

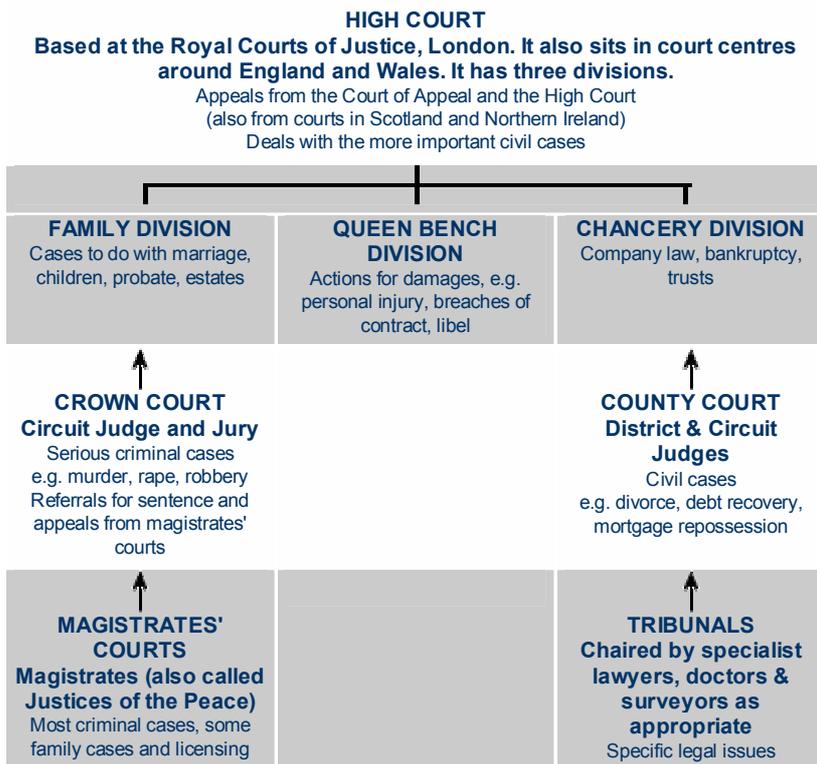
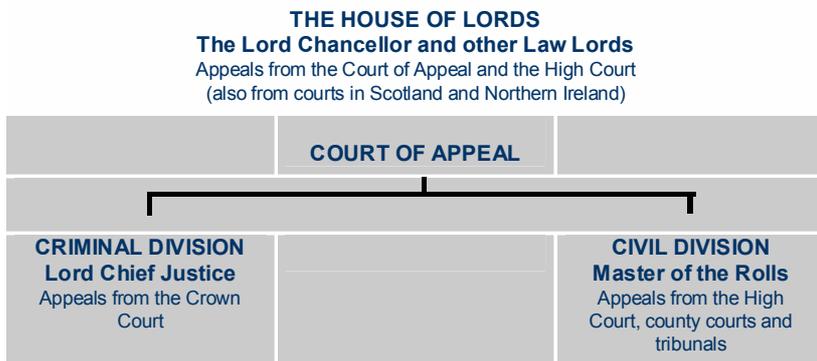
Teacher's notes

Some of the information in this section should be dealt with in a sensitive manner, as some students may have personal information or experiences of going through the court systems.

However it is important for students to know what is right and wrong behaviour within the law and what the consequences might be should they go against the law and be summoned to court.

Her Majesty's Courts Service is made up from different courts, which deal with different offences or situations.

Below is the structure,



(http://www.magistrates-association.org.uk/youth_site/court_structure.html)

- Magistrates Court – nearly all criminal cases start their proceedings here, but in addition some civil cases are heard here too. Usually it is the case that there will be a panel of three magistrates – Justices of the Peace. Or one District Judge. Normally with magistrate's court, if a prison sentence of more than a year or a fine in excess of £5000 is required the case will be tried in Crown court for more severe sentencing.
- Youth Court – Is similar to the magistrates but specially designed for children between the ages of 10-17, unless it is a very severe crime. The aim is to stop the person re-offending. The media may attend these cases, but they cannot report the defendant's name. The public are not allowed to sit in and observe.
- Crown Court – deals with the most serious criminal cases such as murder, robbery and rape, and also appeals or referrals from the Magistrates court. A Judge and a jury of 12 people, members of the public selected from the electoral register hear the case and decide if the verdict is guilty or not guilty. Once the decision is made the judge will pass sentence if required
- County Court – the majority of cases here are civil law disputes, although this does depend on the nature of the claim. It can also be known as the **small claims court**. Cases tend to be around divorce settlements, personal injuries and debt recovery.
- High Court – comes under The Royal Court of Justice, and deals with higher levels of civil disputes such as bankruptcy and slander.
- Court of Appeal – there is a civil and criminal court, civil dealing with referrals from the High Court and Criminal dealing with appeals from the crown court.

http://www.magistrates-association.org.uk/youth_site/mag_court_.html

Following this link will allow you look at the set up of the different courts, it may be interesting for students to look at it.

The roles in court

Imagine that the court is a theatre and you need lots of different people to play the parts. Listed below are some of the main roles in court.

- The defendant - the person who is accused of committing the crime

- The witness/victim– the person who might be the victim
- The claimant- Person claiming in civil cases
- Bench - the panel of three magistrate judges/ justices of the peace who hear cases in the magistrates court
- Judge - is responsible for all matters of law and making sure that all the rules of procedure are properly applied. The judge makes the decision about the punishment or referral
- Jury - 12 people, members of the public selected from the electoral register hear the case and decide if the verdict is guilty or not guilty.
- Witness – some one who may be able to give evidence about the case.

Role play activities can easily be done with this information; you may wish to use the seating plan from one of the court

www.magistrates-association.org.uk/youth_site/mag_court_.html

Allocate each student a role. This will give them a visual representation of the different courts and help to highlight how different civil and criminal cases are heard and decided.