

Legal Rights and Responsibilities

TOPIC SUMMARY

The Constitution and the Bill of Rights contain important laws that safeguard the rights of Americans. Laws are sets of rules that allow people to live together peacefully in a society. Laws set punishments and rules for resolving disputes. Early laws have influenced our laws today. Criminal laws are those that prevent people from harming others. Civil laws address disputes between people or groups. Other types of laws include constitutional law, administrative law, and statutory law. These are laws that stem from our state and federal constitutions, administrative agencies, and lawmaking bodies. The American legal system offers protection to its citizens, including those who are accused of crimes. In return, Americans have certain responsibilities, such as serving on juries.

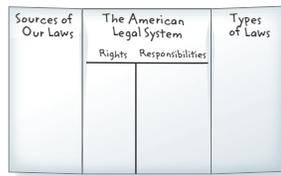
FOLDABLES™ Study Organizer

Evaluating Information Study Foldable *This Foldable will help students evaluate the sources and types of American laws, and the rights and responsibilities they protect.*

Step 1 Mark a point in the middle of the paper top to bottom. Fold in each side of the paper to meet that point.



Step 2 *Unfold the paper and in the center section draw a T diagram.*



Step 3 Label all three sections as shown.

Reading and Writing *Make notes under each heading about main ideas, key terms, and supporting facts for each topic. Write a paragraph summarizing the types of laws in America.*

TOPIC ACTIVITY IDEAS

Reflecting

Have students create the Study Foldable above, including the Reading and Writing activity. Have students review the information listed in the “Rights” and “Responsibilities” columns. Then ask: In what ways may we exercise our rights and responsibilities as citizens when acting as students in a school or as members of a neighborhood or community? Students should add a few examples to the Foldable. Lead a class discussion about the relationship between students’ rights and responsibilities.

SUMMARIZING

Have students use this Foldable to organize information about the rights of people accused of crimes. Have students use separate columns to list important terms and important court cases from their reading. They should use the two center columns of the Foldable to summarize important details about constitutional amendments that protect those accused of crimes. When students have finished their summaries, have them use the Internet or other library resources to find a recent court case that addresses the rights of people accused of crimes.

Important terms	Rights of the Accused in the U.S. Constitution		Important Court Cases
	Fourth and Fifth Amendments	Sixth and Eighth Amendments	

Roman Law	The History of Our Laws		English Law
	Early Laws We Have Adopted	Early Laws We No Longer Follow	

ANALYZING

Have students use the Foldable to analyze early laws that influenced our legal system. In the far left column, students should list details about Roman law. In the far right column, students should list details about English law. In the two center columns, students should note which of these early English and Roman laws may be seen in our laws today, and which may not. Students may also wish to examine further some other early codes of law, such as the Code of Hammurabi. When students have finished their work, lead a class discussion about which early laws were and were not adopted into our own system.

Student Study Tip

Point out that time lines can be helpful study aids for many different topics. For example, students may want to construct a time line that shows the evolution of legal codes throughout history. Also, students could build a time line that organizes court cases pertaining to people's rights. Tell students that constructing time lines can help them to see the relationships between events.