

Preface

This photocopyable book is designed to stimulate lively discussion among **intermediate to advanced English language learners**. It is based on **real court cases** in which, to put it simply, someone is suing someone else. The learners study the cases and then carry on a discussion about the case and who should win. The **actual results** of the case are also in the book, to be used for comparison with the learners' resolution.

In addition to working on **discussion skills** in English, the learners will also encounter new **vocabulary**. Each case includes a vocabulary practice page for words that are central to the case. The vocabulary also reflects a semantic field that includes legal terms and words associated with injury and damage. A **vocabulary list** of all featured words is also available in the book, as are **answers** for the vocabulary page.

The legal cases in this book are called torts. Basically, a tort involves damage, injury, or a wrongful act done willfully, negligently, or in circumstances involving strict liability.

The learners will also find themselves involved with an exploration of a particular aspect of **American culture**: American law and the legal system in general. On page ix you will find a facsimile of an advertisement by a law office offering to represent clients in a court case. You will also see a series of discussion prompts that will start your students building vocabulary and talking about this very American cultural phenomenon.



PLEASE NOTE:

Although the cases and locations are real, the names used in these cases are not the real names of the people involved. The exceptions are case 16, Willie Sutton, and case 29 where the people are public figures.

User's Guide

We recommend that you introduce the work to the learners with a general description based on the preface and a discussion of the ad on page ix. **It is specially important to do the Basic Vocabulary Worksheet on page 3** before you begin any case. These vocabulary items occur throughout the collection of cases, and the worksheet also introduces the students to the nature of the exercises.

Our recommended procedure for each case is:

- ❁ Read the case summary (pages 3 to 10) to the students to give them a general idea of what the case is about. 1 minute.
- ❁ Check their comprehension of the summary and carry out some discussion about what they expect to discuss. 5 minutes.
- ❁ Hand out the vocabulary worksheet and have the students do a self-check when they finish. Answers are available in the back of the book. 10 minutes.
- ❁ Check for any questions resulting from the worksheet activity. 2 minutes.
- ❁ Put the students into groups of 3 or 5 and give them the case.
- ❁ Have them read the case. To keep everyone at the same pace, have them take turns reading the case aloud. Put a time limit on the reading. 3 minutes should be sufficient.
- ❁ Pause for any additional questions. 1 minute.
- ❁ Ask the students to discuss the case and reach a verdict : 10 - 12 minutes.
- ❁ Ask each group to announce their decision and the reason behind it. Some discussion may follow. 6 minutes.
- ❁ Give the students the solution. First read it aloud; then hand it out and have the students compare their solution with the actual solution, and then discuss which they think is better. 5 - 10 minutes.

Using the Vocabulary Worksheets

- ❁ The matching exercise is the easier of the two exercises. It is a kind of scrambled glossary, which requires the students to do some critical thinking as they search for each match. If the match is not immediately apparent by doing a meaning-based search, it can usually be made by doing a grammar-based search (a subject noun phrase that needs a verb phrase).
- ❁ The fill-in exercise requires the students to find the word that will fit in the context of the sentence. In some cases, the students may need to supply an inflectional or derivational variant of the key word. For example, the key word may be *negligence*, but the fill-in requires *neglected* or *negligent*.

User's Guide – Variations

- ❁ 1. After following the procedure described above, have the students role play the case as a courtroom trial. Two lawyers argue the case, and a judge or a jury decides on it. If more than one group is involved, have the groups compare their decisions.
- ❁ 2. If there are enough students to form more than one group, you can have a different case being discussed by each group. Then each group summarizes its case and its decision.
- ❁ 3. Photocopy some of the case summaries, and have the students choose the case they want to discuss.
- ❁ 4. Have groups act out the case, creating dialogue (not all cases will work for this option).
- ❁ 5. Have individual students read the case and then write a verdict. Each can then read their verdict to the rest of the class.