The Florida Courts and the Judiciary: A Constitutional Scavenger Hunt

Overview: This activity will help participants become familiar with the Florida Constitution and corresponding provisions for the state courts system.

Objectives:
- Develop individual decision-making skills;
- Familiarize participants with the Florida Constitution;
- Examine the structure and function of the state courts; and
- Determine the jurisdiction of the state courts.

Materials Needed: Copies of the Florida Constitution
Answer Key for Facilitator

Time Required: One hour

Sunshine State Standards:
Grade 7: Standard 3, Benchmarks 8, 11, 13
SS.7.C.3.8, SS.7.C.3.11, SS.7.C.3.13

High School: Standard 3, Benchmark 9, SS.912.C.3.9.

Procedures:
Divide the audience into groups of five. Give each group the same questions/handout along with copies of the Florida Constitution. Participants should work in groups to answer each question and identify corresponding sections of the Florida Constitution where they found their answers. Allow 25-30 minutes to complete. Reconvene to discuss and debrief. Discuss the purpose of state constitutions and how they differ from the U.S. Constitution.

NOTE: Copies of the Florida Constitution can be obtained through the Florida Department of State. To access on-line, visit the Department’s website at http://www.election.dos.state.fl.us.

This activity was developed by Annette Boyd Pitts, Executive Director of The Florida Law Related Education Association, Inc. For additional information, please visit our website at www.flrea.org.
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1. What Article in the Florida Constitution addresses the judicial branch? __________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________

2. The Florida Constitution establishes what levels of courts? _________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________

3. How many justices serve on the Florida Supreme Court? _________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________

4. How many justices constitute a quorum? _________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________

5. How is the chief justice of the Florida Supreme Court chosen? ______________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________

6. What cases must be heard by the Florida Supreme Court? _________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________

7. Who determines the number of judges in Florida? _________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________

8. Who is eligible to be a judge in Florida? _________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________

9. Who investigates judicial misconduct in Florida? _________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________

10. How many judges hear a case in the district court of appeals? _____________________________
    ____________________________________________________________________________________

11. How are county court judges chosen for office in Florida? _________________________________
    ____________________________________________________________________________________

12. What happens when there is a vacancy in a judicial office? _______________________________
    ____________________________________________________________________________________

13. Who does the Judicial Qualifications Commission present its recommendations for disciplinary sanctions to? ____________________________________________________________________________________

14. Are judges allowed to engage in the practice of law? _____________________________________
    ____________________________________________________________________________________

15. How are judicial salaries determined? ___________________________________________________
    ____________________________________________________________________________________

Handout A
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Answer Key for Facilitator

1. Article V of the Florida Constitution
2. Article V, Section 1
3. Article V, Section 3
4. Article V, Section 3
5. Article V, Section 2
6. Article V, Section 3b
7. Article V, Section 9
8. Article V, Section 8
9. Article V, Section 12a(1)
10. Article V, Section 4a
11. Article V, Section 10
12. Article V, Section 11
13. Article V, Section 12
14. Article V, Section 13
15. Article V, Section 14