

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



# Jury Duty

Today we're going to talk about jury duty...in just a minute.

The Sixth Amendment to the United States Constitution guarantees anyone accused of a crime the right to a "speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury." The Seventh Amendment guarantees a similar right in civil lawsuits.

A criminal trial jury is typically made up of 12 people. Jury members sit in on the trial, review evidence, and work together and with the judge to determine whether a defendant is guilty or not guilty. In most criminal cases, a unanimous, or 12 to zero, jury vote is required to find a defendant guilty.

While much of civic participation is voluntary, jury duty is not. Courts randomly select citizens 18 and older to fill out a questionnaire. This helps identify a pool of qualified jurors that accurately reflects the community a trial will take place in. A portion of those qualified are randomly selected to appear for jury duty.

Qualified jurors are summoned into a courtroom and asked questions to determine if they can decide a particular case fairly. Jurors who may be biased are dismissed, then 12 jurors—plus some alternates—are selected to serve at the trial.

Jury duty is just that—a duty. By serving on a jury, you're protecting the liberty of fellow citizens by making sure they get a fair trial. And if you're ever in that situation yourself, you'll be guaranteed the same right.

Why do you think jury duty is important in a democratic society?