



JUDGES *in the* CLASSROOM

Lesson Plan: When You Turn 18

Objectives:

- Students will be able to: Identify the legal rights and responsibilities that automatically change when a person turns 18 in California (the "age of majority"), including contracts, property, marriage, wills, and jury duty;
- Explain practical legal considerations young adults face in everyday situations — renting an apartment, driving, attending parties, getting married, and using the internet;
- Recognize the basic steps of the arrest and booking process, and understand rights afforded during that process;
- Identify resources available to them (California's Self-Help Centers and the *When You Turn 18* guide) for navigating legal questions as new adults.

Grade Level:

Grades 6–12 (best suited for students approaching age 18)

Time:

One class period (approximately 50 minutes)

Materials:

- PowerPoint Presentation — When You Turn 18: A Legal Survival Guide
- Optional handout/resource: QR code / link to calawyers.org for students to download the full *When You Turn 18* guide (Slide 37).

NOTE: This deck is organized as a reference guide rather than a single narrative — it moves through topic sections (Moving Out, Driving, Having Fun, Marriage and Partnerships, Crime and Consequences, Computers/Mobile Devices/Internet), with periodic "???" transition slides. Use those "???" slides as natural discussion pauses — ask students to guess what they think the law says before revealing the answer on the next slide.

Connecting with the teacher ahead of time is essential for a successful visit. At this time, you may test your connection, go over the presentation, adapt slides (where

needed) and review stopping points for student participation. It is recommended the teacher advance the slides.

Procedures for Delivering Lesson

1. Introduction and Your Role as a Judge (approx. 5 min)

Come in plain clothes — no robe. Before diving into slides, warm the class up and let them see you as a person, not just a title.

Say: "Before we get started, I want you to know a little about me — not just that I'm a judge." Share something low-stakes and personal: a favorite book/character growing up, a favorite food, a song stuck in your head, a favorite color. If it fits naturally, add a quick "when I was your age..." story.

Say: "Today we're covering something a little different — not one big court case, but a whole survival guide for turning 18. A lot of you are close to that birthday, or you'll get there before you know it. Turning 18 changes a lot more than just being able to vote. Raise your hand any time you have a question — I'll also leave time for questions at the end."

Slide 1 — Index Briefly preview the topics ahead:

- moving out, driving, having fun, marriage and partnership, crime and consequences, and computers/mobile devices/the internet.

Slide 2 — Title Slide

2. Reaching the Age of Majority (approx. 6–8 min)

Slide 3 — Reaching the Age of Majority

Say: "Turning 18 is more than just being able to vote."

STOP — ask students:

- What do you think changes, legally, the day you turn 18? Take a few guesses before moving on.

Slide 4 — Rights Acquired at 18 (Part 1)

Walk through the list:

- At the age of majority, teenagers acquire the right to enter into binding contracts;
- Buy or sell property; marry without the written consent of a parent (or guardian) and a judge;
- Sue or be sued in their own name; and compromise, settle, or arbitrate a claim.

Slide 5 — Rights Acquired at 18

(Part 2) Continue the list:

Make or revoke a will; inherit property outright; and serve on a jury.

STOP — ask students:

- Which of these rights surprises you the most? Which one feels like the biggest responsibility?

[Slide 6 — "???" TRANSITION SLIDE]

Use this as a pause before moving into the next section —

Ask if there are any quick questions on this topic before moving on to moving out.

3. Moving Out (approx. 6–8 min)

Slide 7 — Moving Out

Say: "A big part of gaining independence is moving out."

Slide 8 — Security Deposit

Cover the key questions students should know: why a security deposit is required, when they can expect to get it back, and that local ordinances may add additional rules on top of state law.

Slide 9 — Lease Agreements

Explain the key things to check in any lease: whether it's for a specific time period or month-to-month, what the landlord is responsible for, and what happens if you break the lease.

Slide 10 — FAQ: Advance Notice

Have a student read the FAQ aloud: if you decide to move, you must give reasonable notice before the end of a rental period — in most cases, a month's notice. However, if moving out would break your lease, requirements depend on the lease terms, and you could be held liable for the period the apartment remains unoccupied.

STOP — ask students:

- Why do you think landlords require a security deposit and advance notice?
What's being protected on each side?

[Slide 11 — "???" TRANSITION SLIDE]

Pause here for questions before moving to driving.

4. Driving (approx. 6–8 min)

Slide 12 — Behind the Wheel (Part 1)

Introduce the topics ahead: car insurance, car ownership, and bicycle laws.

Slide 13 — Behind the Wheel (Part 2)

Walk through key driving rules students should know: open container laws, passengers riding in the trunk, "click it or ticket" seatbelt laws, driving without a license, and the dangers (and illegality) of looking at your phone while driving.

Slide 14 — FAQ: Bicycle Laws

Have a student read the FAQ aloud: yes, for the most part, bicycle riders must follow the same traffic laws as motorists — stopping at stop signs and red lights, riding on the proper side of the street, using bike lanes, and giving pedestrians the right-of-way. It is also illegal to ride a bike while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

STOP — ask students:

- Were you surprised bicycle riders can be held to the same rules as drivers? Why do you think that is?

[Slide 15 — "???" TRANSITION SLIDE]

Pause for questions before moving into "Having Fun."

5. Having Fun? (approx. 8–10 min)

Slide 16 — Having Fun

Say: "As a young adult, new opportunities for fun come with legal boundaries."

Slide 17 — Property and Expression / Parties and Public Conduct

Cover property and expression issues like spray-painting graffiti, and public conduct issues like disturbing the peace, party crashers, and California's "Rowdy Fan Law."

STOP — ask students:

- Why might there be a specific law about rowdy behavior at sporting events?

Slide 18 — Alcohol and Drugs

Cover underage purchase and consumption of alcohol (under 21), the consequences of using false identification, underage drinking at parties, and the "Good Samaritan" law protecting people who call 911 during an alcohol-related emergency.

Say: "That last one is important — the Good Samaritan law exists so that people aren't afraid to call for help in an emergency."

Slide 19 — Drug Possession

Cover possession with intent to sell, the added consequences of selling drugs near schools, and driver's license suspension as a possible consequence of drug offenses.

Slide 20 — FAQ: Controlled Substances

Have a student read the FAQ aloud: yes, it is against the law to possess a controlled substance prescribed for someone else.

Unauthorized possession of certain prescription drugs, including narcotic painkillers, could lead to jail or prison — and using someone else's prescription drugs for non-medical purposes can be just as dangerous, and illegal, as using street drugs.

STOP — ask students:

- Does that FAQ surprise you? Why might someone assume sharing a prescription is safer than it actually is?

[Slide 21 — "???" TRANSITION SLIDE]

Pause for questions before moving into marriage and partnerships.

6. Marriage and Partnership (approx. 6–8 min)

Slide 22 — Marriage and Partnerships (Part 1)

Cover parental consent requirements, marital property, and prenuptial agreements.

Slide 23 — Marriage and Partnerships (Part 2)

Cover domestic violence protections and issues under "parentage," including age of consent, child custody and visitation laws, and parental rights and responsibilities.

Slide 24 — FAQ: Spousal Support

Have a student read the FAQ aloud: yes, both spouses are obligated to provide for the support of the other spouse, and both are required to provide financial support for any minor children of the marriage.

Either spouse can be held liable for necessities like housing, electricity, and water paid to the other, or to support a minor child.

STOP — ask students:

- Why do you think the law makes both spouses financially responsible for each other, rather than just one?

[Slide 25 — "???" TRANSITION SLIDE]

Pause for questions before moving into crime and consequences.

7. Crime and Consequences (approx. 6–8 min)

Slide 26 — Arrested? (Part 1)

Say: "Let's walk through what actually happens if someone is arrested." Cover the process: being taken into custody, informed of your rights, booked at the station, searched, and placed in holding.

Slide 27 — Arrested? (Part 2)

Continue the process: charges filed, initial appearance/arraignment, the bail or bond decision, the opportunity for legal counsel, and next court dates being set.

STOP — ask students:

- At which step in this process do you think it matters most to have a lawyer? Why?

Slide 28 — Gun Laws FAQs

Cover the key questions: could you get in trouble for pointing a gun at someone, are there restrictions on where you can practice shooting, and do you need a license to hunt?

[Slide 29 — "???" TRANSITION SLIDE]

Pause for questions before moving into computers, mobile devices, and the internet.

8. Computers, Mobile Devices, and the Internet (approx. 6–8 min)

Slide 30 — Computer Crimes (Part 1)

Explain that illegal acts include deleting, damaging, or destroying systems, networks, programs, databases, or computer components without authorization, and introducing contaminants or viruses to a computer.

Slide 31 — Digital Piracy

Explain that pirating or downloading copyrighted material — such as music — without authorization is illegal.

Slide 32 — Computer Crimes (Part 2)

Explain that computer crimes also include devising and executing fraud schemes to obtain money, property, or services through a computer, and disrupting or denying access to authorized users of a computer.

Slide 33 — Computer Crimes (Part 3)

Cover everyday digital-life issues: sharing personal information online, sexting, cyberbullying, recording phone calls, and whether an employer can track your emails.

STOP — ask students:

- Which of these feels the most relevant to your own daily life online?

Slide 34 — T.A.P.

Say: "A simple way to remember all of this: Think before you post. Avoid scams. Protect personal information."

[Slide 35 — "???" TRANSITION SLIDE]

Pause here for any final questions before closing.

9. Closing — Resources (approx. 3–5 min)

Slide 36 — Self-Help Centers

Say: "If you ever have a legal question down the road, Self-Help Centers are available in every county — you can find resources at selfhelp.courts.ca.gov."

Slide 37 — Download the Full Guide Point out the QR code and let students know they can download the complete *When You Turn 18* guide at calawyers.org.

Slide 38 — Closing Quote Have a student read Chief Justice Patricia Guerrero's quote: "The richness of our conversation depends on the number of voices that contribute to it."

Say: "That's really what today was about — giving you the tools to be an informed voice in your own life as you take on these new rights and responsibilities."

QUESTIONS?