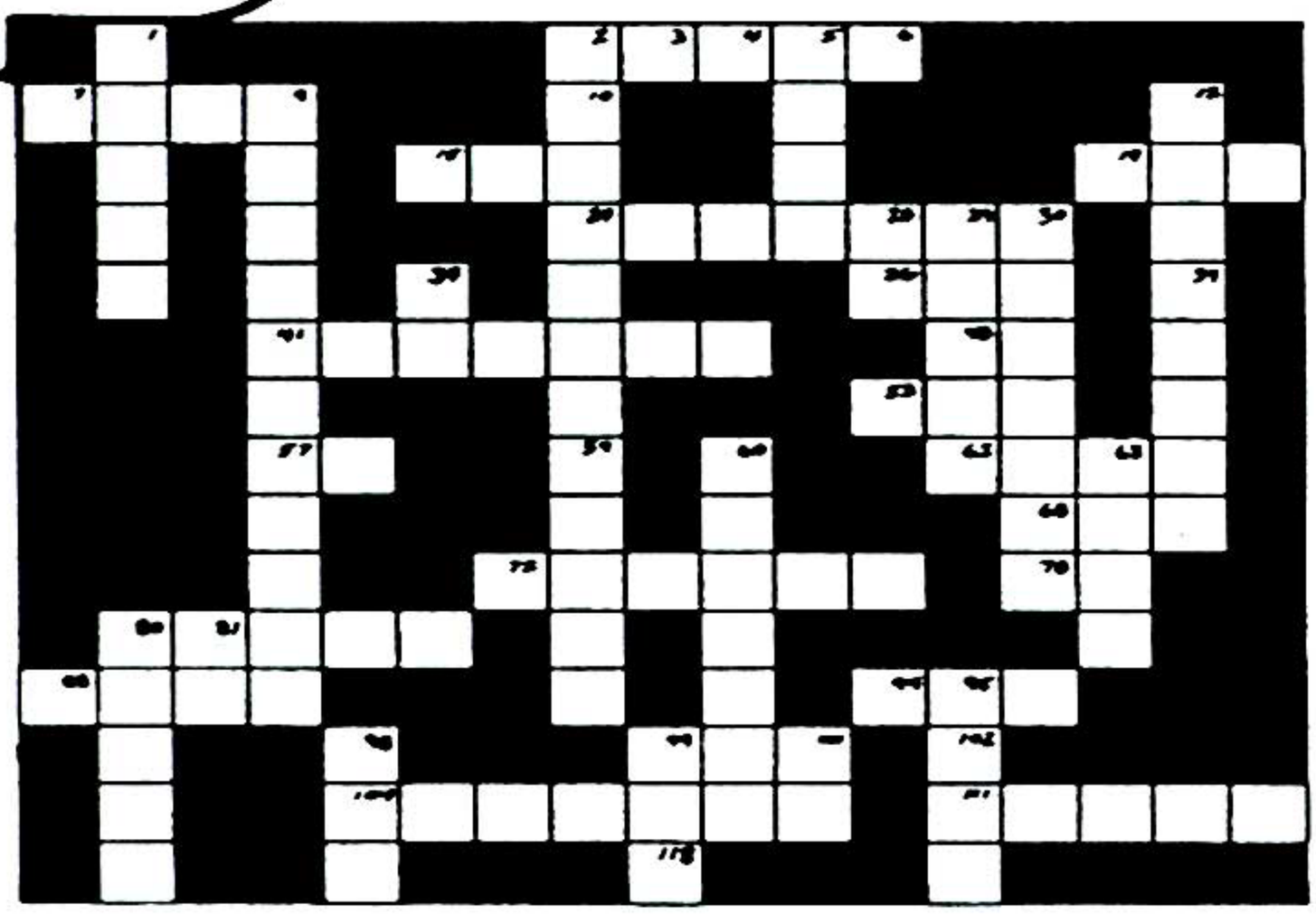
Transcript:
A typewritten record that is made by the court reporter of what is said in court.

Trial:
A hearing that takes place when the defendant pleads "not guilty" and witnesses are required to come to court to give evidence.

Lots of words in this puzzle are used in court. If you want some help, the answers are on page 27.



Courtroom Crossword



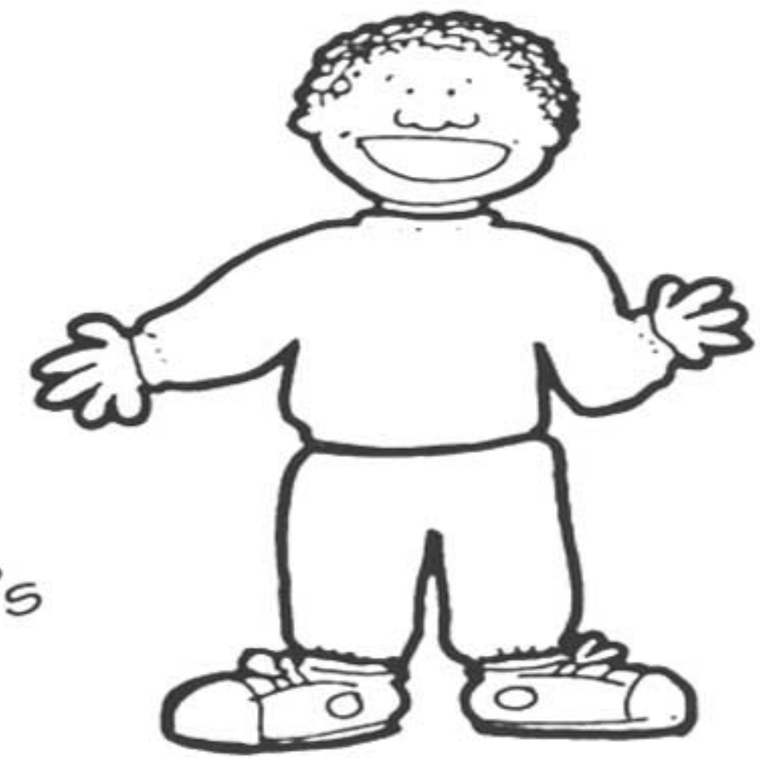
ACROSS

2. The place where cases are heard before a judge.
7. Food you eat when you are feeling ill. Chicken noodle _ _ _ _ .
15. Another word for "also."
19. When you agree, you say _ _ _ .
24. Someone the police think has broken the law.
36. What word is missing in "shall be _ _ _ truth"?
39. 4 – 4 = _ .
41. To look at closely. (Hint: this word sounds like respect.)
48. The middle two letters in the word "list."
53. A type of airplane.
57. The opposite of out.
59. The first letter of the alphabet.
61. Money that a person who is found guilty has to pay.
68. "A penny _ _ _ your thoughts."
72. The person against whom a crime is committed.
78. An old English word that means "you."
80. A person on the jury.
88. Twelve people who decide if the defendant is guilty or not guilty.
94. Jennifer's friend, Max is a _ _ _ .
99. If you want to know something, you should _ _ _ .
102. The first letter in the word "allege."
104. What the bailiff says when the judge comes into court.
111. It is important that all the witnesses tell the _ _ _ _ _ .
118. The first letter in the word "day."

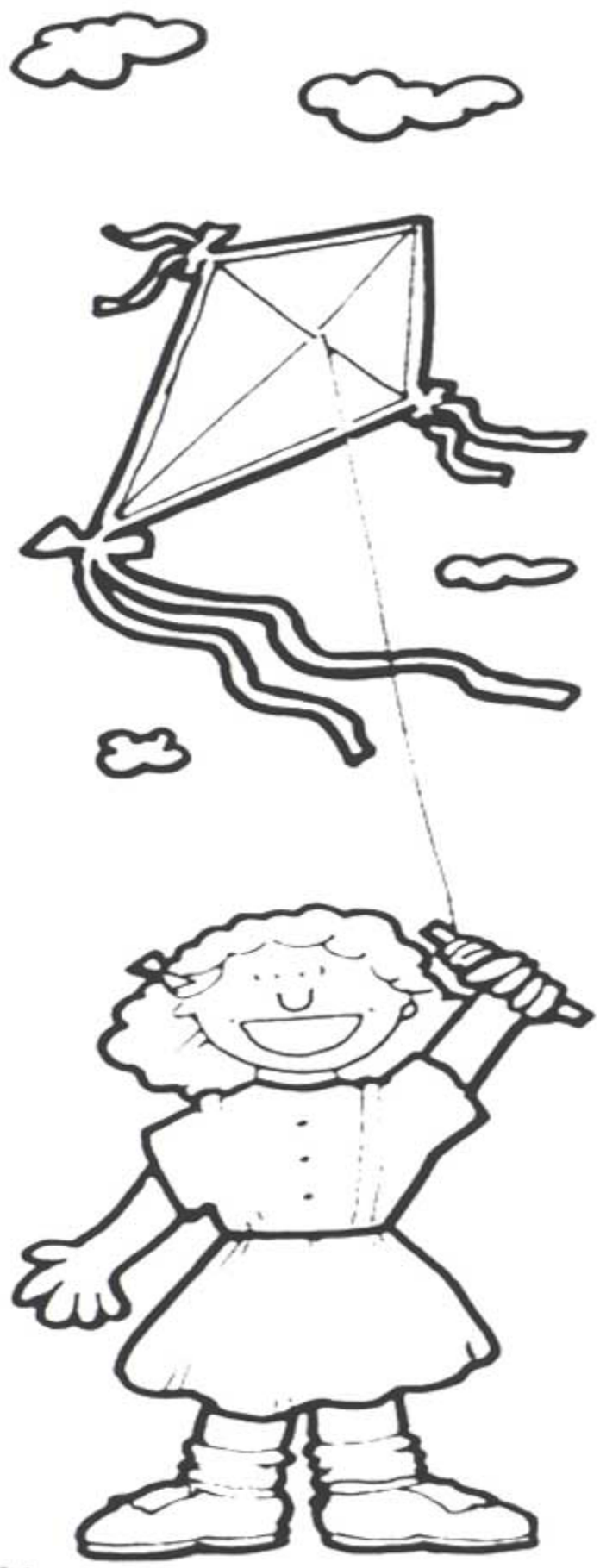
DOWN

1. You can call the judge "your _ _ _ _ _ ."
2. What the defense lawyer may do to check your evidence.
5. A handicapped person gains access to Court by using a _ _ _ _ .
9. A hearing where the judge decides whether there is enough evidence for a full trial.
12. The person who records what everyone says in court is the court _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ .
28. The initials for "Extra Terrestrial."
29. The leader of a native tribe.
30. Answer questions in court.
34. The two middle letters of the word "Miss."
60. A person who answers questions in court for the judge to hear.
63. The French word for "Christmas."
72. A sign for victory.
80. The person who listens to the witnesses and decides what happens in the trial.
81. Two letters that sound like "you are."
88. The first letter in the word "jury."
95. A promise to tell the truth.
98. A boy's name (rhymes with "ham.")
99. Another word for "help."
101. The cottage is on a la_ _ .

What happens when my job is over?



Some kids don't want to know what happens in court after they've finished being a witness. Other kids want to come back and find out what the judge or jury decides about the case. We can always talk to the Commonwealth's Attorney about what we'd like to do.



If the judge or jury finds the defendant not guilty of breaking the law, the defendant is free to go. If the defendant is found guilty, one of the things the judge must decide is how to keep the defendant from breaking the law again. To do this, sometimes the judge sets rules about what the defendant can and can't do, sometimes the judge makes the defendant pay money, and sometimes the judge sends the defendant to jail, and sometimes the judge makes the defendant get help.

If we have any questions about what the judge decides in the case, we can ask the Commonwealth's Attorney.

After it's all over, some kids feel sad or upset. We should all talk to someone we trust about how we feel.

Whatever happens, we'll have done an important job by being witnesses. And we'll have learned a lot about court and what goes on there.

All about the jury

Most of the time, it's the judge who decides whether or not the defendant broke the law. Sometimes, a jury is chosen to do this.

A jury is made up of 12 men and women. The people on the jury are called jurors, and they are picked by the Commonwealth's Attorney and the defense lawyer. The jury's job is to listen carefully to all the witnesses and to try to decide together whether the defendant is guilty or not guilty of breaking the law.

Have you ever had to make an important decision about what to believe?

Guilty / not guilty

The judge has to listen to all the witnesses and try to make a decision about what happened. This part of the judge's job is like putting the pieces of a puzzle together.

Sometimes the judge may be confused because some of the pieces are missing and other pieces aren't clear. Unless the judge feels sure that the defendant broke the law, the judge must find the defendant not guilty.

Words are hidden in this puzzle across, up and down, and diagonally. These words are sometimes used in court. When you find a word, circle it and cross it off the list. The first one is done for you. The rest of the answers are on page 27. (But don't peek yet!)

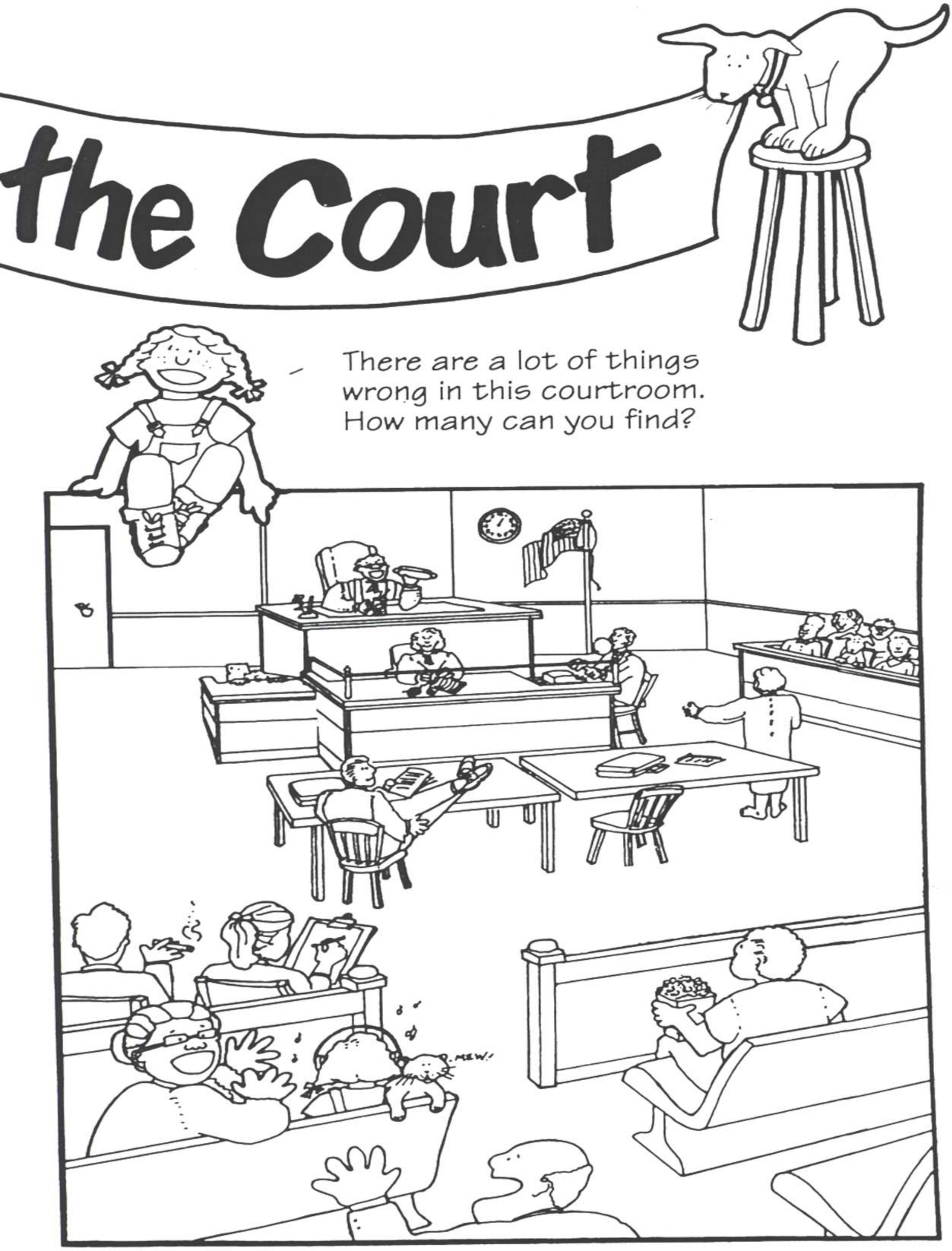
B	C	H	A	R	G	E	S	P	L	E	A	Z	M
A	Q	R	D	E	F	E	N	S	E	E	J	P	L
I	P	B	O	A	T	H	S	C	T	R	U	T	H
L	R	S	L	W	E	E	E	T	O	M	R	T	R
S	E	N	T	E	N	C	E	P	M	U	O	A	E
T	L	A	I	T	S	A	B	J	O	T	R	N	P
A	I	L	I	O	U	A	T	U	T	L	E	T	O
T	M	W	N	B	B	C	E	T	I	D	I	E	R
E	I	C	Q	J	P	V	S	L	O	Y	Y	C	T
M	N	L	U	E	O	U	T	C	N	R	O	E	E
E	A	E	I	C	E	S	I	Z	U	I	N	R	R
N	R	R	R	T	N	H	F	J	U	D	G	E	K
T	Y	K	Y	Y	A	Z	Y	G	U	I	L	T	Y
A	L	L	E	G	E	E	V	I	D	E	N	C	E

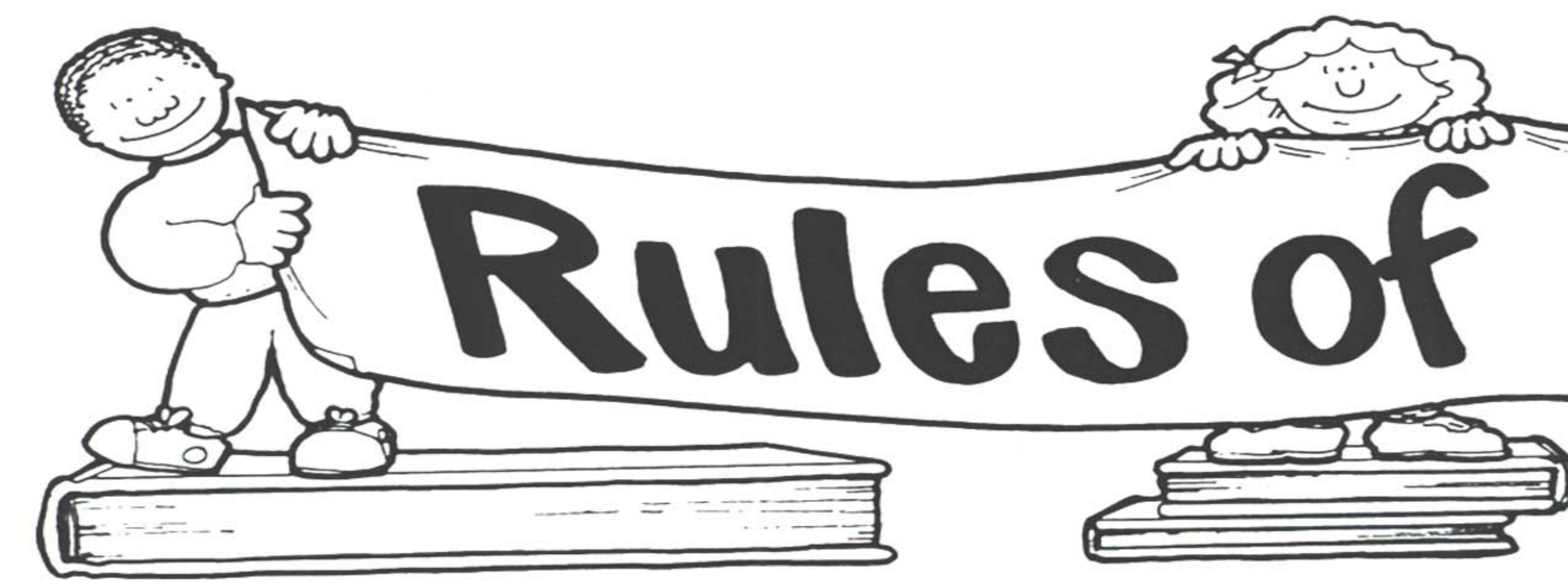
- ALLEGE
- BAIL
- CHARGE
- CLERK
- CODE
- COURT
- DEFENSE
- EVIDENCE
- GUILTY
- INQUIRY
- JUROR
- JURY
- MOTION
- OATH
- OBJECT
- JUDGE
- POLICE
- PRELIMINARY
- REPORTER
- SENTENCE
- STATEMENT
- PLEA
- SUBPOENA
- TESTIFY
- TRUTH
- WITNESS

Match the people in column A to their job in column B.
The first one is done for you. See the answers on page 27.

A	B
Judge ○	○ A person who tells the judge about something that happened.
Commonwealth's Attorney ○	○ The person on trial who is charged with breaking the law.
Defense Lawyer ○	○ The person who makes sure everyone is safe in court.
Court Reporter ○	○ The person who listens to all the witnesses and decides what happens in the trial.
Bailiff ○	○ The person who helps you to be a witness in court.
Jury ○	○ The person who helps the defendant in court.
Witness ○	○ The person who records everything in court.
Defendant ○	○ Twelve people who try to decide together if the defendant is guilty or not guilty.

the Court


There are a lot of things wrong in this courtroom. How many can you find?
MEW!



In America everybody tries to be very careful and fair when deciding whether people have broken the law or not. That's because if people are found guilty of breaking the law, they can be punished.

It is not enough that the judge thinks the defendant probably broke the law. The law says that a judge cannot find a person guilty unless the judge feels certain that the person broke the law.

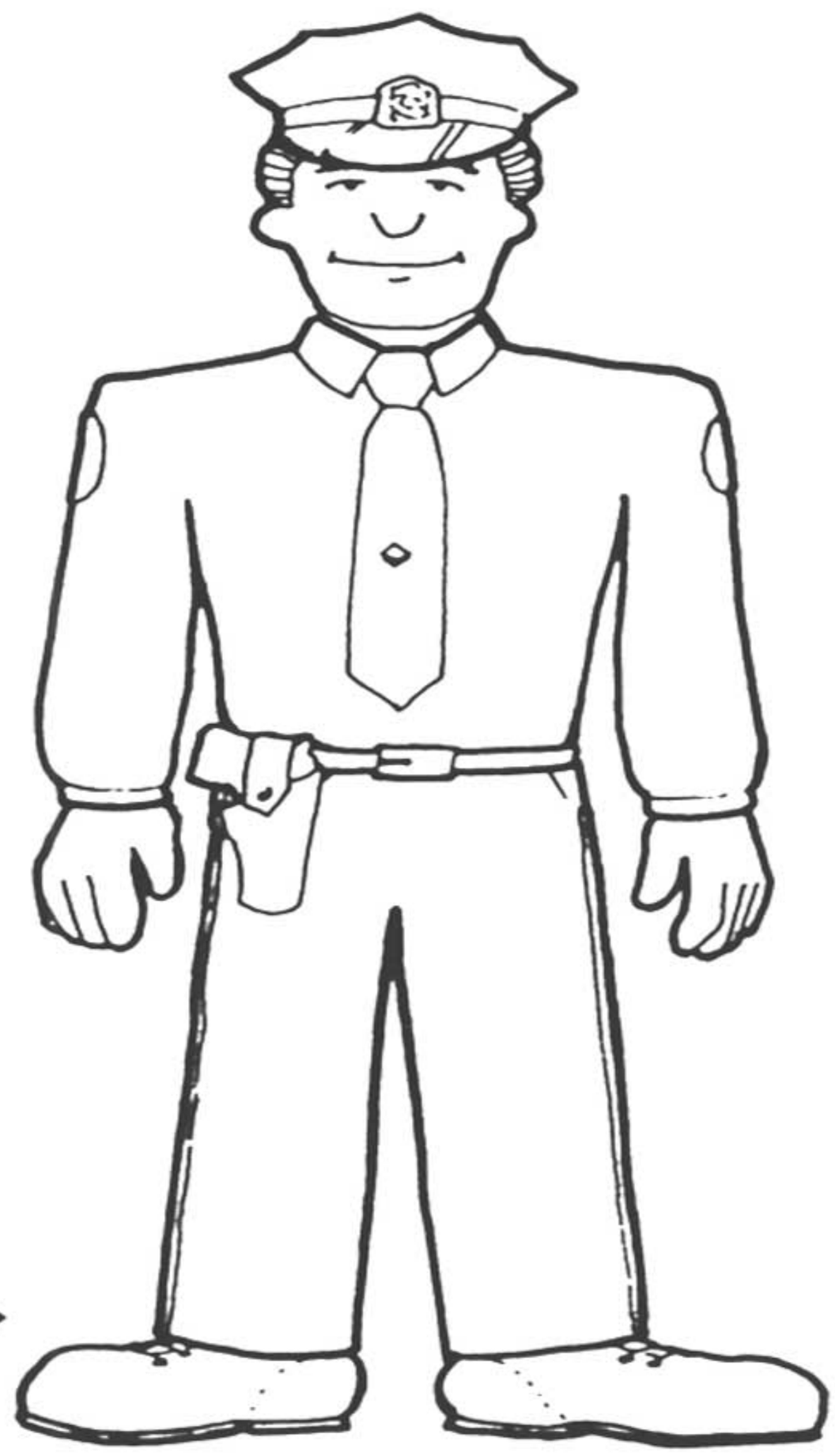
Rules for Witnesses

- Tell the truth.
- If you can't remember something or don't understand what someone says, say so.
- If you don't know the answer to a question, say you don't know – don't guess.
- If you don't agree with what someone asks you, tell them that you don't agree.
- If you are sure about the answer to a question, you can say so. If you are not sure, you can tell the judge what parts you are not sure of.
- Talk to the judge if something is bothering you or if you have a question while you are being a witness.

The Bailiff

The job of the bailiff is to keep everyone safe in court. Some courtrooms have a bailiff to make sure that no one hurts or frightens anyone. The bailiff wears a uniform.

Often, the police officer who spoke with you may be in court. That officer might also be a witness.
If we have any worries or questions about court, we can ask the police officer or the Commonwealth's Attorney.



Can you color the bailiff?

Max is having a snack while he waits for his friends in court.

Can you color his silly sandwich?

Clerk of the Court

The clerk of the court's job is to help the judge.

The clerk reads out the charge at the beginning of the trial. The judge may ask us to take an oath. If this happens the judge tells us to raise our right hand and asks, "Do you swear or solemnly affirm that the evidence you are about to present will be the truth - the whole truth - and nothing but the truth."

An oath is a promise to tell the truth. If you agree to tell the truth, say "I do."

A defendant may be punished because of what witnesses say. That is why it is so important to tell the truth in court. How would you tell the judge in your own words that you will tell the truth?

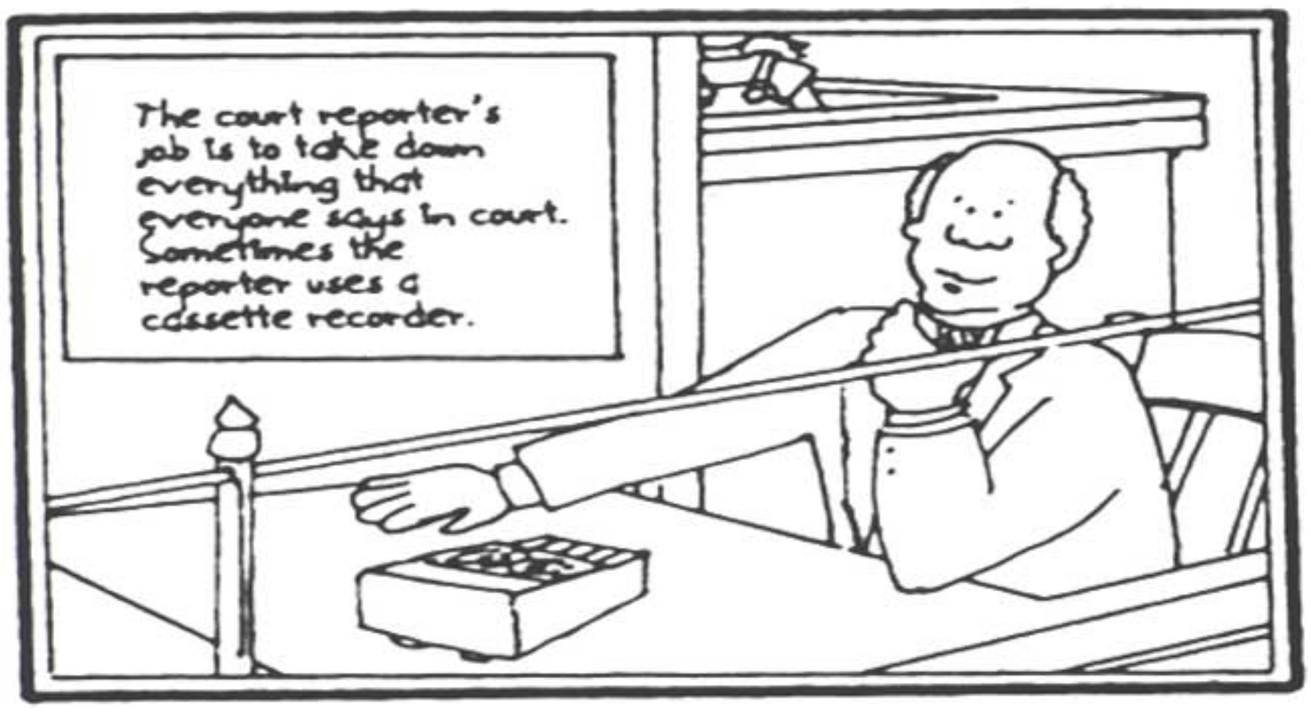
_____

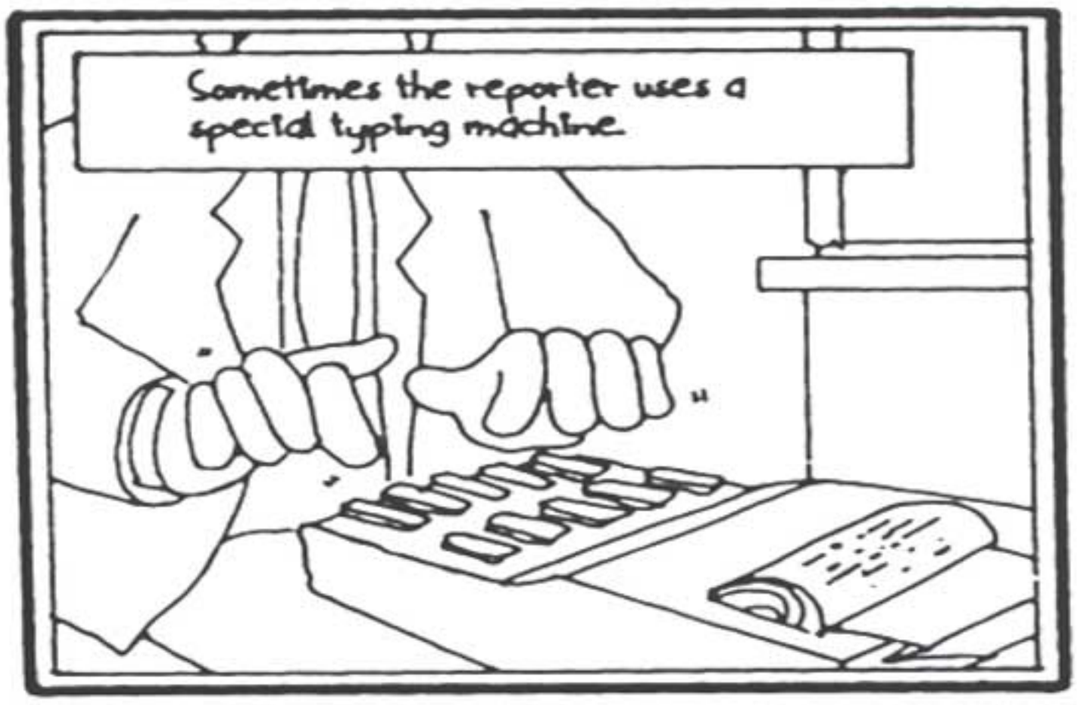
_____

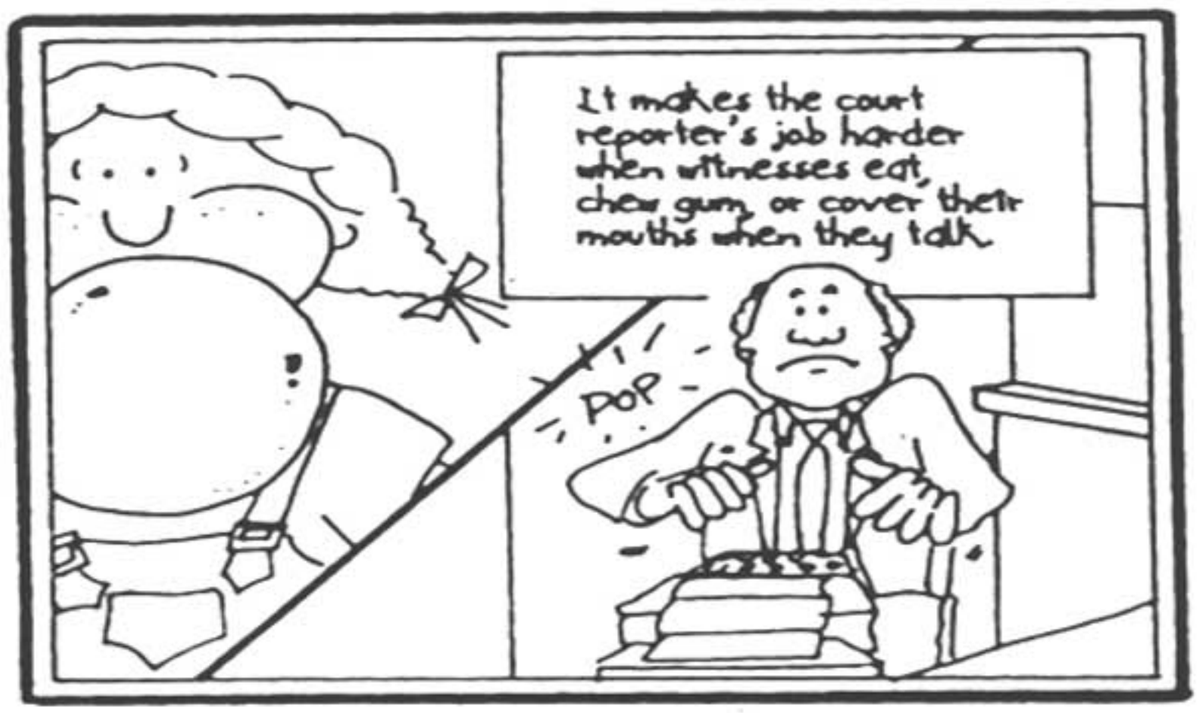
_____

_____

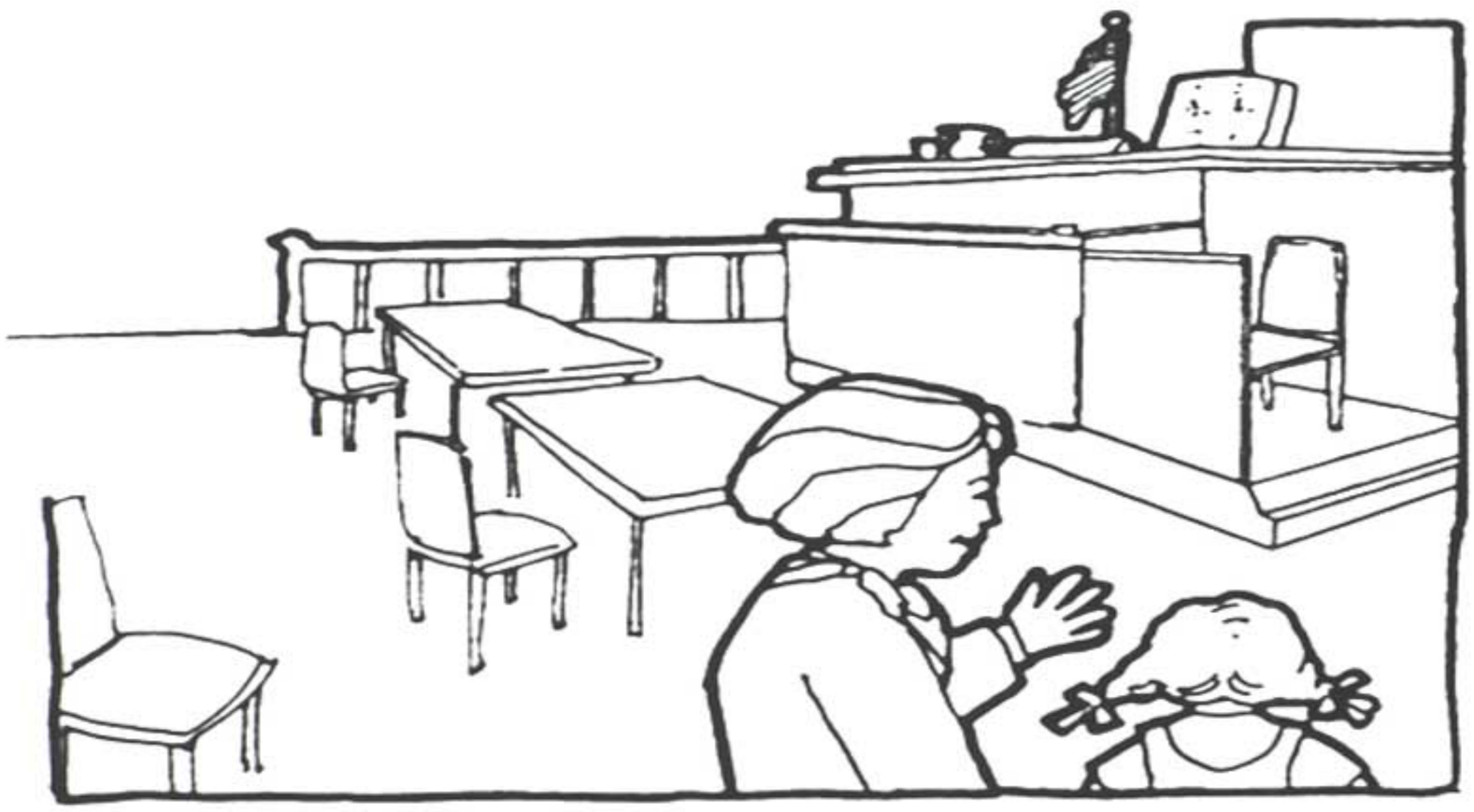
The court reporter







a witness do ?

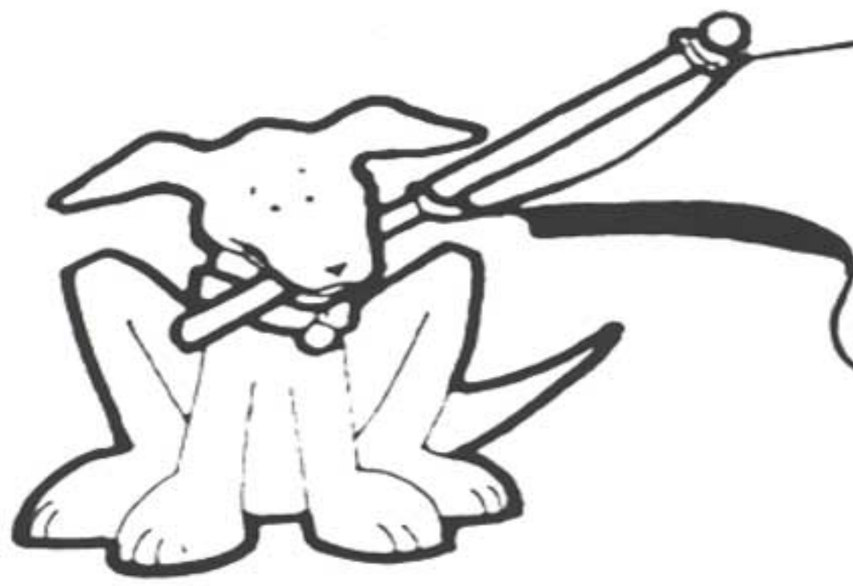


The Commonwealth's Attorney or someone who works with them should show us the courtroom before it's time for us to be witnesses. If we have any questions after we see the courtroom, we can always ask the Commonwealth's Attorney.

Some kids are scared about going to court. If we're scare, we should tell the Commonwealth's Attorney.

In court sometimes the judge can order "sequestration" of the witnesses. This word means that when you give evidence, no other witnesses can be with you in the courtroom, and after you give evidence, you cannot stay and hear what other witnesses are saying. It also means that you cannot talk about the evidence you gave until the trial is over. If you have any questions about this, ask your Commonwealth's Attorney.

If your Mom and Dad are witnesses, you can take a special friend with you into the courtroom to help you feel safe.



What does

A witness is a very important person in court. Our job as witnesses is to listen to questions and to give answers for the judge to hear. This is called giving evidence. The most important thing about being a witness is TELLING THE TRUTH.

What if...

1. You're asked a question and you don't understand it?

_____

2. You're asked a question, and you don't remember the answer?

_____

3. You're asked an embarrassing question?

_____

4. You cry in court?

_____

5. You need to go to the bathroom?

_____

6. You're asked more than one question at a time?

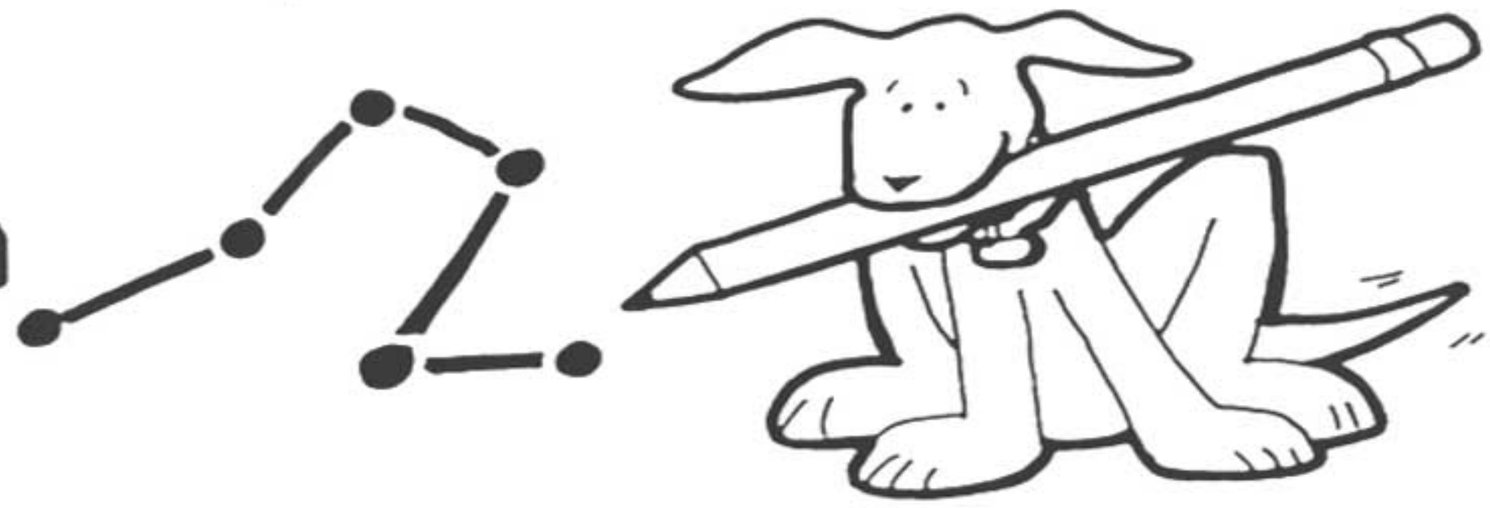
_____

(If you need some help with these questions, turn to page 27)

Johnny is learning all about court and being a witness.

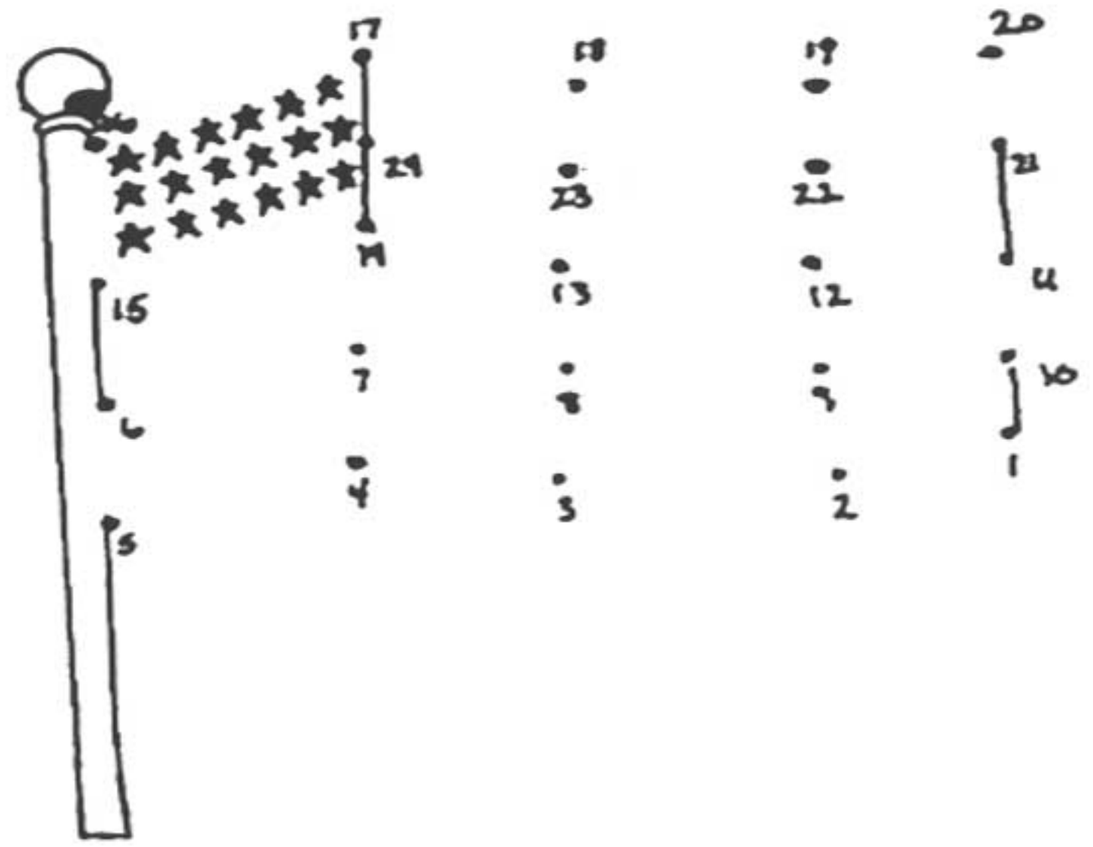
Can you color him?
(and Max too?(

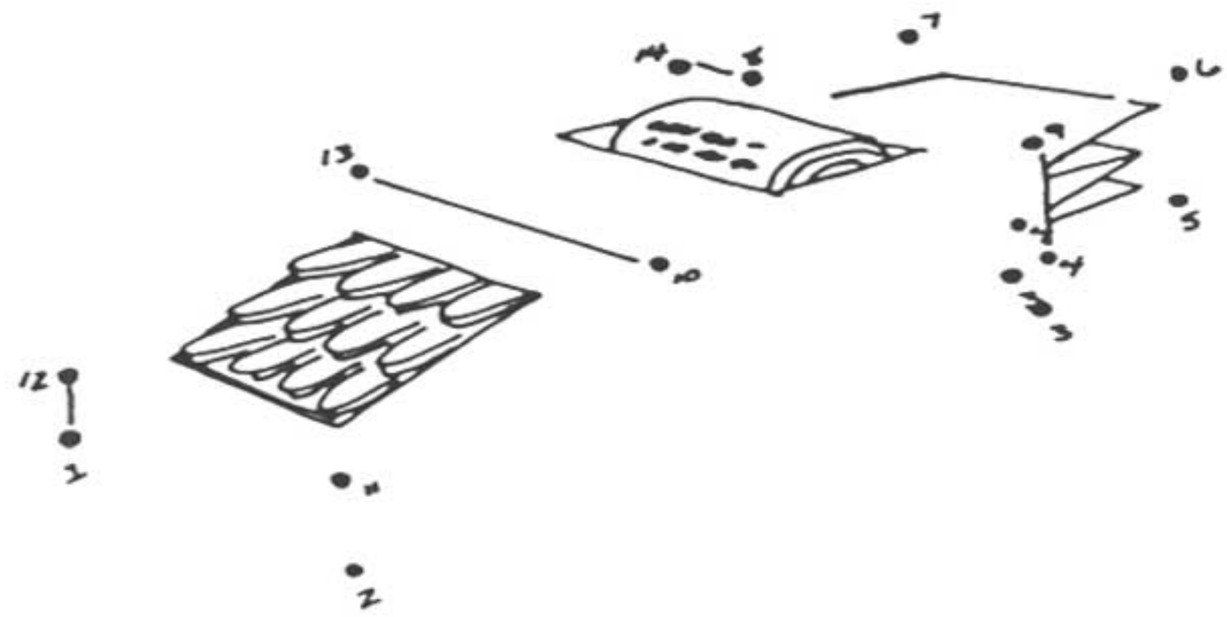
Connect the dots

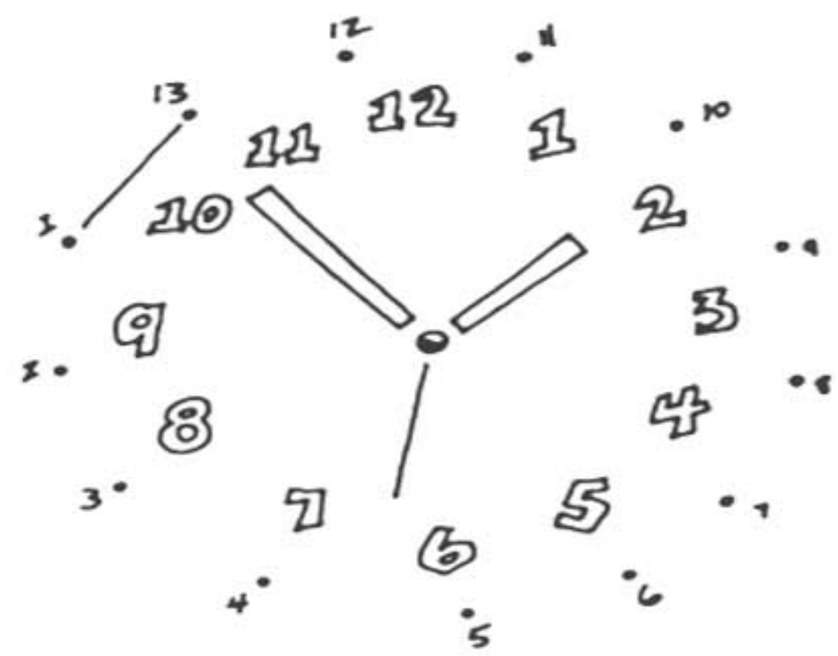


and circle the things that belong in the courtroom. If you don't know what to circle, look at the courtroom in the middle of the book.

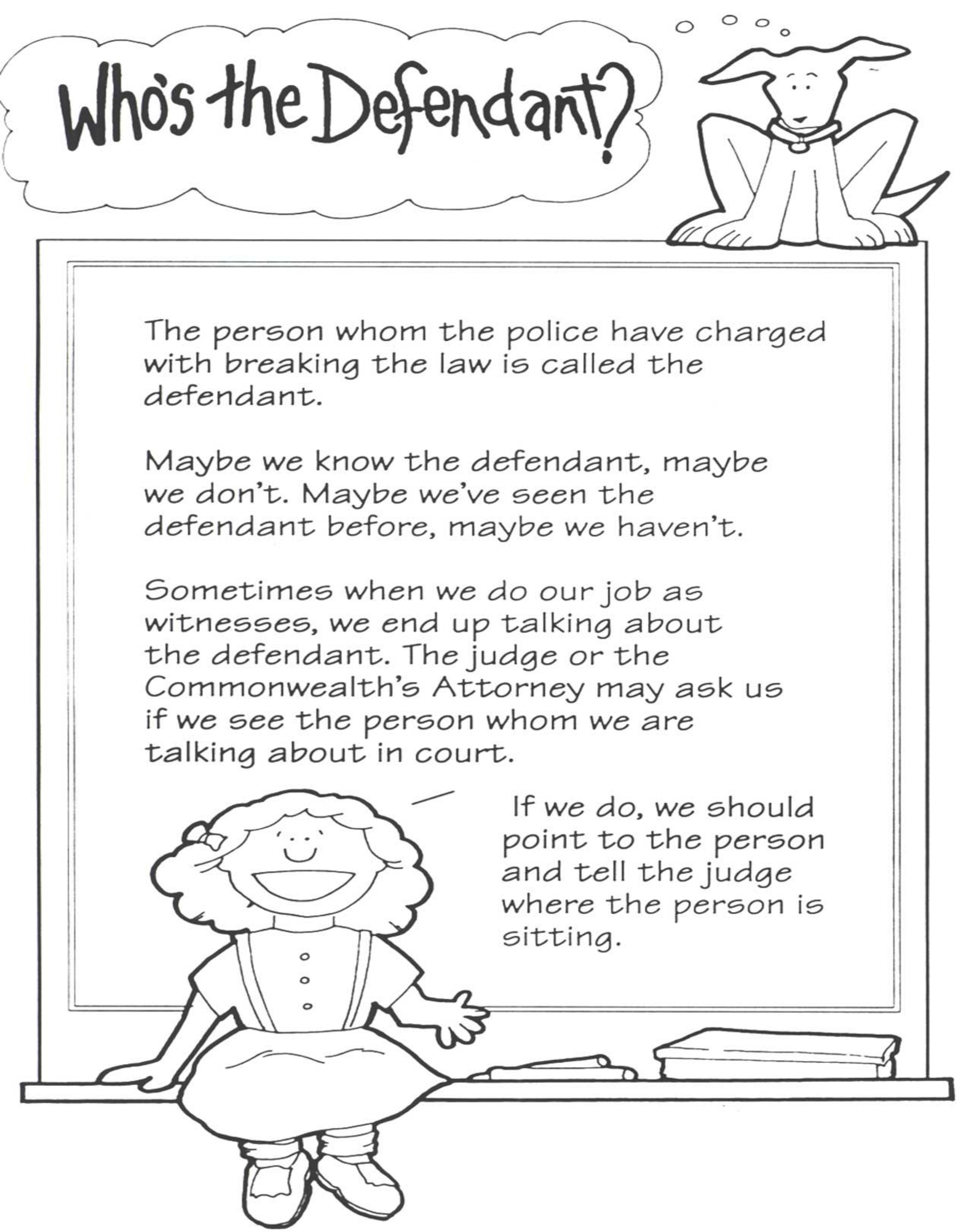
(Dot to dot answers are on page 27)







Who's the Defendant?



The person whom the police have charged with breaking the law is called the defendant.

Maybe we know the defendant, maybe we don't. Maybe we've seen the defendant before, maybe we haven't.

Sometimes when we do our job as witnesses, we end up talking about the defendant. The judge or the Commonwealth's Attorney may ask us if we see the person whom we are talking about in court.

If we do, we should point to the person and tell the judge where the person is sitting.

What is the defense lawyer's job?

The defense lawyer's job is to help the defendant. The defendant is the person charged with breaking the law.

Can you give an example of breaking the law?

_____

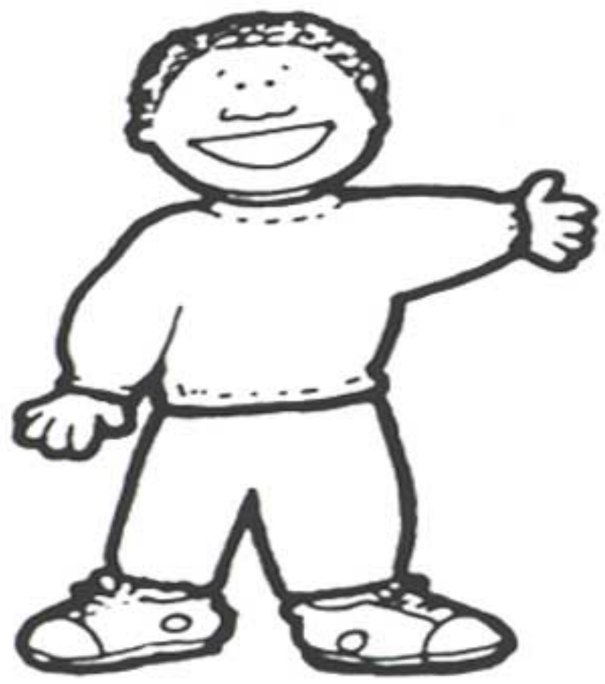
_____

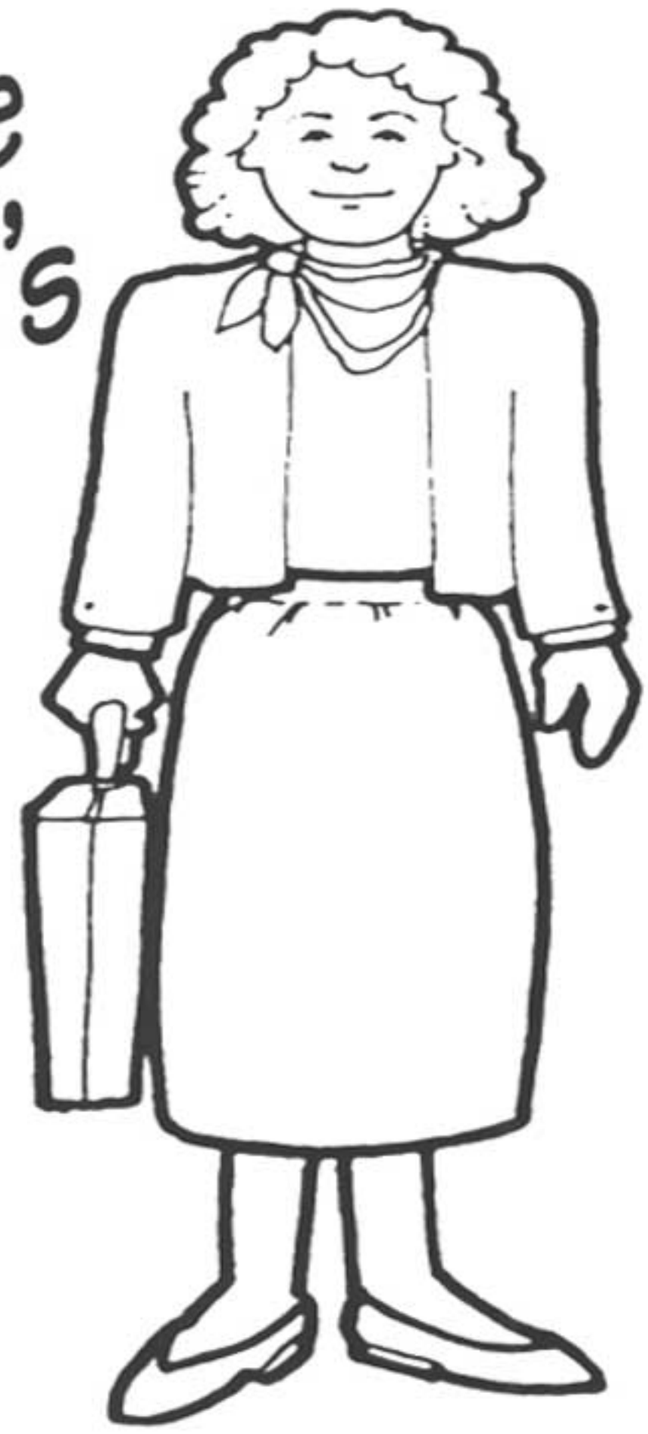
To do a good job, the defense lawyer tries to find out if we've made a mistake, or if we can't remember something, or if we've made something up. That's why the defense lawyer gets a chance to ask us questions after the Commonwealth's Attorney has finished asking us questions.

We've got to listen to everyone's questions carefully and understand them before we answer.

Sometimes when we're talking in court, the defense lawyer may stand up and interrupt us to talk to the judge. Don't worry. We haven't done or said anything wrong. No one is angry at us. All we have to do is stop talking until the judge or the Commonwealth's Attorney asks us to go on.

What does the Commonwealth's Attorney do?





The Commonwealth's Attorney or prosecutor helps us to do our job as witnesses. The Commonwealth's Attorney does this by asking us questions so that the judge can listen to our answers.

Can you answer these questions and show your answers to the Commonwealth's Attorney?

Q. Do you think it will be hard to talk to the Commonwealth's Attorney about what happened? Why? _____

_____

Q. What questions do you want to ask the Commonwealth's Attorney?

_____

_____

_____

Q. Do you know someone you would like to come to court with you? Who? _____

Q. Is there anything about going to court that scares you? What? _____

_____

_____

Draw a picture of your prosecutor.

What is the judge's job?

It's the judge's job to listen to everything that everyone says in court.
We can call the judge "Your Honor" when it's our turn to talk. It's also the judge's job to know the law and to decide whether there is enough evidence to prove the law was broken.
Who acts like a judge at school?

_____

At the beginning,
the judge may ask us some questions like these:

Q. How old are you? _____

Q. What grade are you in? _____

Q. Do you know what an oath is? _____

Q. What does it mean when you "promise to tell the truth"? _____

Q. What do you think might happen if people do not tell the truth in court? _____

_____

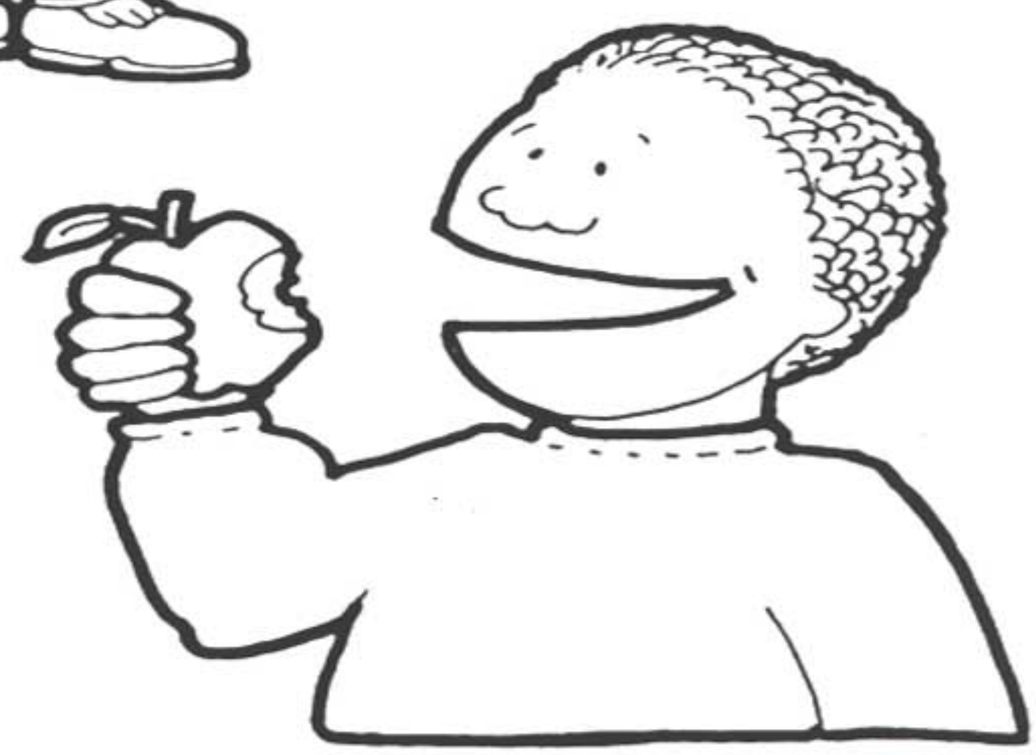
If we need some help in finding answers to some of these questions before we go to court, we can ask the Commonwealth's Attorney.

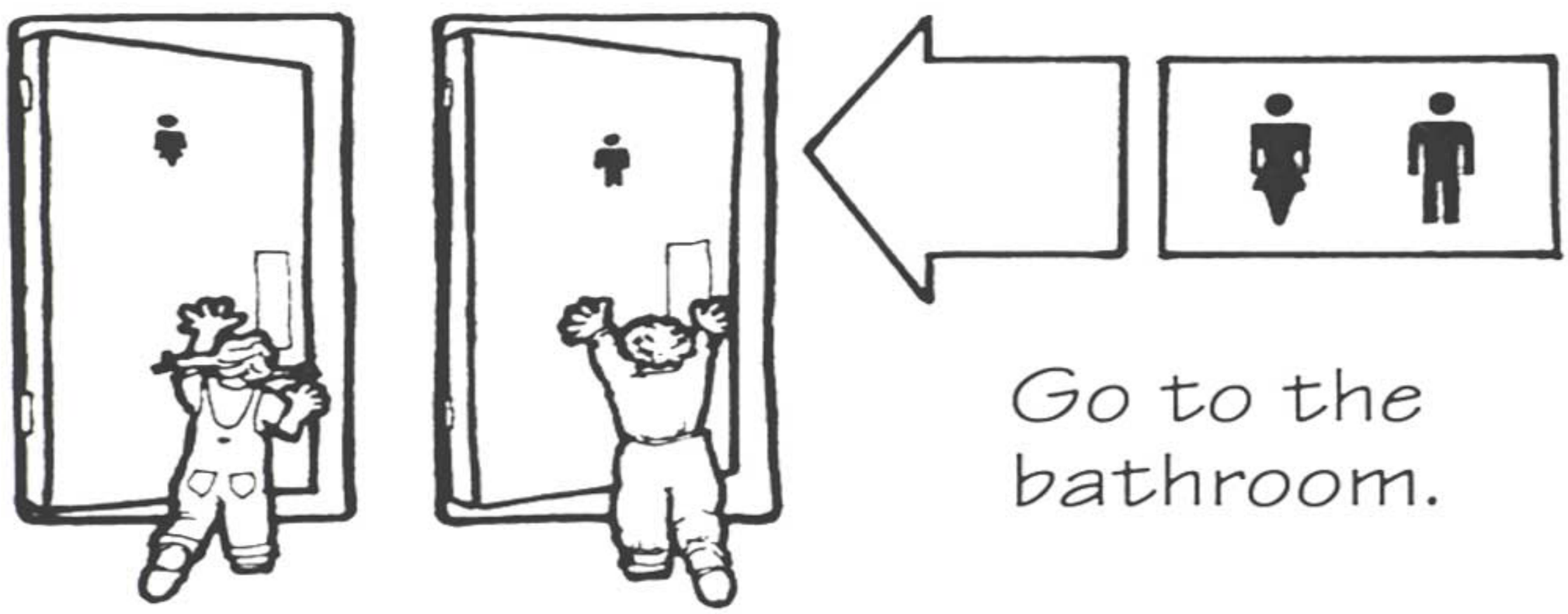
before Court

Color and remember.

Dress to be neat and comfortable.

Eat a snack.



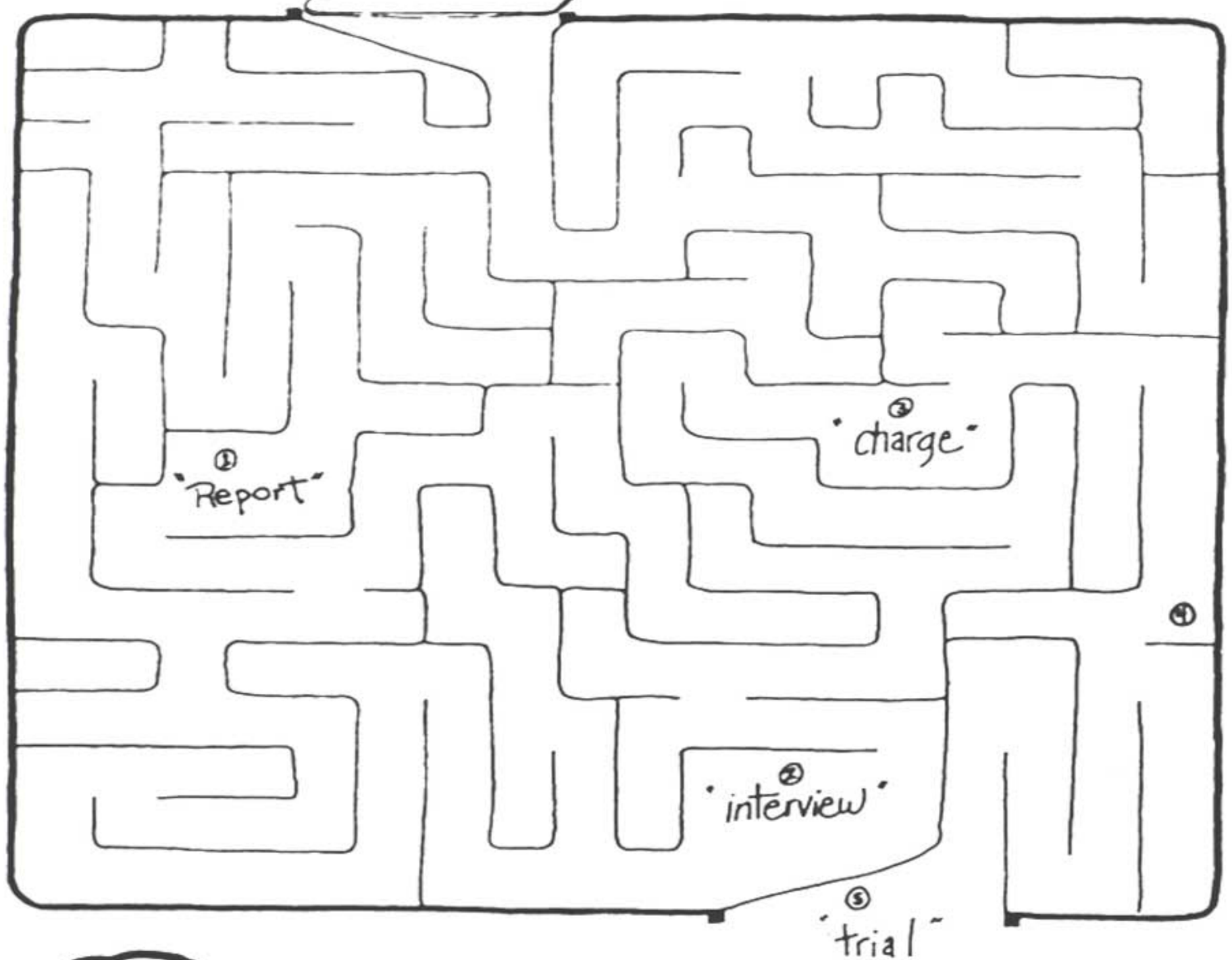


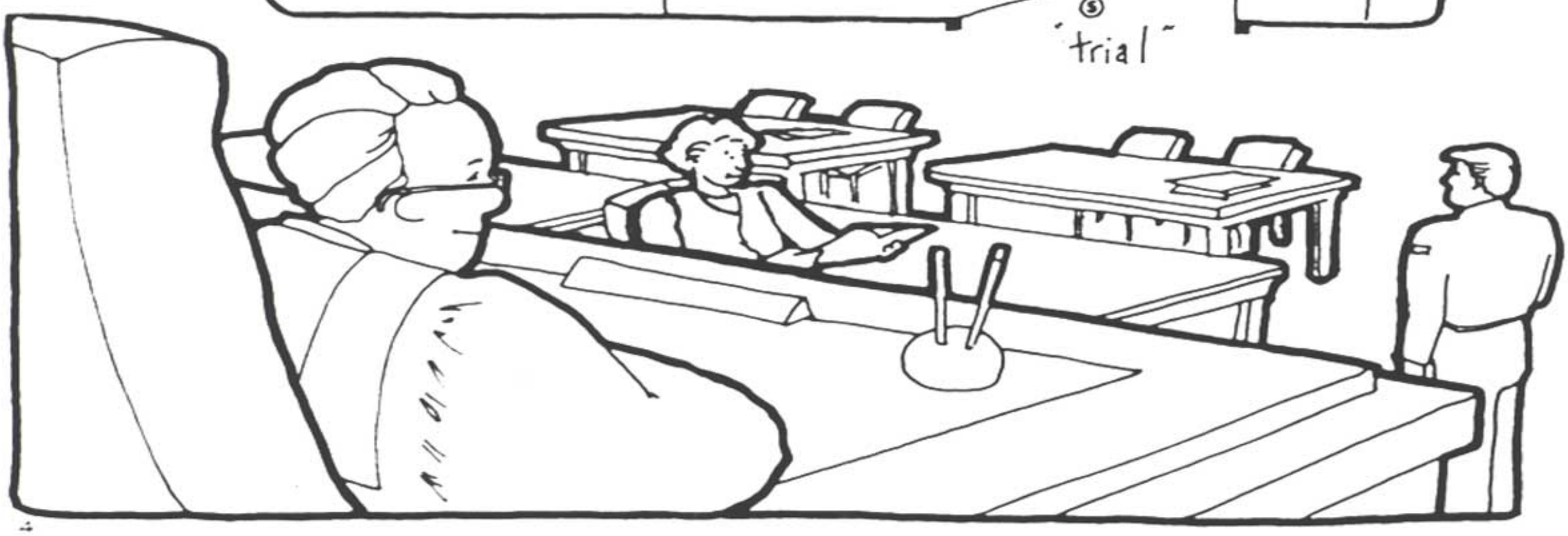
Go to the bathroom.

(If you need some help with the maze, turn to page 27)

Things to do

A lot happens before people get to court. Let's trace some of the steps.





What is a courthouse?

In most towns and cities, there is a building called a courthouse.

It's a place where judges, and sometimes juries, decide if someone has broken the law.

Can you complete the courthouse by filling in the U.S. flag and by printing the name of your city or town above the front doors?

You may want to remember some names, dates and places. Here is a place to write some of them down.

My name is _____

The Commonwealth's Attorney is _____
telephone number _____

The police officer is _____
telephone number _____

My court date is _____

I met the Commonwealth's Attorney on _____

My birthday is _____ I am in grade _____

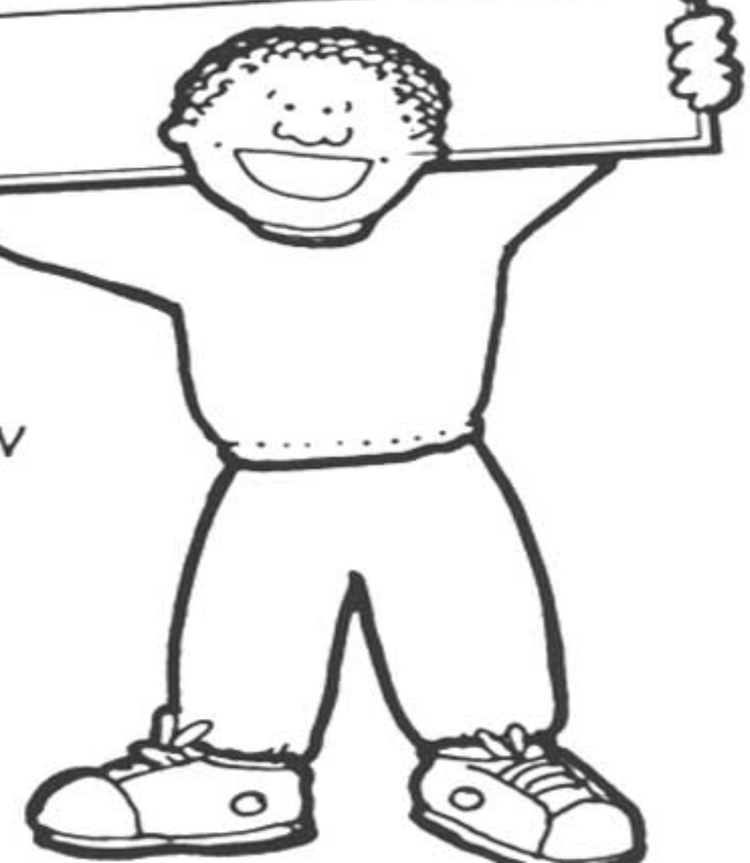
The name of my school is _____

My teacher's name is _____

My favorite subject is _____

My hobbies are _____

The people in my family are _____

_____

The Commonwealth's Attorney would like to know a little bit about you. Can you show this page to the Commonwealth's Attorney?