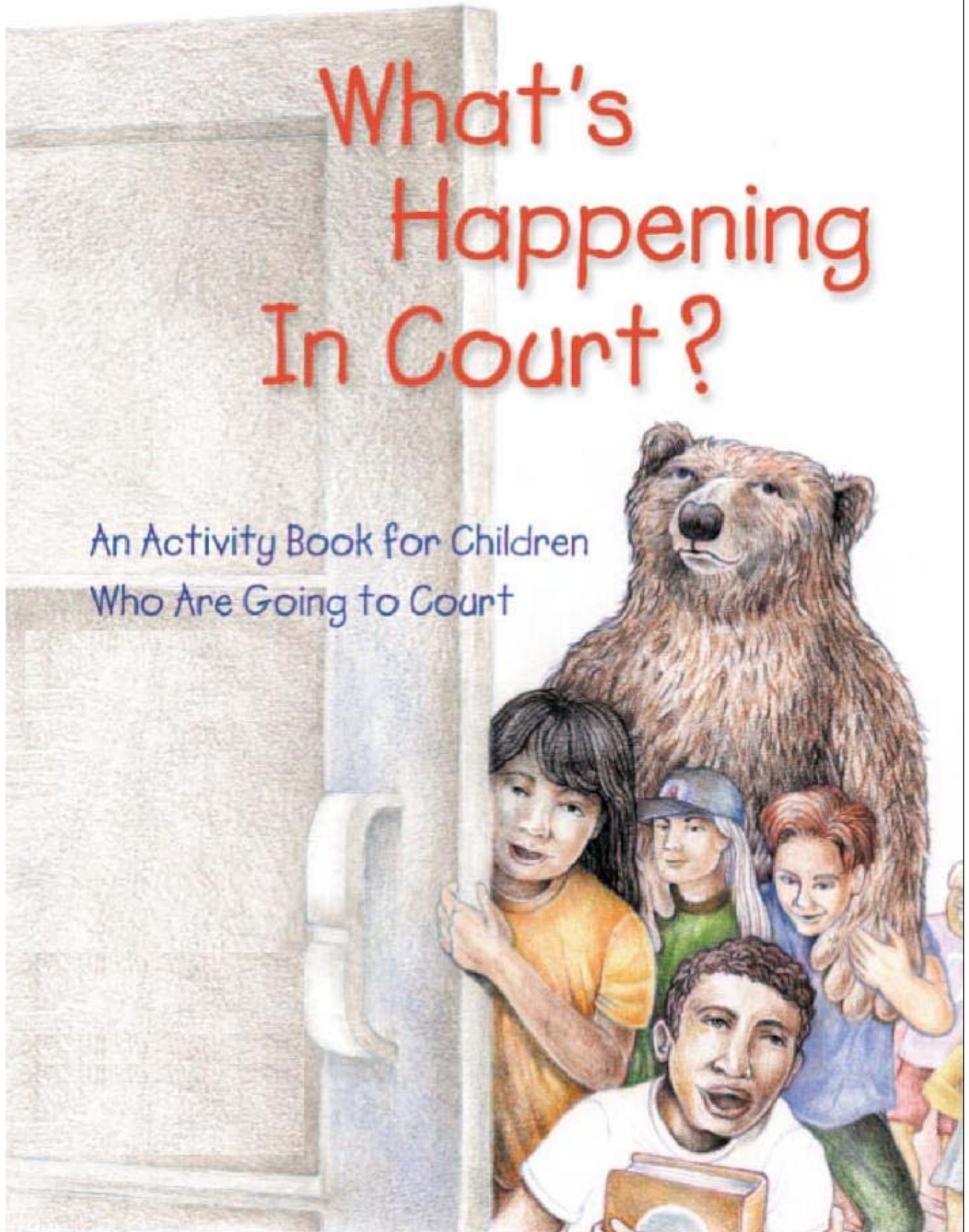


What's Happening In Court?

An Activity Book for Children
Who Are Going to Court



“What’s Happening in Court?” was written in 1999 by the Office of the General Counsel, Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) for the State of California. It was illustrated by San Francisco artists Andrew DeWitt and Robert Gutierrez and was produced by the dedicated staff of the AOC. In 2003, the AOC granted permission for The Listening Place, Howard County’s Child Advocacy Center to modify the book to correspond to Maryland law. In 2005, the AOC and The Listening Place granted permission to the Maryland Judiciary to republish the book and distribute it to children throughout Maryland.

The Listening Place is a collaborative partnership of the Howard County Department of Social Services, the Howard County Police Department, the State’s Attorney’s Office, the Office of Citizen Services, the Health Department, the Domestic Violence Center, and the STTAR Center. The Listening Place’s adoption and modification of the book was made possible by the generous support of the Maryland Department of Human Resources through a grant from the Children’s Justice Act.

*For additional copies or more information about the book, please call the Maryland Judiciary’s Court Information Office at 410-260-1488 or download a copy at:
<http://www.courts.state.md.us/publications.html>.*

WELCOME

Going to court can be scary or intimidating for anyone – especially children. Yet children go to court every day, for all sorts of reasons. We want to make the experience of going to court easier for you to understand.

This book will tell you what happens in court: who works there, what the rules are, and how you might be involved in a case. Remember that you can always ask questions if you are in court and feel afraid or confused.

THE MARYLAND JUDICIARY



“What’s Happening in Court?”

An Activity Book for Children Who Are Going to Court

is presented by

**the Maryland Judicial Conference’s
Committee on Public Awareness.**

The book was adapted for the children of Maryland by

The Listening Place,

Howard County’s Child Advocacy Center.



This book is designed for children of all ages who visit court for any reason – whether they are witnesses, visitors to the courthouse, or involved in a case.

It is meant to be used as a teaching tool that may foster conversations about the court system, and an activity book that gives children who are in court something to do while they wait.

This book is not intended to give or substitute for legal advice.

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Some Important Information

I have to go to court. My next court date is _____

The judge's name is _____

My lawyer's name and phone number are _____

My social worker's name and phone number are _____

My CASA's name and phone number are _____

My Victim Advocate's name and phone number are _____

Names of other important people and their phone numbers:

On My Way to Court

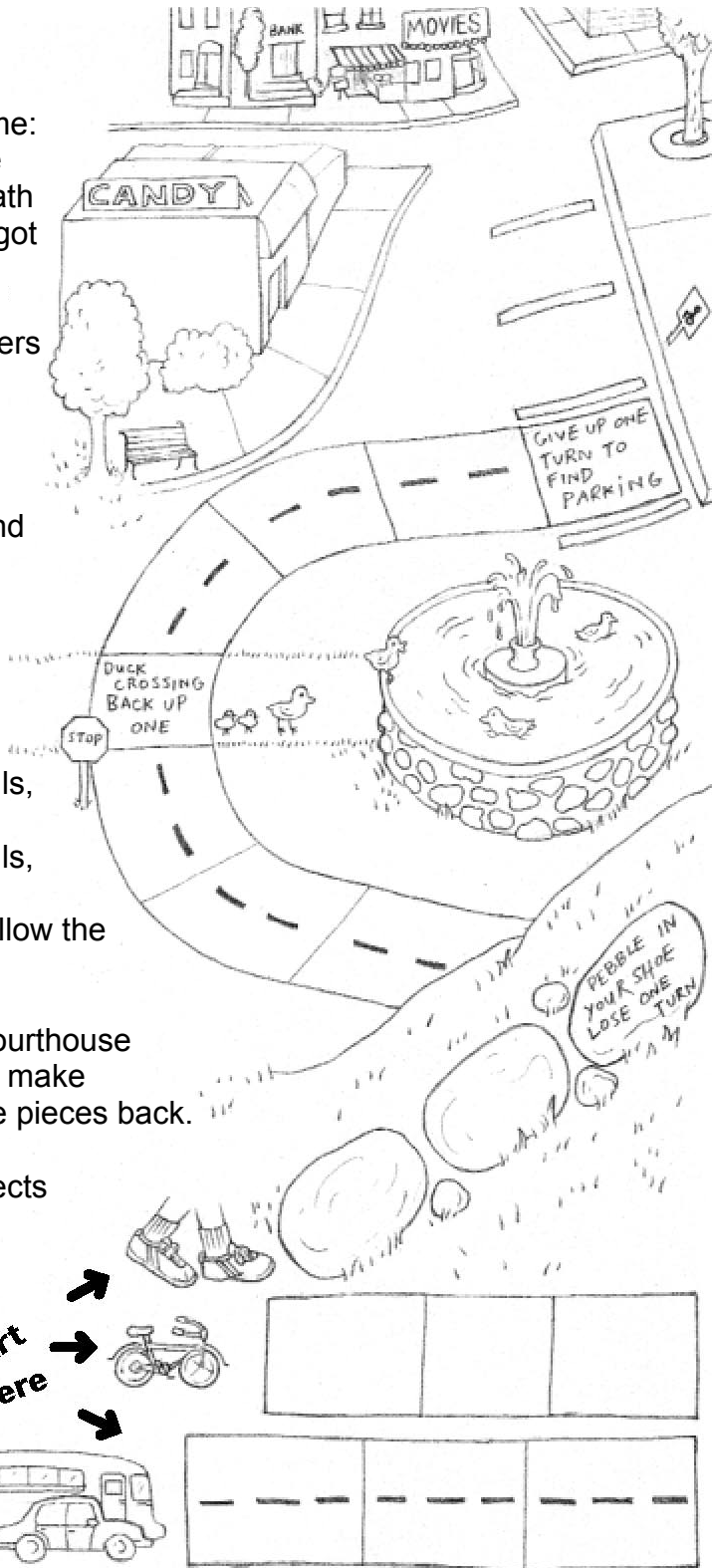
These are the rules of the game:
 Be the first player to get to the courthouse by following the path that has a picture of how you got to the courthouse.
 1–4 players can play.
 Use coins, paperclips, or erasers as game pieces.
 Drop 3 extra coins on a flat surface.

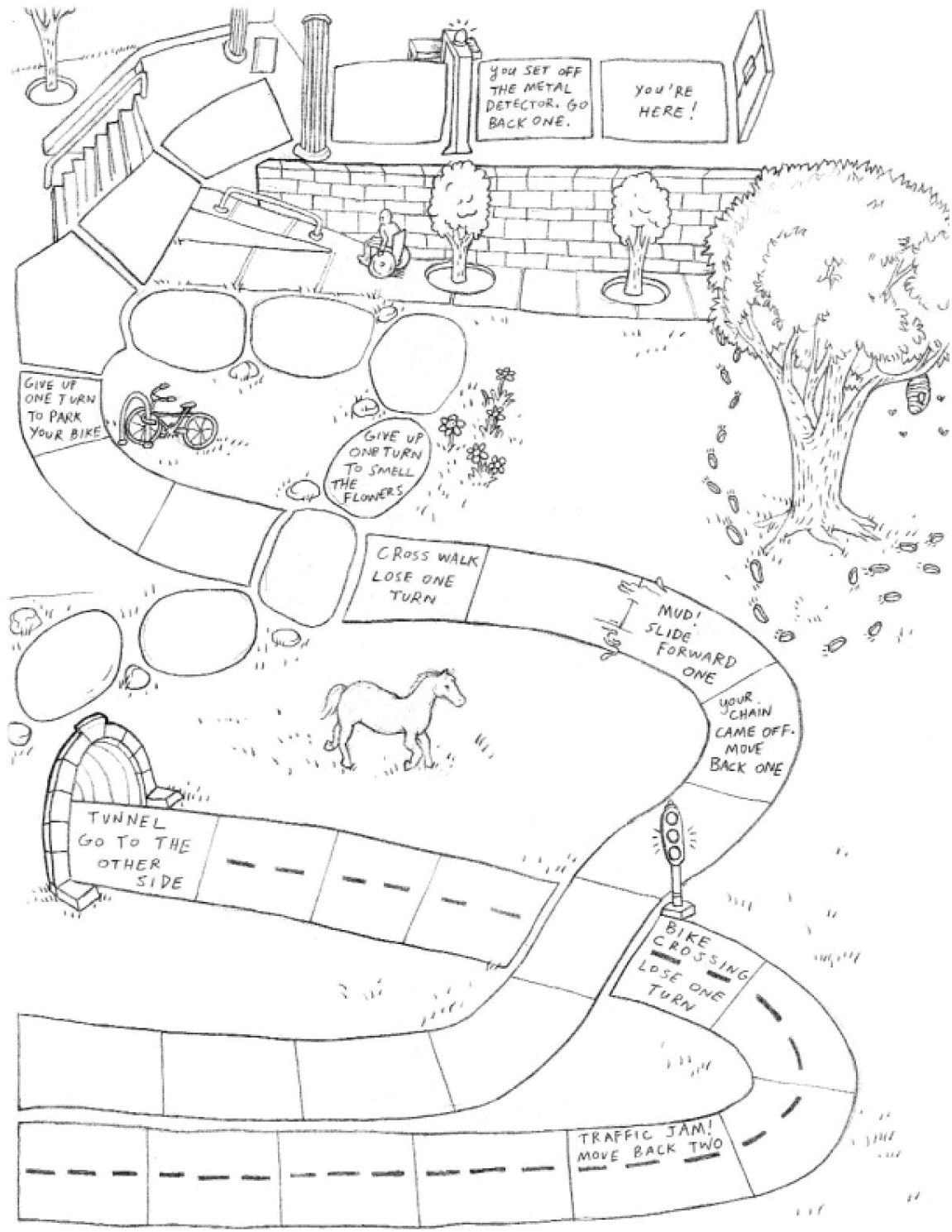
Count the number of heads and move ahead that number.

If there are 1 head and 2 tails, move forward 1 space.
 If there are 2 heads and 1 tail, move forward 2 spaces.
 If there are 3 heads and no tails, move forward 3 spaces.
 If there are no heads and 3 tails, do not move.
 When you land on a space, follow the instructions on that space.

The first player to get to the courthouse wins. At the end of the game, make sure everyone gets their game pieces back.

Circle on the game all the objects that you saw on your way to court today. If you saw a horse, then circle the horse. If what you saw today is not here, draw a picture of it on the game.



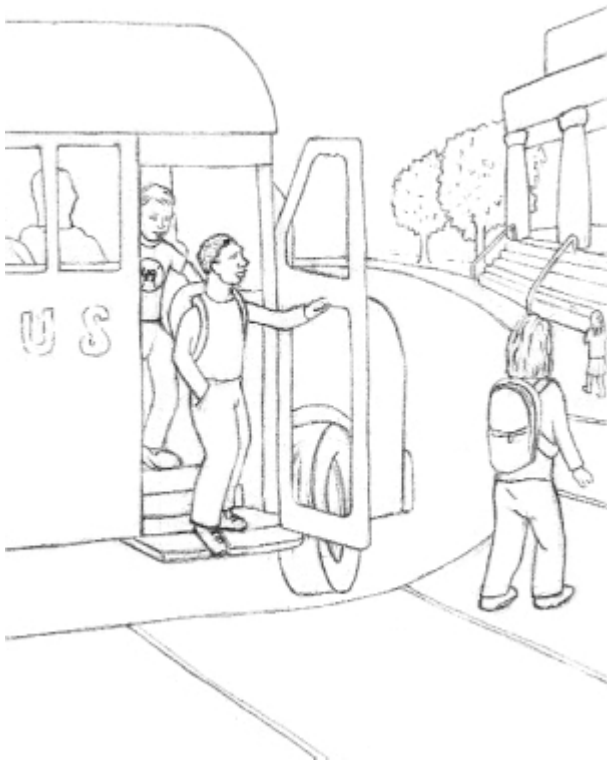
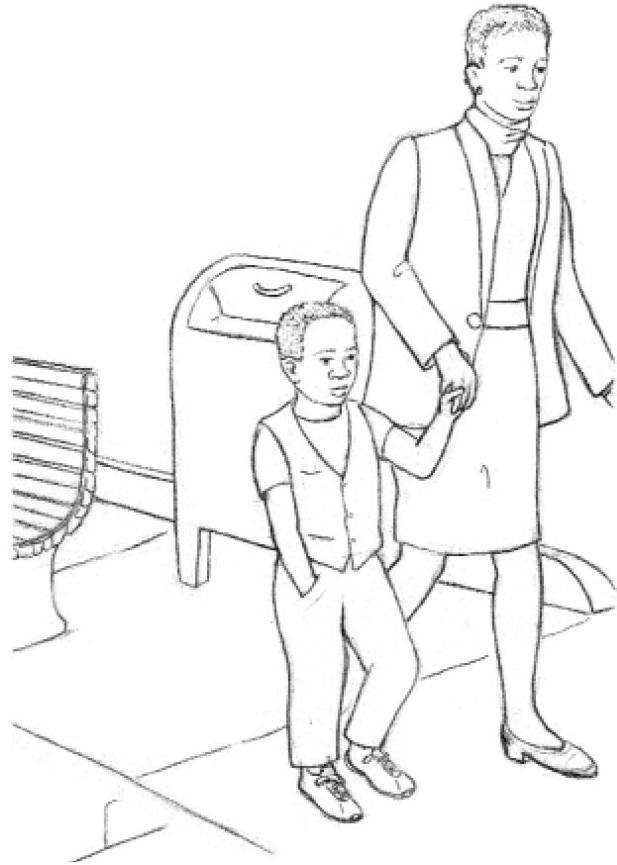


Why Am I Here?

Check the box that tells why you are at court today, then color the pictures.

I am at court today with

who has come here to



I am at court today on a field trip

with _____



I am here because I am involved in a case or I am here as a witness to tell what I have seen or heard.

I do not know why I am at court.



Who Are the People in Court?

Many people work in a court. Everyone has a job to do.

First, there is the **judge**. In many courts, the judge will be wearing a black robe. The judge usually sits at the front of the courtroom on the **bench**. The judge's name is often on a sign near the bench. Some types of cases are heard by **masters**. A master is a lawyer who the judge has asked to sit at the bench instead of the judge.



The judge does many things. First, the judge is like a referee at a ball game. The judge makes sure that everyone plays by the rules. Sometimes the judge is also the person who decides the argument that people came to court about. For example, if two people come to court because they disagree about money, the judge might be the person who finally decides who gets the money.

Other times, a group of people decides who wins the argument. These people



are called **jurors**. Jurors are people who come to court to listen to each side of a disagreement. Then the jurors decide how the disagreement will be settled. A group of jurors is called a **jury**.



When people go to court, they often have **lawyers**. Lawyers are also called **attorneys**. Lawyers give advice to people on their disagreements in court. You don't have to have a lawyer to go to court. When a lawyer talks for someone who has come to court, it

means that the lawyer "represents" the person. Each lawyer represents only one person in court. So, if many people are involved in a disagreement, there might be more than one lawyer in court. All kinds of people have lawyers, even children! Lawyers usually sit next to the person they represent in the court.

You can probably spot the bailiff very easily. The **bailiff** is the person who makes sure the people who go to court obey the rules. The bailiff is usually wearing a uniform, like a police officer's uniform. The bailiff is a special police officer just for the court.



Courts also have **interpreters** for people who don't speak or understand English. The interpreter's job is to translate what is said in court.

The **court reporter** is the person who writes down everything that everybody says in court. Wow! Can you imagine writing down all the words people say? The court reporter usually sits near the judge and types on a small machine. Court reporters type very fast, and everyone in court has to speak slowly and clearly so the court reporter can hear what they say.



All courts have **clerks** as well. A court clerk keeps all the papers about the cases in the court and organizes them. The clerk keeps track of the decisions or orders that the judge makes during court and also keeps the court's schedule.

Witnesses are people who come to court to tell what they have seen or heard. For example, if someone is accused of stealing something, a witness might come to court to say what they saw happen. When witnesses come to court, they have to raise their hand and make a special promise, called an oath, to tell the truth. They take a special seat and the lawyers ask them questions. Cases that last a long time may have lots of witnesses.



Now that you know about some of the people in a court, can you solve this puzzle? Draw a line to connect the name of the person with the job they do. Good luck!

Lawyers	These people come to court to tell the truth and talk about what they have seen or heard.
Judge	This person types everything that is said in court into a machine.
Bailiff	This person organizes all the papers and keeps track of the judge's decisions.
Jurors	This person translates what is said in court.
Clerk	This person's job is to make decisions and make sure that everyone follows the rules in court.
Witnesses	These people give advice and talk in court for the people who have disagreements.
Court reporter	This person keeps order in the courtroom and usually wears a uniform.
Interpreter	These people listen to both sides of a disagreement in court and then decide who wins.

Answers on page 35.