

CIVICS – JUDGES MEETING WITH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Written by Michael Rhinehart, Esq.
Career Law Clerk to Judge Newman

Three Branches of Government

1. Legislative branch (makes the laws)
2. Executive branch (enforces the laws)
3. Judicial branch (interprets the laws)

United States Courts:

Trial courts - jury decides facts
Appellate courts
Supreme court

Three Little Pigs

House of straw; house of sticks; house of bricks.
Huffs and puffs and blows their houses in
Pig whose house is made out of straw

Scenario 1:

Wolf tried to blow down the door of Pig 1's straw house and, in doing so, blew down the whole house. Pig 1 now has no place to live. Also, the pig community is scared of the wolf and wants protection.

- Legislative branch passed a law making it a crime to destroy property
- Executive branch appointed a prosecutor and he/she brings criminal charges against the wolf
- Courts have to decide if the wolf broke the law and, if so, what's the punishment
- Pig 1 can sue the wolf in civil court for \$\$ to rebuild his house

Scenario 2:

After blowing down Pig 1's house, wolf is in the woods being chased by a bear; the only safe place is Pig 2's stick house. Pig 2 isn't home, so the wolf blows down the door and hides inside. Later, Pig 2 comes home and finds the wolf and gets scared.

- Legislative branch passed a law making it a crime to break into someone's house, but also passed a law saying it is okay to break into someone's home if that person is in fear and needs a safe place.
- Executive branch brings charges against the wolf for breaking and entering Pig 2's house.
- Courts have to decide:
 - Whether to consider the fact that the Wolf previously destroyed Pig 1's house; and
 - Whether the wolf was allowed in the house because he was in fear of the bear.