



Law and Justice Curriculum Overview

Law and Justice (L&J) is a two-year curriculum specifically for high school career academies in the legal, government, and protective services pathways.



A distinguishing feature of the curriculum is its deliberate integration of fields that have traditionally been separate: (1) law and law enforcement, (2) law and advocacy, and (3) academic and career technical education. The curriculum is intended to help prepare students for post-secondary education and a range of careers, and to become productive leaders in a democratic society.

The L&J curriculum meets California and national academic standards as well as career technical education standards. Students learn and apply knowledge and skills that are essential in the field of law and law enforcement. Students also explore different professions in the U.S. legal system as they develop a career portfolio.

Best Practices: Shaped with substantial input from secondary and post-secondary educators and law, law enforcement, and advocacy professionals, the curriculum incorporates best practices identified by research. For example:

- Project- and inquiry-based learning help students master key concepts and connect classroom learning to personal interests and careers.
- Performance assessments provide evidence of critical thinking, conceptual connections, and mastery of essential knowledge and skills.
- Units in both courses are built around essential framing questions and specific understandings (learning goals).
- Specific structured activities support development of 21st century skills, including leadership and teamwork, communication, and problem-solving.
- Appropriate technology is used to support student learning.

Foundations in Law

Foundations in Law is a year-long course that helps students develop an in-depth understanding of how and why governments and laws are formed. It also develops students' knowledge of the relationship between law and law enforcement.



Essential Questions:

- Why do we have laws? What is the purpose of law in society?
- What are justice and injustice?
- Why are there different interpretations of the law?
- How does the U.S. legal system affect young people, and how can they help achieve justice in their community?
- What are the different roles and professions in the U.S. legal system?

Unit 1: Human Nature, Rules, and Power: The Origins of Law

Unit 2: The Legal System in Action

Unit 3: Criminal Law and the Pursuit of Justice

Unit 4: Lawsuits and Liability: Civil Law Systems

Unit 5: Equal Justice Under the Law: Movements for Social, Political, and Legal Equality

Unit 6: International Law and Human Rights

Foundations in Criminal Justice

Foundations in Criminal Justice, the second Foundations course, provides a broad orientation to the key components of the criminal justice system—law enforcement, corrections, and courts—and how they interact with one another. Students explore the definition of crime in greater depth and historical developments and current practices in criminal justice.

Essential Questions:

- What is crime? Who defines crime?
- What are the functions of a criminal justice system?
- How do criminal justice systems balance the safety of the community with individual rights?
- What are the different roles, responsibilities, and limits of professions in the criminal and juvenile justice systems?
- How do criminal and juvenile justice systems affect young people, and how can they work to improve the administration of justice in their communities?

Unit 1: Defining Crime and Justice

Unit 2: Responding to Crime

Unit 3: Jury Trials and the Pursuit of Justice

Unit 4: Responding to Juvenile Delinquency

Unit 5: Punishment and Rehabilitation in the Criminal Justice System

Unit 6: Balancing Security and Liberty

Integrated Units

ConnectEd: The California Center for College and Career is developing integrated lessons in English language arts, math, and science that link to the Foundations courses.

The curriculum will be available at EDC: www.lawandjustice.edc.org and ConnectEd Studios: www.connectedstudios.org. For more information, contact Eliza Fabillar at efabillar@edc.org.