

Grabber

Brief:

The teacher will play the video scene from Ghostbusters II (1989)

- [Link](#)
 - Stop Video at 2:45
- The teacher will lead a class discussion on the counsel representing the Ghostbusters
- The teacher will map students' analysis of effective and ineffective counsel in the scene

Introduction to the Clip

"Today we're going to dive into a crucial aspect of our justice system: the right to **effective legal counsel**. To kick things off, we're going to watch a short clip from a famous movie. This scene features the Ghostbusters on trial. As you watch, I want you to pay close attention to **both lawyers** in the courtroom – the one representing the Ghostbusters (Louis Tully) and the prosecuting attorney. Think about what both lawyers do, or don't do, that might make them seem 'good' or 'bad' at their job. Consider which lawyer you believe is more effective in this scene, and why."

(Show the "Ghostbusters 2 Courtroom Scene" clip.)

Discussion Questions

"Alright, that was quite a scene! We saw two very different approaches to lawyering. Now, let's break down what we observed and connect it to our topic. We're going to start building a web on the board about what makes a lawyer **effective** versus **ineffective**."

Have students work in small groups to write on sticky notes examples of effective counsel and ineffective counsel. Have them stick the post-its on a T-chart on the board. Utilize the following questions to prompt students as they create their post-its. Prompt students to define what "effective" really means. After reviewing the post-its for redundancies and learning the Strickland test, eliminate the post-its that aren't actual requirements of the Strickland test or matter for the 6th Amendment right to fair trial.

1. **Clearly the Ghostbusters are on trial for an alleged crime. Are they represented by counsel?**
2. **Must the accused have a lawyer? Why/Based on what?** (Due Process "5th", Rights of Accused "6th")
3. **Let's start with Louis Tully, the Ghostbusters' lawyer. What did he do, or try to do, in court? Be specific.** (Allow students to describe his actions: yelling, making strange noises, rambling, presenting irrelevant information...)
4. **Now, think about the prosecuting attorney. What was her approach? How did she try to present her case or question witnesses?** (Guide them to describe the prosecutor's more conventional, serious demeanor, attempts to follow procedure, direct questioning, etc.)
5. **If you were one of the Ghostbusters, which lawyer would you say was more effective in this scene? Why?** (Guide them to make a comparative judgment. This is the core question for the clip.)
6. **So, would we consider Louis "effective counsel"?**
7. **Based on the differences we saw, what are some qualities or actions that make a lawyer seem ineffective?** (Write student responses on one side of the web, e.g., "unprofessional," "doesn't understand the law," "talks nonsense," "annoys the judge," "lack of preparation," "disrespectful.")
8. **And conversely, what are some qualities or actions that would make a lawyer seem effective?** (Write these on the other side of the web, e.g., "professional," "knows the law," "clear arguments," "respectful to court," "organized," "listens to client," "well-prepared.")
9. **Why is having an effective lawyer so crucial for someone accused in a serious case? What's at stake for them?** (Emphasize themes of fairness, liberty, reputation, avoiding wrongful conviction, ensuring rights are protected.)
10. **How fair do you feel this trial was for the Ghostbusters?**
 - a. **Can a trial be fair without effective counsel?**
 - b. **Is it merely sufficient for a defendant to be afforded a lawyer in court or must that lawyer also be effective?** →"Let's explore further what it means to have effective counsel."