

Marshall the Courthouse Mouse | Lesson Plan

How do decisions made by others affect our lives and the choices we have?

Students will demonstrate an understanding of how decisions affect individuals and communities by identifying the roles and decisions of characters in *Marshall the Courthouse Mouse*.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify the main characters in *Marshall the Courthouse Mouse* and describe their roles.
- Explain the main decision made by the Mouse Supreme Court in the story and why it was necessary.
- Identify instances of fairness and decision-making in the story and relate them to their own experiences in school.
- Express their feelings and opinions about the decisions made in the story.
- Recall and discuss significant events in the story.

Key Vocabulary:

- **Supreme Court:** The highest court of the United States.
- **Justice:** The term for a judge who sits on the Supreme Court.
- **Chief Justice:** The presiding judge of the U.S. Supreme Court
- **Constitution:** The document embodying the system of fundamental principles according to which a nation or state is governed.
- **Clerk:** Someone who assists the Justices with research and other administrative work.
- **Opinion:** The formal statement by a judge or court of the reasoning and the principles of law used in deciding a case.

Educational Standards: CCRA.R.7, CCRA.SL.1, CCRA.SL.2, CCRA.L.4

Academic Topics: Life Lessons, America, Judicial Branch

What You'll Need

- Video: *Marshall the Courthouse Mouse* (Watch [Here](#))
- Book (Optional): *Marshall, the Courthouse Mouse: A Tail of the U.S. Supreme Court*
- Coloring Page: (Click [Here](#))
- Classroom whiteboard and coloring supplies

Lesson Plan (45 mins.)

Warm-Up: (10 mins.)

1. Begin with a discussion about students' rights and rules at school (e.g., the right to learn, a rule against pushing or shoving, the freedom to choose a book, choosing playground activities, expressing their opinion, etc.). Ask students to consider who comes up with the rules to ensure they are fair in the classroom or the playground.

Scan to watch episode:



2. Create a list of the top five rights and rules at school, as identified by the students.
3. Introduce the concept of the Supreme Court and its role in national rule-making. Pose the day's enduring question: *How do decisions made by others affect our lives and the choices we have?* Encourage students to think about this and share their ideas.
4. Preview the key vocabulary with the students. Encourage them to listen to these terms as they watch the video.

Watch and Discuss: (25 mins.)

1. Play the video *Marshall the Courthouse Mouse* for the students.
2. Pause at key moments to ask questions and check for understanding of vocabulary words and objectives from the lesson.
3. After the video, initiate an interactive discussion about rights and freedoms.
 - Discuss the scenario from the video: Would you prefer to have the right to choose which cheese you would like to eat each day or have someone else choose for you?
 - What decision did the Mouse Supreme Court make about cheese?
 - What is the job of the Mouse Supreme Court?
 - How did Marshall feel about the decision made by the Mouse Supreme Court, and why?
 - What would you have decided if you were on the Mouse Supreme Court, and why?

Wrap-Up: (15 mins.)

1. Provide each student with the coloring page.
2. Instruct students to color the justices' robes, choosing one mouse as the Chief Justice. They should add bars on the Chief Justice's robe sleeves and color the robe black to distinguish this role. The other justices can have solid-colored red robes or another color of choice.
3. Once students finish coloring, ask them to pair up and share their pictures with a partner. They should explain who they chose as the Chief Justice and briefly describe this mouse's role in the Mouse Supreme Court.
4. Close with a takeaway thought, for instance: "Every day, we make decisions that affect ourselves and others. Like the Mouse Supreme Court, it's important to consider what is fair and right for everyone."

Don't have time for the full lesson? Quick Activity (15 mins.)

Hand out the coloring page and watch the video. Initiate a discussion about what rights are and why it's vital to have protection for our rights.