

PROJECT
LEAD 
FACILITATOR FAQ SHEET

How do I get started?

Visit the Project LEAD website at projectlead.lacounty.gov (no www). Create an account to gain access to the lessons. The form requires a user name, password and contact information. Your request will be reviewed and approved by the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office. Once registered, you may log in to view and download the Project LEAD curriculum and optional lessons.

How do I approach a school?

It's simple. Contact the principal of a local elementary school (we suggest a school that is near your office). Explain that Project LEAD is a proven law-related education program taught by prosecutors to help fifth-grade students understand legal consequences and decision-making. Explain that the 20-week curriculum requires a fifth-grade teacher to devote one hour a week of class time to the program. The Project LEAD website may help principals and teachers understand the concept. The principal can connect you with a fifth-grade teacher. There is a sample school agreement on the Project LEAD website.

What should I do when I am assigned a class?

Leave a phone message for the teacher at the school's main number. When the teacher calls back, set up a day and time each week that is convenient for both you and the teacher to begin Project LEAD. It's also helpful at this point to exchange cell phone numbers and e-mail addresses. If you have time and you or your school is new to Project LEAD, we recommend scheduling an introductory meeting with your teacher and/or principal to review the curriculum and discuss expectations.

How often and how long do I teach?

Project LEAD facilitators are expected to teach one hour a week for 20 weeks. It is best to set a day and time and stick with it. If you are unable to attend a class, ask your teacher if you may reschedule during the same week.

What is the duration of the program?

We try to keep the program as close to a traditional school year as possible, running from September or October to May or June. But if you are in a year-round school and you don't mind teaching through the summer, that's OK with us.

Should I teach as part of a team?

We strongly encourage Project LEAD facilitators to work with at least one other facilitator. That way, if you are unavailable to teach a class, the other facilitator(s) will be there to step in and the students will still be able to experience Project LEAD that week. With a team, the students also will have a chance to get to know more than one facilitator.



What about school/court holidays?

Ask your teacher for a list of pupil-free days, shortened days and holidays so you may arrange your schedule accordingly. In exchange, let your teacher know in advance when you will be unable to attend class due to holidays and personal vacations. Also inquire if your school has a rain schedule that might interfere with your regular class time.

What happens if I cannot teach a class?

Notify your teacher immediately. (If you cannot reach your teacher, call the school's main office and ask that a message be relayed to your class as soon as possible.) Try to reschedule your lesson for another day during the same week. Please try not to disappoint your students. They look forward to your visits. Whenever possible, let them know in advance that you will not be there.

What happens if I am transferred or must drop out of Project LEAD?

Let your teacher and students know immediately. Try to recruit a replacement facilitator. If you cannot find a replacement, enlist your office's Project LEAD Coordinator to help. Notify your office's Project LEAD Coordinator of all staffing changes.

How closely do I have to follow the Project LEAD curriculum?

The Project LEAD curriculum was written by experts at the Constitutional Rights Foundation and has been proven effective by outside evaluators. You should closely follow the curriculum as presented to ensure that your students gain all the proven benefits of this award-winning law-related education program.

May I facilitate Project LEAD in another grade level?

Each Project LEAD lesson has been developed specifically for a fifth-grade student level. Fifth-graders are in a critical period of youth development. Project LEAD gives students the motivation and essential skills they need to meet the many new challenges they will face in middle school.

How do I prepare for a class?

Try to review all of the lessons before your first class. If that's not possible, at least read the current lesson before you go into the classroom. All of the lessons are self-explanatory. They contain enough activities and topics for discussion to fill an entire hour or more. If you complete a lesson early, be prepared to move on to the next lesson.

Who prints the handouts?

Either you or your teacher can print them prior to each lesson. Some facilitators copy the scripts only for play participants. Others make copies for the entire class so they may follow along.



May I bring in guest speakers?

Absolutely! Invite a police officer or deputy sheriff, a deputy public defender or a judge to address the class. Students also will enjoy meeting a drug-sniffing dog or having a crime lab technician take their fingerprints.

What is the teacher's role?

Your teacher should serve as your partner. She or he is required to remain in the classroom while you are teaching. Some teachers are more active than others. Encourage your teacher to use the optional teacher materials on the Project LEAD website.

Why doesn't my teacher return my phone calls immediately?

Please be patient. Remember that being a teacher is very different than working as a lawyer. Most teachers do not have secretaries. They may not be allowed to access to telephones or e-mail during the school day. They are required to stay with their students at all times. If they get a lunch break, it is short – not the hour or more you may be used to. They may only pick up their messages from the front office before and after school.

How do I conduct the mock trial?

Preparation for the mock trial takes at least two weeks so make sure you allow enough time to get ready for the final production. We strongly encourage you to assign each student a part – even if that means your jury has more than 12 members. Some facilitators arrange to have their mock trial performed in a real courtroom. Others borrow a judge's robe, gavel and other props for the trial in the school auditorium.

What if I want to return to the same school next year?

Make arrangements with your teacher before the school year ends. Contact your teacher at the beginning of the new school year to confirm his or her participation. Sometimes teachers are transferred or reassigned during the summer months.



Project LEAD is an effective law-related elementary education program established by the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office in partnership with the Constitutional Rights Foundation.

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Facilitators, teachers and other school personnel are encouraged to call with any questions or concerns about the program and/or its participants.