

Teacher Guide and Answer Key
“Compensatory and Punitive Damages”

Directions

Page 1: Reading

Read the first page of the handout to the students. You can have students read the paragraphs as well. Ask students questions about the material as you read. For example, after finishing the first paragraph, ask them, “What is a civil lawsuit?” “Who would sue in a civil lawsuit?” “Is anyone going to jail in a civil lawsuit?”

Pages 2-3: Review Questions

Have students write the answers to review questions in the worksheet. You can do this as a group or individually. You may choose to ask the questions aloud and have individual people answer, then take time to write the answers down.

Pages 4-5: You Be the Jury! Exercise

This exercise should be completed as a group. You can read each scenario, or have the students read the scenarios. Have them state the amount of compensatory and punitive damages that should be awarded in each case. Then add the numbers up for compensatory and punitive damages to reach a total.

Lawsuit #1: Koffer v. Big Power

Compensatory damages should be at least \$6,000 to cover the medical costs. If the people lost wages because they were sick, they should receive the money that they would have been paid if they had worked. This could be several hundred or several thousand dollars, depending on how long they were sick and how much they earn. Punitive damages could be much higher to cause others to not hurt citizens. They should not be grossly excessive.

Lawsuit #2: Phender v. Bumper

Compensatory damages should cover the cost of the truck, Phender’s medical bills, Phender’s pain and suffering, and Phender’s lost wages. There is no reason for punitive damages because this was a single incident and a mistake.

Lawsuit #3: Babee v. Toyco

There may or may not be compensatory damages since the loss of Babee’s front tooth is not that important. Babee’s front tooth was likely to fall out anyway because it is one of his baby teeth. In addition, there are no lost wages or medical bills mentioned in this case because Babee is too young to work and Babee did not visit a doctor. Punitive damages may or may not be awarded depending on the extent of the bad conduct.



Lawsuit #4: Phaller v. Parker

No damages should be awarded to Phaller because Parker was not at fault and did nothing wrong.

