

HOW TEXAS COURTS WORK

About the Project

The judiciary is likely the least understood branch of government. How Texas Courts Work offers short videos, resource guides, and other information to help Texans navigate the courts and understand their rights and responsibilities under the law. Highlights of How Texas Courts Work include:

- A primer on the types of Texas courts and their functions.
- Videos on what to expect in some of the most common types of cases, including divorce, traffic tickets, DWI, and car accidents.
- A guide on why and how to hire a lawyer.
- Tips for journalists covering legal proceedings.
- An educational program regarding witness credibility (appropriate for middle and high school students).

Project Format

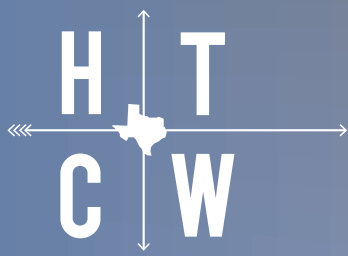
- Website with Videos available at: <http://howtexascourtswork.tyla.org/>

TYLA Board Members to Contact:

- Courtney White
- Alyson Martinez
- Laura Pratt

Presenter Outline for Main Page:

1. Opening Remarks and Introductions (5 Minutes)
 - a. Introduce the presenters
 - b. Talk briefly about TYLA and/or Other Organization
2. Show and Discuss the HTCW Overview Video (10 Minutes)
 - a. Have the audience discuss one thing they learned from the overview video.
 - b. Have the audience discuss their personal interactions with the judicial branch:
 - i. What do you know about the Texas court system?
 - ii. Have you ever been to a courthouse?
 - iii. Have you ever seen a courtroom on TV or in a movie? What was it like?
 - iv. Why do people typically interact with the judicial branch?
3. Show a Topic-Specific Video (5-10 Minutes)
 - a. Choose from:
 - i. What to Expect in a Divorce Case
 - ii. What to Expect in a Traffic Ticket Case
 - iii. What to Expect in a DWI Case
 - iv. What to Expect in a Car Accident Case
 - v. Hiring a Lawyer
 - vi. Jury Service



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- b. Have the audience discuss one thing they learned from the topic-specific video.
- c. Explore how this video might be helpful to people needing to go to court.

4. Closing (2 Minutes)

- a. Navigate through the other pages of the website.
- b. Allow the audience to ask questions about the Texas court system.
- c. Provide additional resources or information if necessary.

Presenter Outline for *The Deliberation Room: Who Do You Believe?*

The Deliberation Room: Who Do You Believe? is an educational program regarding witness credibility, appropriate for middle and high school students. A complete student activity guide is available on the *Deliberation Room* page of the *How Texas Courts Work* website.

1. Opening Remarks and Introductions (2 Minutes)

- a. Introduce the presenters.
- b. Talk briefly about TYLA and/or Other Organization.

2. Discuss the Concept of Credibility (10 Minutes)

- a. Review the Illusions section of the page with the class. For each illusion, poll the class on what they see or hear.
- b. Explain to the class that the role of the jury is to decide factual disputes, including issues of credibility.
- c. Have the class brainstorm factors to consider when determining witness credibility.

3. Show and Complete the Deliberation Room activity using either the civil law (Case #1) or criminal law (Case #2) videos (20 Minutes for videos, 25 Minutes for activity)

4. Develop and Conduct Closing Arguments (25 Minutes)

- a. Time permitting, allow the students and attorneys to divide into teams to discuss the strategies for delivering effective closing arguments.
- b. Have the students prepare closing arguments for the direct examinations they observed.
- c. Have one designated student for each side make their closing arguments.
- d. Have the class deliver the verdict.

5. Closing (2 Minutes)

- a. Navigate through the other pages of the website.
- b. Allow the audience to ask questions about the Texas court system.
- c. Provide additional resources or information if necessary.

Report your Rollout:

Upon completion of your presentation, please let TYLA know by emailing Michelle.Palacios@texasar.com and michaeljamesritter@gmail.com.

- Your report should include the location of the presentation, number of young lawyers presenting, and number of attendees at the presentation.
- Please include any pictures, and if you are speaking to minors, please make sure to respect their privacy.