

H.E. Wolfe Construction Co. v. M.D. Broom, Administrator 1936

Lesson Plan Developed for the Tennessee Judiciary Museum

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Rationale: This lesson plan has been developed to aid middle and high school students as they experience a tour of the Tennessee Judiciary Museum. The activities should be facilitated before and after the visit to the museum in conjunction with the presentations by the docents leading the tour. The *Wolfe* case offers an opportunity for discussing the change and development of the judicial branch in Tennessee and its rules that protect our rights. These activities may be used in coordination with activities for other cases on display in the museum to address process standards and to enrich the students' processing of their experience at the museum.

Audience: Students in grades 7-12 with prior exposure to the basic structure of American government with its system of checks and balances.

Curriculum standards: Common Core [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.1-9; ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.1-9; ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.3-9]; course standards in U.S. Government 9-12, Criminal Justice I

Goals: students will be able to

- demonstrate an understanding of the roles and functions of the levels of the Tennessee state judiciary

Materials: *Wolfe* worksheet (attached); relevant classroom or project materials (varying by choice of activity or assessment); Tennessee State Constitution

<http://www.tennessee.gov/sos/bluebook/07-08/47-Constitution,%20Tennessee.pdf> and also at TSLA <http://teva.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/tfd/id/90> in handwritten version that can be downloaded or printed and <http://www.tncrimlaw.com/law/constit/> (individual articles and clauses linked)

Pre-tour activities:

1. Students should review the basic structure of government and the system of checks and balances among the three branches in the U.S. and in Tennessee.
2. Topics for class/group discussion to prepare for *Wolfe*: why do we have a system of courts? What is the "job" of a court? How can the government make sure the courts are "doing their job" as they should? (Answers will vary depending on age and experience. Guide student discussion and correct as needed; students would benefit from recording their responses and asking the docent for their opinion. This discussion can serve to introduce the idea of a *court of appeals* as a 'safeguard' in case a court makes a mistake or does not follow the rules as it should.)
3. (optional for older or more developed students): Conduct a scavenger hunt in Article I of the Tennessee State Constitution. What rights listed there do students think have the closest connection to their understanding of the purpose of courts?

4. (optional for younger students or language arts activities) Assign students to groups of 3. Each member of the group should think of an event they witnessed or took part in, then prepare a brief account of that event for their group. Randomly assign a format for each account: a written statement, a drawing (stick figures are fine), and a thirty-second oral statement. Each account should be limited to that format—no follow-up questions or extra explaining allowed! Have the members present their account and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each way of presenting their version of the event. Another grouping factor can be to separate into groups based on a shared event (sporting event, school lesson, movie, etc) and have each group prepare a brief presentation to the class to show “what actually happened” using three different formats. After the presentations, discuss with the class the advantages and disadvantages of relating memories (and other evidence, if available) to present an accurate version of the event to people who weren’t there.

Activities (after the tour):

1. Allow the students to work together to clarify their answers to the worksheet questions and to formulate their responses.
2. Facilitate class discussion by soliciting student responses to worksheet questions and exercises. Answers to worksheet questions will vary, but the questions themselves can be tailored to prepare the students for a specific assessment opportunity.
3. (optional for scavenger hunt pre-tour activity): discuss how the *Wolfe* decision relates to the rights of individuals involved in a case. What are the advantages and disadvantages to *rules of evidence* that say what kind of information is acceptable to present to a court or a jury?

Assessment possibilities:

1. Assign a persuasive essay that argues for a change in current rules of evidence—for example, using re-enactments or dramatizations to show jurors or judges how events might have transpired. [note: in *Wolfe*, they did not use cars and map in courtroom to act out the event, just to show where the witnesses were in relation to the position of car and truck in intersection]
2. Assign a group project that requires a group to put on a skit and record it on video. The group should then present ‘what happened’ in the skit through other means (written description, individual oral retelling, comic strip?). Show the video of the skit afterwards, and facilitate a class discussion on presenting information about an event. Expand the discussion to relate how to show or explain events to juries, and how journalists or historians use accounts and other information to help them present previous events.
3. Assign a brief research project that requires each student to use at least two different kinds of primary sources (written accounts, photographs, documentary footage) to describe an event and place it in a context. Older students should also evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of their primary sources.

Tennessee Judiciary Museum: *H.E. Wolfe Construction Co. v. Broom* display worksheet

Name: _____ Partners?

As you listen to the docent and read the text in the displays, keep track of important words and remember to ask for, or find their definitions so you can develop your own vocabulary.

1. Read the Introductory text in the Court of Appeals alcove. Why did the state legislature create the Court of Appeals? How did this improve the judicial branch of the state of Tennessee?

2. Read the description of the *Wolfe v. Broom* case in the alcove. What was this case about? Why was this case heard by the Court of Appeals? (Hint: you might need to talk to the docent to get the best answer.)

3. Look at the photographs and the street diagram on display. Using only what you can see in the pictures and on the street map, what can you learn about the accident? Compare what you can see in the photos with the written description of the case you just read.

4. Look at the photos of the car and the truck involved in the accident. Just using those pictures, can you say who was responsible for the wreck? What information that isn't in the pictures would you need to help you decide?