

Understanding Effective Counsel

Lesson Overview: In this lesson, students will work in **six** collaborative groups to analyze fictional legal case scenarios and evaluate the effectiveness of legal counsel. Through critical discussion, group presentations, and note-taking, students will categorize each case as an example of **effective or ineffective counsel**. They will then reflect on how legal representation impacts fairness in the justice system.

PIH: What should society do to promote fairness and justice for people who live within its jurisdiction?

UEQ: Does the Constitution adequately protect the rights of the accused?

LEQ: What determines if counsel is effective?

Materials Needed:

- Printed Student Scaffolds
 - Scenario Card
 - Group Answer Document (6 Questions)
 - Presentation Notes Document
 - Effective v. Ineffective Counsel T-Chart + Short Answer Space
- Prepared Teacher PowerPoint Presentation
- Chart, paper, whiteboard
- Pens, highlighters.
- Students DO NOT need devices for this lesson.

Part I: Group Scenario Work (10-15 minutes)

Instructions to Give Students:

- Each group will receive a scenario.
- As a group, read and annotate the scenario carefully.
- Together, complete the six scaffold questions on the worksheet.
- Each group member must write down the group's answers on their own worksheet.

Circulate during this time to clarify vocabulary (e.g., "objection," "testimony"), direct / assist student thinking or understanding, or discuss legal fairness.

Part II: Group Presentations + Notes: (20-25 minutes)

Instructions to Give Students

- Each group will present their scenario to the class – Teacher reads the case aloud so every student can hear the details of the case.
- As other groups present, your worksheet to write 2–3 bullet points about:
 - What happened in the case?
 - How the lawyer acted?
 - Why the case shows effective or ineffective counsel?
- You'll use these notes later to complete your T-Chart.

Keep track of presentation time, ensure students support each claim with specific evidence from the scenario.

Part III: T-Chart + Class Discussion on Scenarios (20-25 minutes)

- In your original groups, use the T-Chart to decide whether each case is an example of effective or ineffective counsel.
- Place the case titles in the correct columns.
- Within each column, rank them from most effective to least effective or most to least ineffective.
- Whole class discussion breaking down and going over scenarios – teacher gives correct placement.
- Have discussion questions ready to gauge student understand, reasoning, etc.
- Teacher goes the prepared presentation – explaining why each scenario is what it is.

<u>Effective Counsel</u>	<u>Ineffective Counsel</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cleared Just in Time• Justice for Naomi Chen• Saved by the Facts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Case of Jordan Taylor• Trouble After the Game• The Case of the Missing Phone

Discussion Questions (following T-Chart)

- What specific actions or behaviors made you decide that a lawyer in one case was effective?

- Was it the outcome of the case or the effort the lawyer put in that mattered more to you?
- Who placed [e.g., “Justice for Naomi Chen”] under ineffective counsel? Why?
 - Does anyone disagree?
- Did any case fall into a gray area where it wasn’t totally effective or completely ineffective? How did you decide where to place it?
- Is it possible for a lawyer to care about their client and still be ineffective? Can you give an example from one of the cases?
- What role did preparation play in your evaluations? How did you tell if a lawyer was prepared or unprepared?
- Do you think any of the “effective” cases still had flaws in how the lawyer represented their client? Should those flaws matter? Why or why not?
- How did the lawyer’s ability to communicate (with their client, the judge, or jury) affect your judgment of their effectiveness?
- Which case do you believe showed the worst example of ineffective counsel? What were the most concerning signs?
- Why do you think the right to a lawyer is protected by the Constitution? What would happen if that right didn’t exist or wasn’t enforced?
- How do these scenarios connect to our PIH question: “What should society do to promote fairness and justice for people who live within its jurisdiction?”

Part IV: Short Response: (8-10 minutes – possible exit ticket?) (Last 5-10 minutes of class)

Instructions to Give Students

- Then, complete the short written reflection as exit ticket:

Which case showed the most ineffective counsel and why? Support your answer with evidence from the scenario.