

# GOING TO COURT



An Activity Book for Children

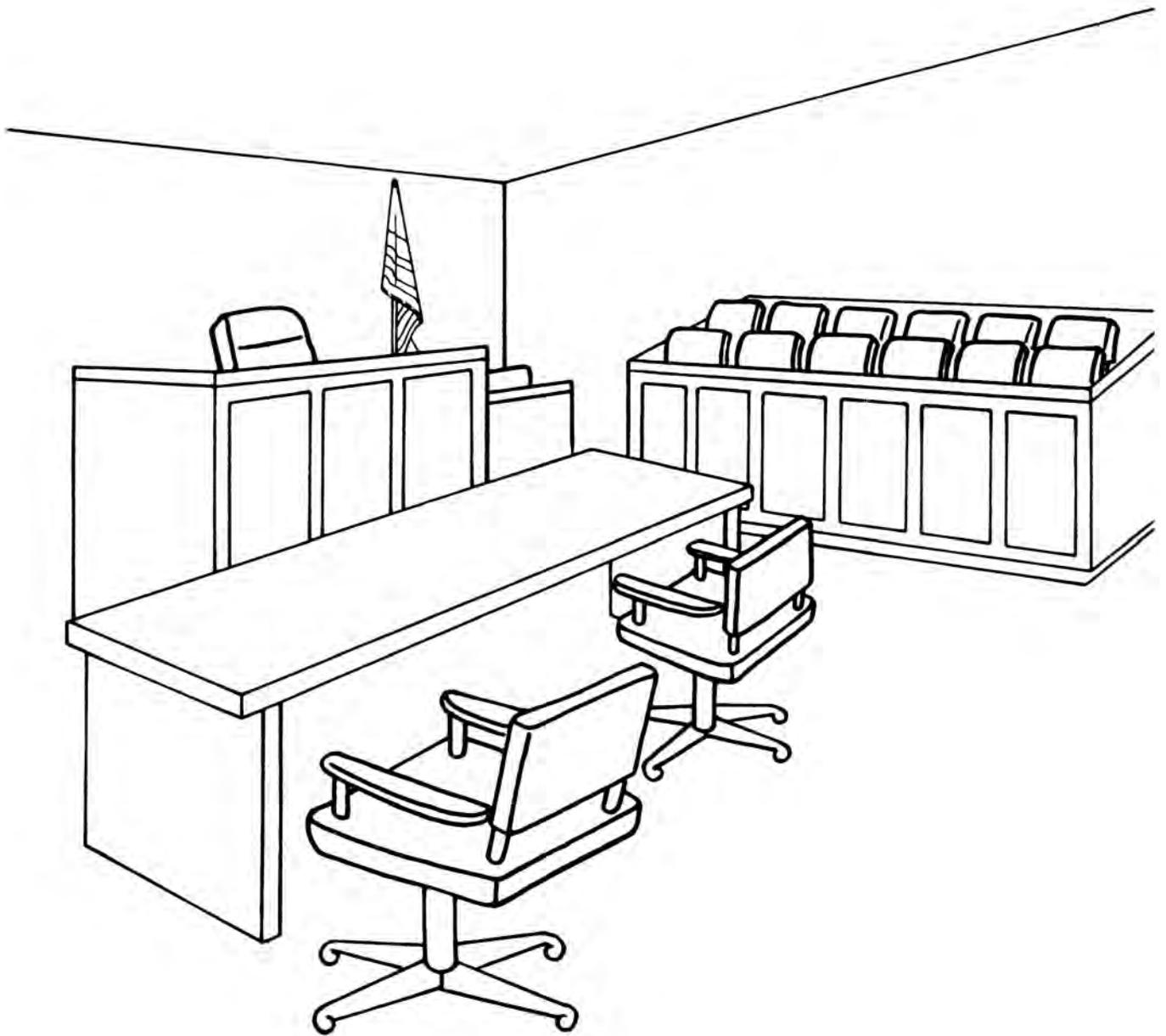
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This book belongs to \_\_\_\_\_.

You're going to court because something happened that you know about and have to tell. Your job in court is to answer questions. Some questions will be about you, like your name and how old you are. Another question may be about the difference between the truth and a lie. Your job is to tell the truth when you answer questions about what you saw, heard, or felt. A person who answers questions in court is called a **Witness**.

When you have told your story and answered all the questions—your job for the day is over.



A **Courtroom** is a special room where witnesses go to tell what they know. Some courtrooms look like this.



Now let's talk about who is going with you to court. Let's name them.

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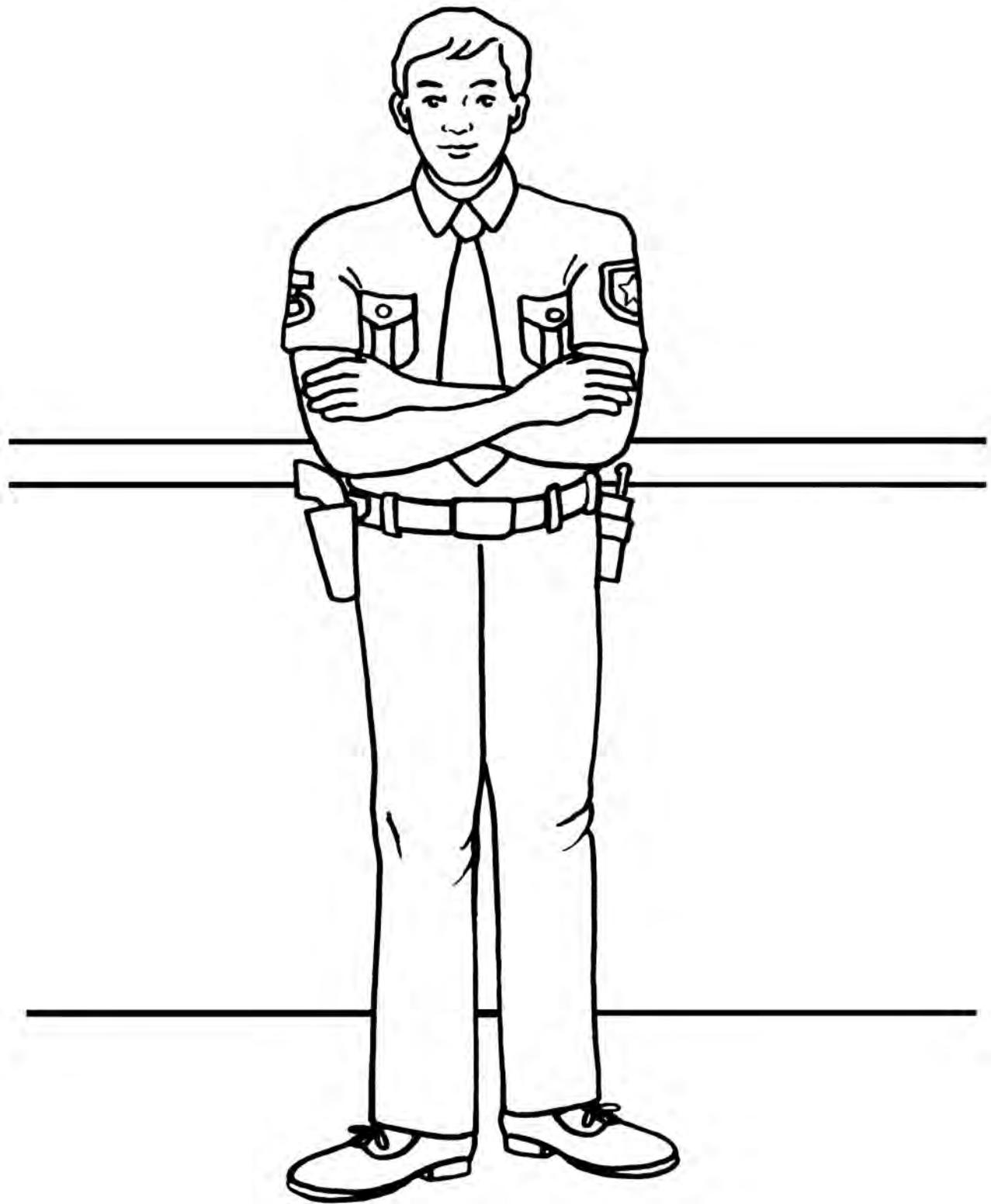
There will also be other people in court who have jobs to do. This book will tell you about them.



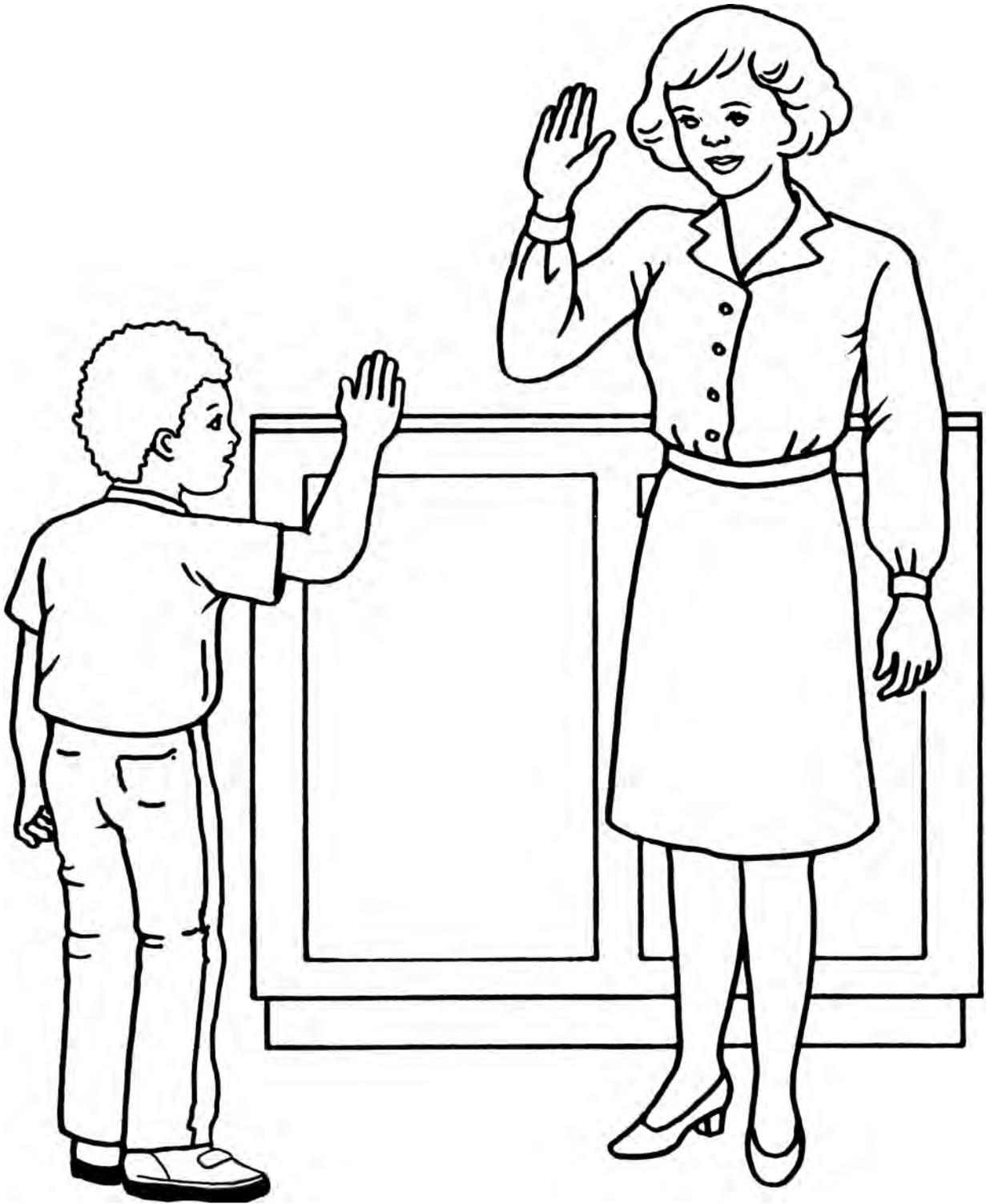
The **Judge** is the person who sits in the front of the courtroom. Sometimes the judge wears a black robe. The judge is the boss in the courtroom and listens to what the witnesses say. The judge may ask you or other witnesses questions. The judge always wants to hear the truth. If there is no jury, the judge decides what happens.



Sometimes the **Jury** decides what happens. The jury is a group of 12 people. Their job is to listen carefully to everything that the witnesses, the lawyers, and the judge have to say.



The **Bailiff** is a deputy sheriff. The bailiff's job is to keep the courtroom a safe place. The bailiff is there to protect the judge and everyone else in the courtroom. Sometimes the bailiff brings witnesses into the courthouse.

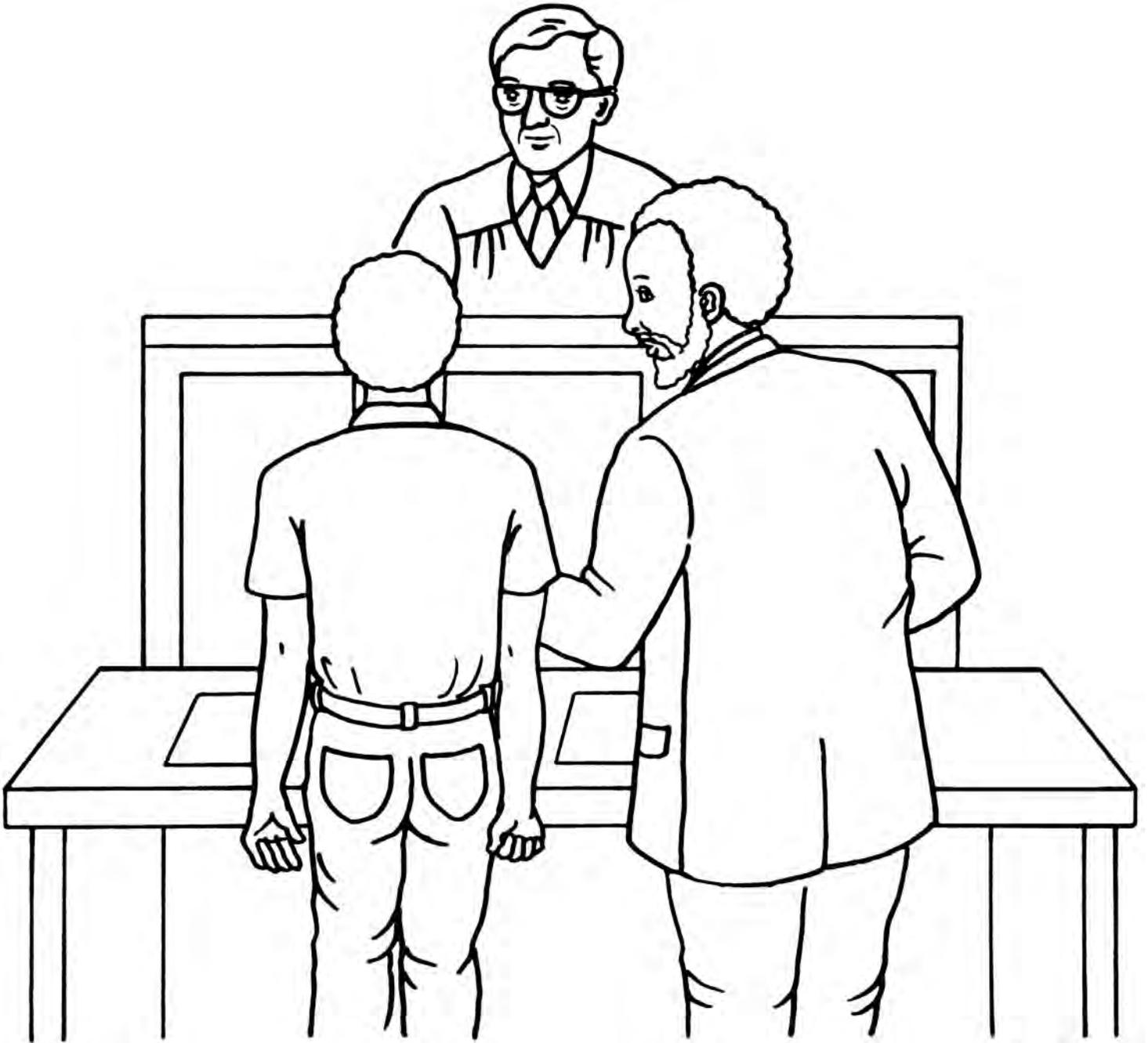


The **Court Clerk** helps the judge in court. The court clerk writes or types notes for the judge. Either the court clerk or judge will ask you to raise your right hand and promise to tell the truth.

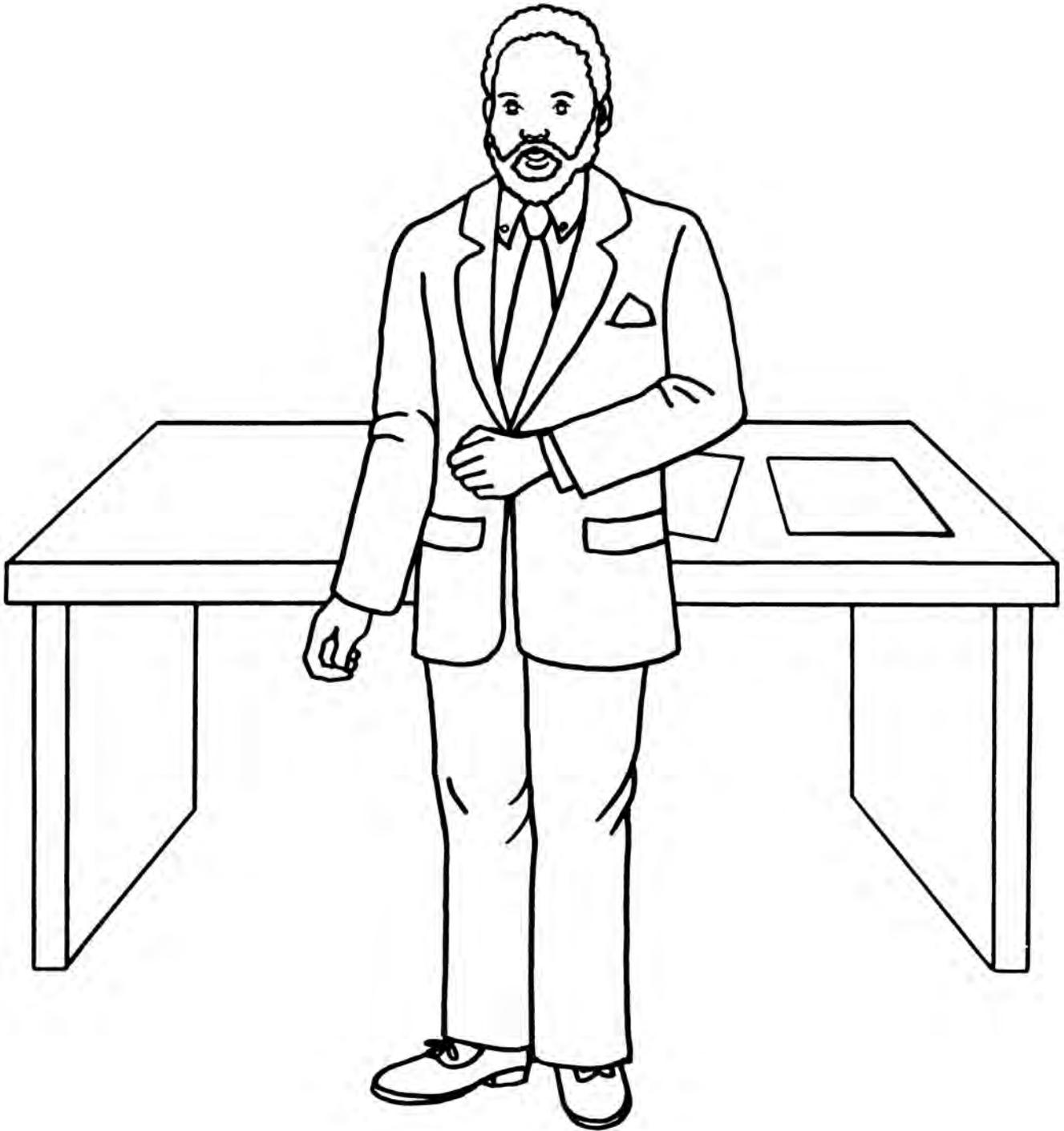


The **Commonwealth's Attorney** is the lawyer who helps you tell the judge what happened. Sometimes the Commonwealth's Attorney is called a **Prosecutor**. This person will ask questions about you, like your name and how old you are. The Commonwealth's Attorney will ask you questions about what you saw or heard or felt.

Listen to the questions. If you don't understand a question, ask the Commonwealth's Attorney to say it in a different way.



The **Defendant** is the person who is accused of doing something wrong. You may know the defendant. The defendant will be in the courtroom while the witnesses answer questions.



The **Defense Attorney** is the lawyer for the defendant. The defense attorney will ask you and the other witnesses questions about what you saw or know.

If you don't understand a question, ask the defense attorney to explain it. Remember to answer all questions by telling the truth.



The **Police Officer** is the person who asked you questions and investigated what happened. The police officer who talked to you may be in court. The police officer's job in court is to help tell what happened.



There may be a **Court Reporter** in the courtroom. The court reporter's job is to type or write everything the witnesses, the lawyers, and the judge say. Everyone must speak in a loud, clear voice. The court reporter may use a machine that looks like a small keyboard on a stand.



At the end, the judge or jury decides what happened. Sometimes this is very difficult. If you don't understand what the judge or jury decided, or if you have any questions you can ask the Commonwealth's Attorney, or the person who helped you in court.

You have done a very important job in court.

# Rules for Witnesses

There are rules in court. Some are:

- Tell the truth.
- If you can't remember something or don't understand what someone says, say so.
- Don't guess if you don't know the answer to a question. Say you don't know.
- If you don't agree with what someone asks you, say you don't agree.
- If you are not sure about the answer to a question, only tell the parts that you know.
- Tell the judge if something is bothering you, or if you have a question when you are in court.

# Questions

Most people have questions about going to court.  
What questions do you have?

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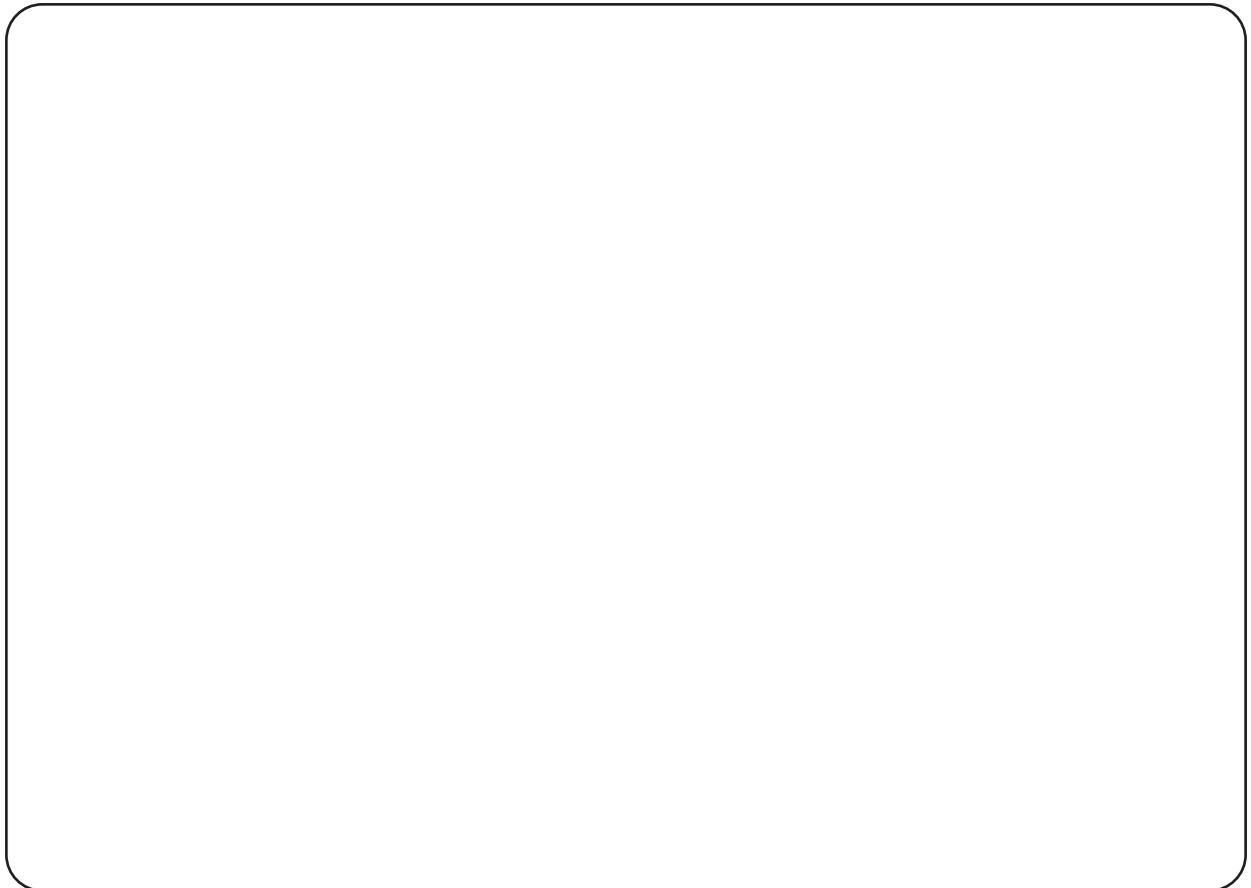
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After you see the courtroom, draw a picture of it.



# Crossword Puzzle

## ■ WORDS TO USE

Apple

Witness

Bailiff

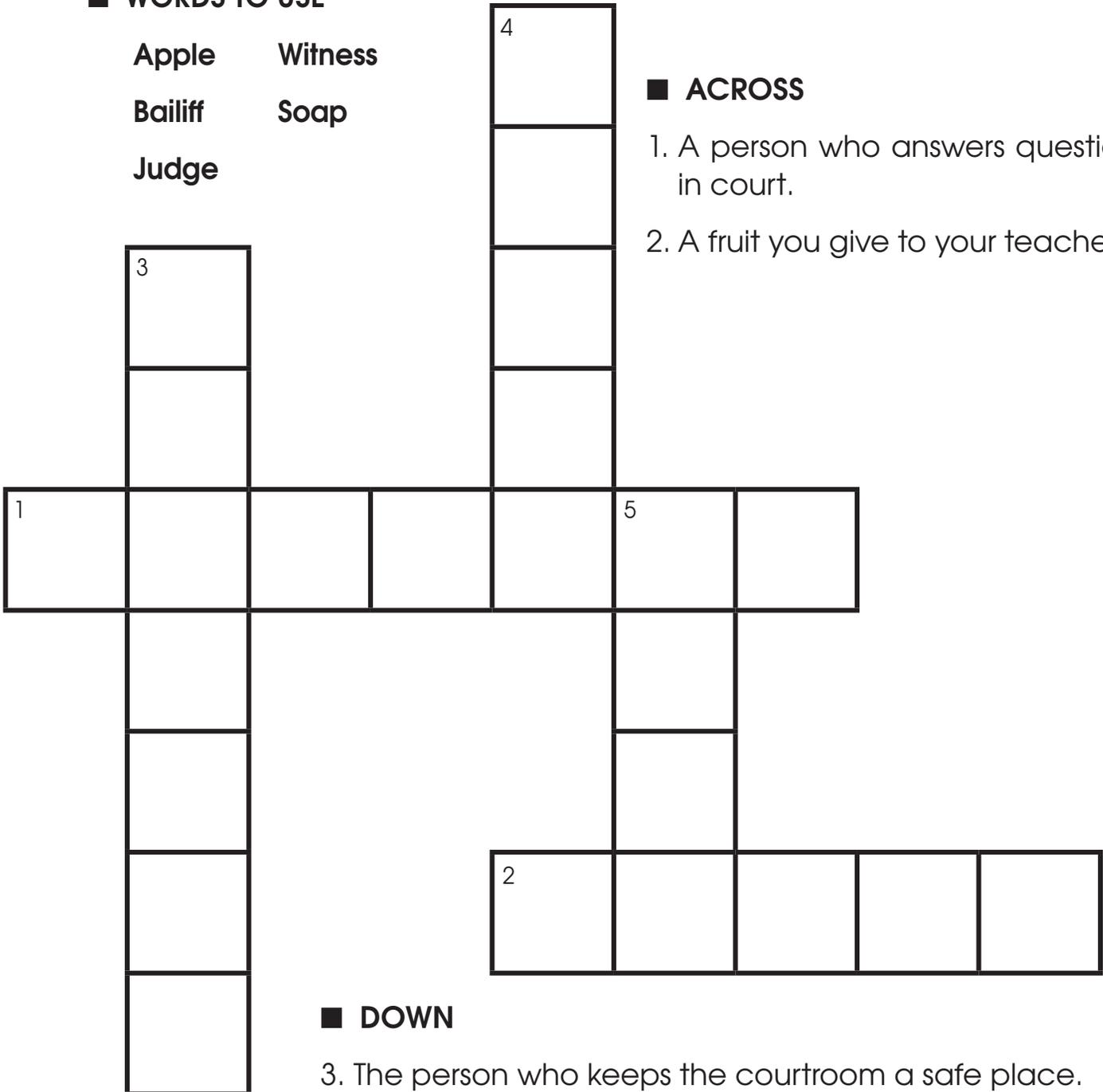
Soap

Judge

## ■ ACROSS

1. A person who answers questions in court.

2. A fruit you give to your teacher.



## ■ DOWN

3. The person who keeps the courtroom a safe place.

4. The boss in the courtroom who listens to what the witnesses say.

5. Something you use to wash your hands.

# Word Search

Find and circle the words listed below. Words may be found across, down, or diagonally.

COURT

PLAY

SUN

HAPPY

BOOK

LAWYER

POLICE

COLOR

ZOO

SCHOOL

TABLE

JUDGE

L	Z	H	A	P	P	Y
O	A	O	B	V	U	L
P	S	M	O	S	D	J
E	G	C	O	U	R	T
S	A	I	K	N	M	D
C	O	L	O	R	P	G
H	T	Z	P	E	G	J
O	I	X	L	V	B	U
O	D	B	A	F	N	D
L	A	W	Y	E	R	G
T	P	O	L	I	C	E

# Match Game

Match the people in Column A to their jobs in Column B.

## Column A

Witness

Courtroom

Judge

Commonwealth's  
Attorney

Defendant

Bailiff

Police Officer

## Column B

The boss in the courtroom who listens to what the witnesses say.

The person accused of doing something wrong.

A person who answers questions in court.

The person who asked you questions and investigated what happened.

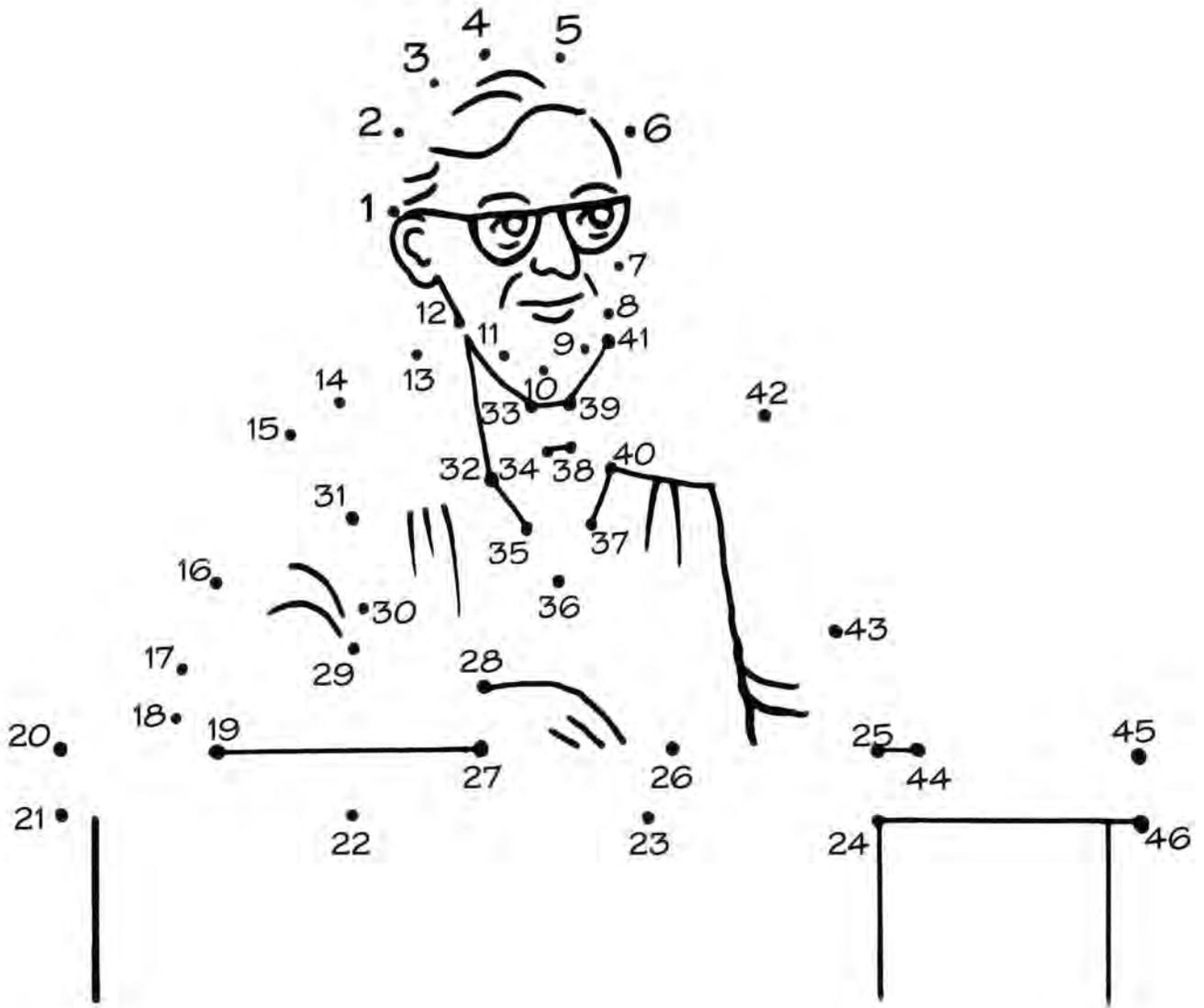
The person who keeps the courtroom a safe place.

A room where witnesses go to tell what they know.

The lawyer who helps you tell the judge what happened.

# Dot-to-Dot

Connect the dots.





## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services extends its appreciation to the many individuals and their agencies for their assistance in the development of the “Going To Court” activity book for children.

If you would like to get copies of this activity book, you may download the information from the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services website at [www.dcjs.virginia.gov/sites/dcjs.virginia.gov/files/publications/victims/going-court-activity-book-children.pdf](http://www.dcjs.virginia.gov/sites/dcjs.virginia.gov/files/publications/victims/going-court-activity-book-children.pdf) or contact the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services at (804) 371-6507.

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# The Child As A Witness

## *How You Can Help*

Being a witness is not a common experience for most adults, let alone for children. Many people get nervous as they think about going to court. Adults and children have different concerns. You may worry about whether the child can describe things clearly. The child may be worried about having to go to the bathroom while testifying! As a parent or support person, you can help in the following ways:

- Make sure the child has seen the courtroom and is familiar with everyone who will be there. Familiarity reduces fear and increases comfort and confidence.
- You will probably have to wait at court, so plan ahead. Bring a few favorite games, books or toys, and a book or activity for yourself.
- Tell the child that it is okay to be nervous, but reassure the child that he/she will do “just fine” as a witness.
- Don’t try to rehearse or coach the child’s testimony.
- If the child has questions that you cannot answer, ask the Commonwealth’s Attorney or victim/witness staff to answer them.

You may have questions, too.

Don’t ever be afraid to ask questions or ask for help.

This activity book was given to you by:

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