

A CONVERSATION ABOUT THE COURTS:



Judges Compare State and Federal Judicial Systems

MATCHING CASE SCENARIOS (*Grades 6-12*):

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. After watching the video, review the concept of “jurisdiction.”
2. Instruct students to make a chart comparing the jurisdiction of state and federal courts, example below.
3. Have students compare charts until you/they are satisfied it is correct and accurate.
4. Assign the example scenarios to individuals or groups and instruct that each scenario be identified as a state or federal case. Students should explain their reasoning.
5. Ask the rest of the class to agree or disagree on each placement.
6. Discuss the correct answer for each.

COMPARING JURISDICTION:

	State Courts	Federal Courts
Types of Criminal Cases		
Types of Civil Cases		

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SCENARIOS:

- A. Josh has been selling fake Lego Sets on the internet to buyers all over the United States. The FBI tracks his online activity and arrests him at his house in Missouri. The US Attorney has filed charges against Josh. Would Josh be more likely to appear in front of Judge Autrey (Federal Court) or Judge House (Missouri State Court) if he is charged with crimes related to his online activity?
- B. Nikki got a speeding ticket from the State Highway Patrol for going 70 mph in a 55-mph zone. She remembers her court date but isn't sure if she should go to the Federal Courthouse in downtown St. Louis or her local state courthouse in her county, can you help her?
- C. Ming and her husband aren't getting along anymore and they decide they need to file for divorce. Will Ming need to file for divorce in State Court or Federal Court?
- D. Lisa has long term damage to her lungs as a result of inhaling chemicals found in a popular brand of hairspray. Recently, she received a letter saying she was part of a class of thousands of people who suffered lung damage from the hairspray and that she was entitled to money from a lawsuit that was filed against the company who makes the hairspray. Lisa lives in the Midwest and the Company is located in New York, New York. Lisa asks you to help her figure out if her case was in federal court or state court so she can get more information.
- E. The Prosecuting Attorney of Josh's county has filed charges against him for stealing a brand-new pair of shoes from his local shoe store the day before they were released to the public. Josh was arrested by the city police and given a court date. Will he be appearing in state court or federal court?
- F. Mark was recently passed over for a big promotion and decides to go for a walk on the grounds of the Gateway Arch, a National Park. Instead of enjoying the beautiful views of the Mississippi River, he is upset by the presence of a large group of baseball fans from out of town. Mark begins yelling at them and then throws rocks in their direction. He is stopped by a National Park Service Ranger and given a citation. Mark doesn't think a federal court would hear a case about throwing rocks.