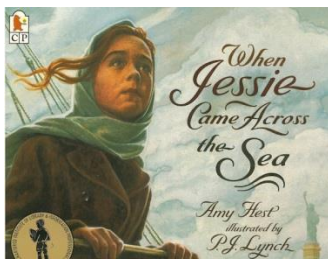




Grade 4 Sample Lesson

When Jessie Came Across the Sea by Amy Hest



Time: 25–30 minutes

Goals

Students will be introduced to how a courtroom works through an age-appropriate, interactive experience. Students will practice public speaking using their own words.

Activity

The teacher will coach students through a short hearing about the immigration of Jessie's grandmother from the story *When Jessie Came Across the Sea*. This script is provided as a guide, and suggestions for what the student attorneys might say are written in italics.

Getting Started

- Set up the classroom to look like a courtroom: judge's desk, clerk's desk, tables for lawyers, jury box, witness stand.
- If possible, have three or four adults (including the teacher) help with small group work. Directions for each group leader are provided.
- Give students an overview of the courtroom and who sits where.
- Give students an overview of the responsibilities of the jury.
- Explain that the purpose of the activity is to show how people use courtrooms to solve problems.

Relevant Key Points from the Text, *When Jessie Came Across the Sea*

- Jessie, a 13 year-old orphan, lived with her grandmother on a small farm far away from America.
- Her grandmother did not know how to read and write, and Jessie tried to teach her.
- Jessie's grandmother taught Jessie how to sew.
- The village rabbi had one ticket to America to give away. He gave it to Jessie.
- Jessie met a boy named Lou on the boat trip to America, and they became friends.
- Jessie arrived at Ellis Island in the New York City harbor and passed through inspection. She told the inspectors her name and age, that she was unmarried, could read and write, and that she was healthy. She listed her occupation as sewing lace.
- Her Cousin Kay greeted her at Ellis Island, and she lost track of Lou without saying good-bye.
- Cousin Kay took her home with her, and gave her a job sewing dresses.
- Cousin Kay sent Jessie to school so she could learn to speak, read, and write English.
- One day, when Jessie was 16 years old, she saw her friend, Lou, from the ship to America. They became friends again, until one day, Lou asked Jessie to marry him. Jessie said she would marry him.
- Jessie wanted her grandmother to come to her wedding and live in America, so she sent her a ticket. Jessie's grandmother wrote back a short letter saying she would come.
- Jessie's grandmother came to America, much older and more frail than she had been. She brought Jessie's mother's wedding ring to give to Jessie.

Presenting the Facts of the Case

- Select two groups of students. The first group will serve as the government attorneys (prosecution). The second group will serve as the attorneys representing Jessie's grandmother (defense).
- Help students act out the fact pattern that will be used for the case.

Fact pattern:

- Jessie's grandmother is trying to stay in the country in the hopes of eventually becoming a citizen.
- The government has denied Jessie's grandmother a visa to stay longer than one month, on the grounds that she is too old and unable to read or write.
- The attorneys representing Jessie's grandmother claim that she has relatives who will take her in and that she brings with her an important skill, sewing. In addition, Jessie says her grandmother can read and write a little. Jessie promises to teach her more so she will become fully literate.
- Jessie's grandmother claims her life is very hard back in her country and America will provide her with safety, opportunities, and the comfort of being with relatives. She says she can provide the wisdom of an older person and possesses strong sewing skills that she can use to help others.

Preparing Student Groups for the Trial

1. Student attorneys: Two Teams

- Three to six students are selected to play each team of attorneys: one team of three to six students for the government (prosecution) and one team of three to six students for Jessie's grandmother (defense).
- Explain to the students what the attorneys will do: *give an opening statement, ask the witnesses some questions, and give a closing argument.* Split the groups of attorneys up so that there are students assigned to each of the three parts.
- Opening statements should consist of each student clearly stating his or her name, whom he or she represents, one piece of information about Jessie's grandmother, and ending by saying *Thank you.* Example: *My name is _____ and I represent the government. Jessie's grandmother should not be allowed to stay in the country because she is illiterate and old. Thank you.*
- Attorneys prepare witness questions to support their side of the case. Possible questions for witnesses about Jessie's grandmother are:
 - What do you know about Jessie's grandmother?
 - Why should or shouldn't she be allowed to enter the country?
 - What would happen to Jessie's grandmother if she were returned to her country?
 - What do you know about life back in Jessie's country?
 - How well can Jessie's grandmother read and write?
 - How old is Jessie's grandmother?
 - What skills does she have?
- Closing arguments should be brief: *We think Jessie's grandmother should/should not be allowed to stay in America because...*
- The most important goal is that each student feels comfortable speaking.
- It will be easier for the students to remember their arguments if they are in the students' own words.

2. Student Judges

- Two or three students are selected as judges.
- Explain the judge's role in a trial.
- Have students practice standing at the side and walking up to the bench. Explain that they will enter once the clerks call: *All rise.*
- Talk about the order of the case: *Each team gets a turn to do each part of the trial. We start with opening statements, then witnesses are questioned, attorneys give closing arguments, and the jury votes.*
- Practice the judges' lines: *Does _____'s team have an opening statement? Does _____'s team have any witnesses? Does _____'s team have a closing argument?*

- Make sure the students understand that they will repeat these lines—once for the first group, and then again for the second group.

3. Student Clerks

- Two or three students are selected to be clerks.
- Explain the clerk’s role in the courtroom.
- Explain about starting court: *You are responsible for beginning the trial. Once you say, “All rise,” everyone will stand up and the judge(s) will enter.*
- Explain that the clerk’s other job is to swear in the witnesses so they will tell the truth, and that they have to do this for each witness.
- Practice the clerks’ lines: *All rise. Court is now in session. You may be seated. Raise your right hand—do you promise to tell the whole truth?*
- Make sure students understand that they will swear in the witnesses for the government and witnesses for Jessie’s grandmother separately.

4. Student Jury

- Explain to the jury members that their role is very important: it is up to them to decide whether Jessie’s grandmother should be able to live in America. Explain to them what it means to be *impartial*.
- Explain that juries don’t know anyone involved in the problem and need to be fair. They need to pretend they don’t know any of the other students and decide based on what happens during the hearing, not based on who their friends are.
- Explain that at the end of the hearing, they will take a vote. Everyone can only vote for one side.

5. Student Witnesses

- Depending on how many students are in the class, witnesses can be:
 - Jessie
 - Jessie’s grandmother
 - A recent immigrant from Jessie’s country
 - An immigration officer
 - Cousin Kay
 - Lou
 - A teacher who has tested Jessie’s grandmother’s literacy skills
- Explain to them that they will be answering some questions about Jessie’s grandmother and her request for permanent resident status. Some questions may be easy (*How old is Jessie’s grandmother?*). Some may require more imagination (*What hardships did you experience back in your country?*).
- Explain that witnesses are supposed to tell the truth. Practice having the witnesses raise their right hands and agree to tell the truth.

Mock Trial Script

Note: This script is for the teacher to get an overview of what happens during the mock trial.

1. Starting Court

Clerks: *All rise. (Judges enter and sit down.)*

Clerks: *Court is now in session. You may be seated.*

2. Opening Statements

Judges: *Do the attorneys for the prosecution have an opening statement?*

Prosecuting Attorneys: *Yes, Your Honor.*

Student attorneys walk over to the jury and make an opening statement.

Teacher: *Jury, what did you hear from the government's team? (Listen to one or two students).*

Judges: *Does Jessie's grandmother's team have an opening statement?*

Defense Attorneys: *Yes, Your Honor.*

Student attorneys walk over to the jury and make an opening statement.

3. Witnesses

Judges: *Does the prosecution have any witnesses?*

Prosecuting Attorneys: *Yes, Your Honor.*

Witnesses go to the witness stand.

Clerks: *Raise your right hand. Do you promise to tell the whole truth?*

Witnesses: *Yes.*

Prosecution questions witnesses.

Teacher: *Jury, what did you hear from the prosecution's team? (Listen to one or two students).*

Judges: *Does Jessie's grandmother's team (the defense) have any witnesses?*

Defense Attorneys: *Yes, Your Honor.*

Witnesses take the stand.

Clerks: *Raise your right hand. Do you promise to tell the whole truth?*

Witnesses: *Yes.*

Follow the same steps for these witnesses.

4. Closing Statements

Judge(s): *Does the prosecution have a closing argument?*

Prosecuting Attorneys: *Yes, Your Honor.*

Student attorneys stand in front of the jury.

Prosecution delivers closing argument.

Teacher: *Jury, what did you hear from the prosecution? (Listen to one or two students).*

Judge(s): *Does Jessie's grandmother's team (defense) have a closing argument?*

Defense Attorneys: *Yes, Your Honor.*

Defense delivers closing argument.

5. Judge Instructs Jury

Judges: *Members of the jury, it is now time to decide whether Jessie's grandmother should be granted permanent resident status.*

Teacher: *You have heard the facts of the case. You have two choices:*

-The first choice is that Jessie's grandmother should not be allowed to stay in America longer than one month because _____ (list the reasons developed by the first group).

-The second choice is that Jessie's grandmother should be granted permanent resident status because - _____(list the reasons developed by the second group).

Have the jury discuss the case in a corner of the room. After they deliberate, have members take a vote. Explain that decisions are usually unanimous: *Ordinarily to reach a decision, the jurors vote until everyone agrees, but today the side that has the most votes wins.*

Appoint someone from the jury to stand and act as the foreperson.

Judges: *Does the jury have a verdict?*

Jury Foreperson: *Yes, Your Honor. We believe that Jessie's grandmother should be able to stay in America permanently/ should not be able to stay in America permanently.*

Student Script: Judges

Judges: Does the prosecution have an opening statement?

Prosecution opening statement

Judges: Does Jessie's grandmother's team, the defense, have an opening statement?

Defense opening statement

Judges: Does the prosecution have any witnesses?

Prosecution witnesses

Judges: Does Jessie's grandmother's team, the defense, have any witnesses?

Defense witnesses

Judges: Does the prosecution have a closing argument?

Prosecution closing statement

Judges: Does Jessie's grandmother's team, the defense, have a closing argument?

Defense closing statement

Judges: Members of the jury, it is now time to decide whether Jessie's grandmother should be granted permanent resident status.

Student Script: Clerks

Clerks: All rise.

Judges enter

Clerks: Court is now in session. You may be seated.

Opening statements

Clerks: Raise your right hand. Do you promise to tell the whole truth?

Prosecution witnesses

Clerks: Raise your right hand. Do you promise to tell the whole truth?

Defense witnesses