



The Legal System: SS.7.CG.2.5
The Trial Process and Juries
VIDEO #2 SCRIPT



Civil Trials

1. In this video series in this module, you're learning about the trial process and juries. And in this video, we're going to learn about the civil trial process. But sure to watch the videos on the criminal trial process and juries if you haven't done so already.

2. After watching this video, you will be able to

- Describe the process of a civil trial

But be sure to watch the other videos for 2.5 in this module to be able to:

- Describe the process of a criminal trial,
- Examine the significance of juries in the American legal system
- Explain how juries are selected and why jury trials are important.

All important stuff that we need to know.

3. So let's take a look at the civil trial process. Civil law is law that deals with relationships between people. When a civil case goes to court, it is called a lawsuit. With a lawsuit, a person (or group of people) can sue another person (or group of people) to collect money for some harm that is done. For example, a person can sue another person over a business deal or a disagreement over rent payments for housing.

4. In a civil lawsuit the two sides are the plaintiff and the defendant. The plaintiff is the individual or group that files the lawsuit and the defendant is the individual or group being sued.

5. There are four major steps of a civil trial that we're going to familiarize you with in this video.

6. Step 1: The Complaint is Filed – the lawsuit begins when a complaint is filed. A complaint is the formal statement naming the people involved and describing the reason for the lawsuit.

7. Step 2: The Summons – After a complaint is filed, the court will send a document to the defendant. This document, called a summons, tells the person that there is a lawsuit against them and orders them to appear in court.

8. Step 3: The Discovery Process – Once a summons is sent, the discovery process begins. During this step, the lawyers for both sides check the facts of the case and gather evidence.

9. Step 4: The Lawsuit is Heard – Finally, the lawsuit is heard by a judge and sometimes also a jury. At this point, the process is similar to what occurs during a criminal trial. Both sides will present their case and any witnesses, and a judge or the jury will determine a verdict.
10. Let's check in. Try to answer the following in your own words.
11. Summarize the four steps of the civil trial process.
12. ANSWER TO QUESTION
13. Let's recap what we've learned so far. Remember that civil law deals with relationships between individuals. The plaintiff is the one filing the lawsuit against the defendant. There are four steps to a civil trial.
14. These four steps are the filing of the complaint, the issuing of the summons, the beginning of the discovery process, and finally, hearing the lawsuit.
15. So we've learned that the civil trial process is a pretty important part of our system. It allows people to settle their problems in court through lawsuits, usually argued in front of a judge.
16. You can learn more about the state and federal court system in other modules on Civics360. But be sure to watch the videos on the criminal trial process and the jury system if you haven't already!