
**The Center for Justice
Education at Eastern State
Presents:**

DEFINING JUSTICE

LESSON PLAN

**EASTERN STATE
PENITENTIARY**

DEFINING JUSTICE

LESSON PLAN

Unit Title:

Defining Justice

Grade Levels:

6th through 12th

Number of Class Periods:

One 60 minute period / Two 30 minute periods

Author:

Designed by the Eastern State Education Team, adapted from *Justice from the Inside Up: A Restorative Justice Education Facilitator's Manual* by Felix B. Rosado with Let's Circle Up.

INTRODUCTION & UNIT OVERVIEW

This 60-minute activity requires active interpretation of Lady Justice, a symbolic statue designed to encapsulate the American criminal justice system. The activity asks for close examination of the statue to measure the healthy and harmful elements of Lady Justice, then suggests using those findings to create an innovative and separate symbol of vision of justice.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What does justice mean to you, and how do your experiences shape your understanding of it?
- How do different cultures and societies define justice?
- What is the difference between, justice, fairness and equality?
- Can justice ever be fully achieved, or is it an ideal we strive for?
- How do laws reflect or conflict with the principles of justice?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Interpret the meaning of justice and injustice through symbolism.
- Create a new, innovative symbol to apply to the criminal justice system today.
- Revise symbol based on peer feedback.

MATERIALS

- Printed image of Lady Justice (photo attached on page 4)
- Art and collage supplies [magazines, scissors, glue, poster board, markers, etc.]

PROCEDURES

1. The first 15 minutes of this activity begin with a three-part close examination of Lady Justice (below). During the first part, the activity asks for simple observations about Lady Justice, i.e. what is observable, what emotions the image invokes. Observations should take five minutes.



2. Ask students: “In what ways does this image present a healthy view of justice?” Answers can be anything, ranging from the precisely balanced scales to the statue being that of a woman. This step should take about 5 minutes.

3. Now ask the inverse: “In what ways does this present an unhealthy or dangerous view of justice?” Answers, again, can be anything like a woman being blindfolded, the crown suggesting nobility, or the prominence of the sword compared to the scales. This step should take about 5 minutes.

PROCEDURES (COT'D.)

4. For the next 25 minutes of this activity, students will create a new symbol or vision of justice based on the answers given to the previous three questions. The symbols can be drawn, painted, collaged, written, etc. Creativity and out-of-the-box thinking is encouraged.

5. The final 30 minutes of the activity will allow for social learning, collaboration, and practical long-term planning. Students will be paired in groups of two or three to adapt this lesson and activity for their classroom in an outline. This lesson outline should be clear on how students will share their justice symbol with those outside of the classroom. Poster or PowerPoint presentations for the grade, school, or community are examples of sharing concepts outside of the classroom.

ASSESSMENTS

- What are some symbols for justice? What are some symbols for injustice?
- What are some symbols for the criminal justice system today?
- What were your main takeaways from the feedback you received about your symbol?

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

D2.Civ.2.6-8: Explain the significance of civic symbols, documents, and events.

D2. Civ.4.9-12: Explain how the US Constitution establishes a system of government that has powers, responsibilities, and limits that have changed over time and that are still contested.

D.2.Civ.12.9-12: Analyze how people use and challenge local, state, national, and international laws to address a variety of public issues.

D2. Civ.2.9-12: Analyze the role of citizens in the U.S. political system, with a focus on civic engagement and social justice initiatives.

D.Civ.12.9-12: Assess how laws and policies affect individuals and groups in society, especially in terms of justice, equity, and fairness.

CCSS.ELA.Literacy.SL.9-10.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA.Literacy.RI.6-12.7: Integrate and Evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS?

Contact education@easternstate.org.

Learn more about the Center for Justice Education at Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site, and about the Teacher Institute, at

EASTERNSTATE.ORG