

Descriptions of court systems

- 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 judges – Justices of the Peace. 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 a 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 not report the defendants name, the public are not allowed to sit in an observe
- Crown Court – deals with the most serious criminal cases such as murder, robbery and rape, and also appeals or referral from 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 against civil law, although this does depend on the nature of the claim. It can also be known as 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 court, it may be interesting for students to