

#1 INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLING AUTHOR

JOHN GRISHAM

**A GUIDE FOR
TEACHERS & LIBRARIANS**

**BRING THE COURTROOM
TO THE CLASSROOM**

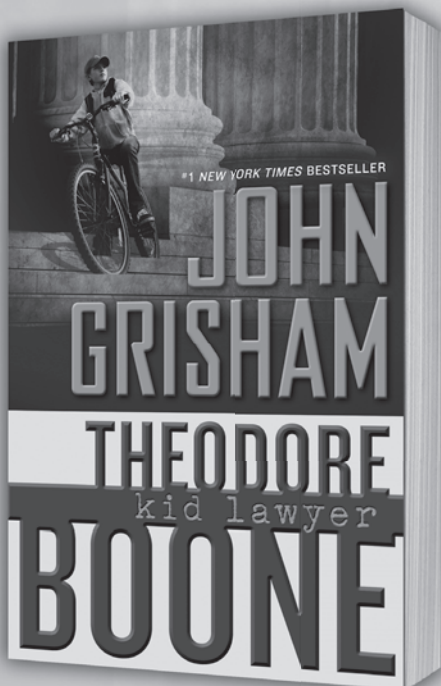


**THEODORE
BOONE**

www.TheodoreBoone.com

ABOUT THE BOOKS

(HC) 978-0-525-42384-3 • \$16.99 • (PB) 978-0-14-241722-5 • \$7.99
(Audio) 978-0-14-242869-6 • \$9.95 • Ages 8–12 • Grades 3–6

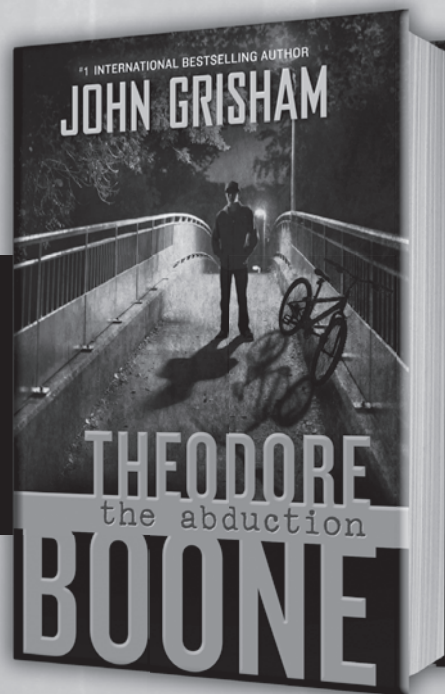


In the small city of Strattenburg, there are many lawyers, and though he's only thirteen years old, Theo Boone thinks he's one of them. He dreams of being a great trial lawyer, of a life in the courtroom.

But Theo finds himself in court much sooner than expected. Because he knows so much—maybe too much—he is suddenly dragged into the middle of a sensational murder trial. The stakes are high, but Theo won't stop until justice is served.

When his best friend, April, disappears from her bedroom in the middle of the night, no one, not even Theo Boone—who knows April better than anyone—has answers.

As fear ripples through his small hometown and the police hit dead ends, it's up to Theo to use his legal knowledge and investigative skills to chase down the truth and save April.



(HC) 978-0-525-42557-1 • \$16.99 • (Audio) 978-0-14-242941-9 • \$19.95
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

JOHN GRISHAM

is the author of 23 novels, one work of nonfiction, and one collection of stories. His works have been translated into 39 languages. *Theodore Boone: Kid Lawyer* is his first book for children. He was the honorary chair of the 2011 ALA National Library Week.

He lives in Virginia and Mississippi.



Photo © Bob Krasner

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS for **THEODORE BOONE:** kid lawyer

- Readers quickly learn about Theo's passion for law; what about this discipline is so appealing to him? What are you passionate about? How do you show your commitment to that area of interest?
- Describe Theo. What makes him such a dynamic character? Is he the type of person you would want to befriend? Why or why not?
- One of the important settings in the novel is the county courthouse. The narrator states, "Theo loved the courthouse, with its air of authority, and people hustling importantly about, and somber notices and schedules tacked to the bulletin boards. Most of all, Theo loved the courtrooms themselves." What makes the courthouse and, particularly, the courtrooms so special for Theo? Is there a public place that you are especially fond of visiting? If so, what makes this spot special to you?
- April Finnemore is described as "not just any girl." She is a special friend of Theo's, and he is sensitive to the difficult situation she is facing in which she must decide which parent she hopes to remain living with after her parents' divorce is finalized. Have you ever had a friend with a difficult home life? In what ways have you been able to help them cope with their situation?
- The law firm of Boone & Boone is much like a second home for Theo (he even has his own office); why does he spend so much time there? What does he glean from this daily exposure?
- Consider Theo's descriptions of his parents' offices. How does he describe these rooms, and what can readers infer about his parents' personalities and interests from these descriptions?
- Theo's understanding of the financial problems faced by Sandy Coe's parents allow him to offer Sandy sage advice which ultimately helps protect Sandy's home from being foreclosed by a mortgage company. Think of a time when you were able to offer a friend or acquaintance useful advice. In what ways did your counsel help your friend? Have you been given useful guidance from a friend? What made you decide to follow his/her suggestion? What were the ultimate results?
- From your experience, do you think it's difficult for most people to reach out for help? Consider the characters in the novel; who do they turn to for assistance? To whom do you turn when you are in need?
- Given the rarity of this type of case, the Duffy murder trial draws a great deal of attention from the media, as well as local citizens of Strattenburg. In your opinion, what makes a case like this so intriguing? Is there a local interest issue that you are following? If so, what is the case and what about it is interesting?
- Theo's uncle Ike is unconventional in many regards. What makes him such an interesting and unusual character? Do you have a relative who "marches to the beat of his/her own drum"? What about them is unique?
- Mrs. Boone states that "people in small towns spend too much time looking up to or down on others." Do you believe this type of behavior is exclusive to people from small towns? Why or why not?
- Throughout the story, readers learn that the Boone family participates in a number of community service endeavors; why are these important to them? Are there any ways you and your family choose to give back to your community? If so, what do you do?
- Based on your knowledge from Theo's descriptions, would you enjoy being a student in Mr. Mount's government class? Why or why not?
- Though Theo realizes that the stakes will be raised if he moves forward with sharing his knowledge about the Duffy case, he does so anyway. Do you think he made the right decision? Predict the long-term effects of this action.
- Using the phrase, "This is a story about . . ." supply five words to describe *Theodore Boone: Kid Lawyer*. Explain your choices.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES for the THEODORE BOONE BOOKS

EXPLORE JUSTICE SYSTEMS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

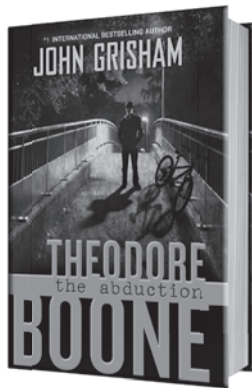
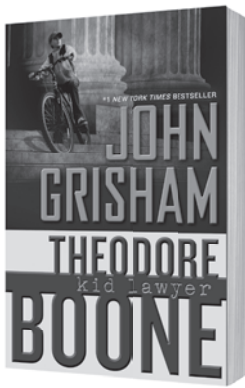
- The American justice system is rooted in earlier European traditions, but elsewhere in the world, those charged with crimes face very different judicial processes. Select a country and explore how those accused of crimes are determined to be innocent or guilty. Possible suggestions include countries where laws are based on tribal traditions, religion, or political ideology. Have students create a digital report of their findings.

CONSIDER THE ROLE OF THE COURT REPORTER.

- One of the important jobs of those involved in a trial is the courtroom reporter. Court reporters make word-for-word reports of court cases, meetings, speeches, and other events and play a critical role in legal proceedings. Their written accounts of spoken words are made into official records. They are expected to create a complete and accurate legal record. Accuracy is crucial. Texts of spoken words may also be needed for letters, records, and proof in court. Consider the following: What type of training does a court reporter need? How long does this training typically take and where do court reporters learn their craft? Stenotyping and voice writing are two commonly used methods of court reporting. Have students investigate these two methods of reporting and create a Venn diagram detailing the similarities and differences between these techniques.

HOST MOCK TRIALS!

- Once students have read *Theodore Boone: Kid Lawyer* and have a better understanding of the layout of the courtroom and the format in which a trial is conducted, allow them to stage their own mock trials.
- For secondary students, consider hosting the following mock trials:
 - Put a famous literary character on trial for their actions. Examples could include:
 - Mr. and Mrs. Wormwood or Miss Trunchbull from *Matilda*
 - Tom Sawyer or Warden Walker from *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*
 - Research and reenact a famous court trial. Examples could include:
 - The Salem Witch Trials
 - The *Plessy v Ferguson* Trial
 - The Dred Scott Trial
 - The Scopes Trial
- For younger students, use the debate and trial guidelines learned and put a famous fairy tale character on trial for their indiscretions. Characters could include (but are not limited to):
 - The Wolf from *The Three Little Pigs*
 - Jack from *Jack and the Beanstalk*
 - The Big Bad Wolf from *Little Red Riding Hood*
 - Goldilocks from *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*
 - The Witch from *Hansel and Gretel*



BRING THE COURTROOM TO THE CLASSROOM with THEODORE BOONE

SETTING THE STAGE: UNDERSTANDING THE COURTROOM LAYOUT

Theo helps arrange an all-day field trip for his Government class to watch the opening of the trial. Prior to the trip, Theo sets the stage for the experience by presenting a report and diagram of the main courtroom, explaining where each trial participant will be seated, as well as his role in the trial. Using the descriptions in the book from Chapter 2, re-create the courtroom structure and label where each participant will be seated. Be sure to label each station with the names of the characters provided in the novel.

PLACE THE FOLLOWING TERMS IN THE BOXES BELOW: Defense Lawyer, Spectators, Judge, Witness, Court Reporter, Prosecution, Bailiff, Additional Witnesses, Jury, Defendant, Court Clerk

ANSWERS (from top, left to right): Judge, Witness, Bailiff, Court Reporter, Court Reporter, Court Clerk, Jury, Prosecution, Defense Attorney, Defendant, Additional Witnesses, Spectators.

ROLES OF THE MEMBERS OF THE COURT DURING A TRIAL

Prosecution & Defense

- Create a list of main arguments
- Name a list of witnesses

Prosecution Lawyers

- Address the jury
- Present the arguments
- Question witnesses in order to convince the jury of the defendant's guilt

Prosecution Witnesses

- Respond to questions posed by the lawyers for the prosecution
- Respond to questions posed by the lawyers for the defense

Defense Lawyers

- Address the jury
- Present the arguments
- Question witnesses in order to convince the jury of the defendant's innocence

Defense Witnesses

- Respond to questions posed by the lawyers for the prosecution
- Respond to questions posed by the lawyers for the defense

Jury

- Serves as the audience for all arguments presented in the trial
- Evaluates the arguments presented by the prosecution and the defense in order to determine the guilt or innocence of the defendant
- Judges the effectiveness and merit of the arguments and evidence presented by the prosecution and defense teams
- Votes on the outcome of the trial according to the established criteria only

Clerk of Court

- Works with the chief judge in overseeing the court's administration
- Assists in managing the flow of cases through the court
- Maintains court records
- Keeps all physical evidence secure

Bailiff

- Enforces the rules of behavior in courtrooms

The Judge

- Decides which disputed facts (evidence) may be presented to the jury
- Provides jury instructions and explains what the applicable law is to the jury

Witnesses

- Have specific knowledge of what happened
- Do tell the jury what they think or feel
- Do not present gossip

Expert Witnesses

- Know the specific facts in the case
- Use their specialized knowledge to help the jury understand complex evidence

GLOSSARY OF LAW TERMINOLOGY

ACQUITTAL: A jury verdict that a criminal defendant is not guilty, or the finding of a judge that the evidence is insufficient to support a conviction.

ADMISSIBLE: A term used to describe evidence that may be considered by a jury or judge in civil and criminal cases.

AFFIDAVIT: A written or printed statement made under oath.

APPEAL: A request made after a trial by a party that has lost on one or more issues that a higher court review the decision to determine if it was correct.

BAIL: The release, prior to trial, of a person accused of a crime, under specified conditions designed to assure that person's appearance in court when required. Also can refer to the amount of bond money posted as a financial condition of pretrial release.

BRIEF: A written statement submitted in a trial or appellate proceeding that explains one side's legal and factual arguments.

BURDEN OF PROOF: The duty to prove disputed facts. In civil cases, a plaintiff generally has the burden of proving his or her case. In criminal cases, the government has the burden of proving the defendant's guilt.

CONVICTION: A judgment of guilt against a criminal defendant.

COUNSEL: Legal advice; a term also used to refer to the lawyers in a case.

COURT: Government entity authorized to resolve legal disputes. Judges sometimes use "court" to refer to themselves in the third person, as in "the court has read the briefs."

DEFENDANT: In a criminal case, the person accused of the crime.

EVIDENCE: Information presented in testimony or in documents that is used to persuade the fact finder (judge or jury) to decide the case in favor of one side or the other.

JUDGE: An official of the judicial branch with authority to decide lawsuits brought before courts. Used generically, the term judge may also refer to all judicial officers, including Supreme Court justices.

JURY: The group of persons selected to hear the evidence in a trial and render a verdict on matters of fact.

MOTION: A request by a litigant to a judge for a decision on an issue relating to the case.

ORAL ARGUMENT: An opportunity for lawyers to summarize their position before the court and also to answer the judge's questions.

PLAINTIFF: A person or business that files a formal complaint with the court. In criminal cases, it is the state.

PLEA: In a criminal case, the defendant's statement pleading "guilty" or "not guilty" in answer to the charges.

PRECEDENT: A court decision in an earlier case with facts and legal issues similar to a dispute currently before a court.

PROSE: Representing oneself. Serving as one's own lawyer.

PROSECUTE: To charge someone with a crime. A prosecutor tries a criminal case on behalf of the government.

RECORD: A written account of the proceedings in a case, including all pleadings, evidence, and exhibits submitted in the course of the case.

SENTENCE: The punishment ordered by a court for a defendant convicted of a crime.

STANDARD OF PROOF: Degree of proof required. In criminal cases, prosecutors must prove a defendant's guilt "beyond a reasonable doubt."

TESTIMONY: Evidence presented orally by witnesses during trials or before grand juries.

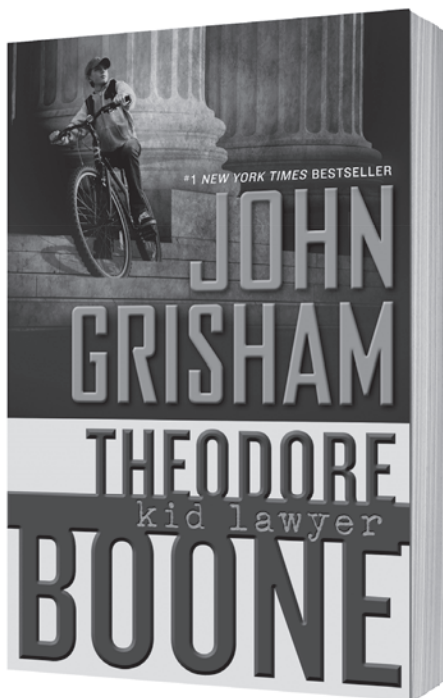
VERDICT: The decision of a trial jury or a judge that determines the guilt or innocence of a criminal defendant.

WITNESS: A person called upon by either side in a trial to give testimony before the court or jury.

THEODORE BOONE—LAW TERMINOLOGY MATCHING GAME

Write the letter of the correct definition next to each term.

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| _____ 1. Brief | a. A written statement submitted in a trial or appellate proceeding that explains one side's legal and factual arguments |
| _____ 2. Jury | b. The punishment ordered by a court for a defendant convicted of a crime |
| _____ 3. Conviction | c. A judgment of guilt against a criminal defendant |
| _____ 4. Plaintiff | d. A person called upon by either side in a trial to give testimony before the court or jury |
| _____ 5. Acquittal | e. A person or business that files a formal complaint with the court. In criminal cases, it is the state. |
| _____ 6. Sentence | f. The group of persons selected to hear the evidence in a trial and render a verdict on matters of fact |
| _____ 7. Witness | g. A jury verdict that a criminal defendant is not guilty, or the finding of a judge that the evidence is insufficient to support a conviction |
| _____ 8. Admissible | h. In a criminal case, the person accused of the crime |
| _____ 9. Defendant | i. A written or printed statement made under oath |
| _____ 10. Affidavit | j. A term used to describe evidence that may be considered by a jury or judge in civil and criminal cases |



THEODORE BOONE: the abduction

STORY ANALYSIS CHART: POST-READING ACTIVITY

PURPOSE: Students demonstrate knowledge of basic story elements in *Theodore Boone: The Abduction*.

DIRECTIONS: After a lesson on story elements, read *Theodore Boone: The Abduction* to the class and have students complete the chart below considering setting, characters, problems (conflict), events (sequencing), and solution (conclusion). Extend this activity by allowing students to create their own short stories that follow the same mystery/thriller plotline as *Theodore Boone: The Abduction*.

SETTING:

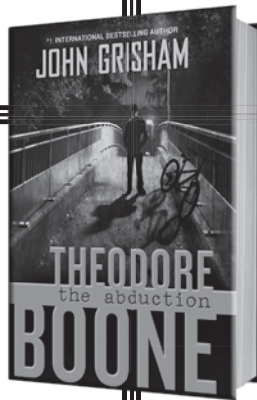
Where did it happen? When did it happen?

CHARACTERS:

Who are the most important people in the story?

PROBLEM (Conflict):

What was wrong? What was the problem?



EVENTS (Sequencing):

What happened first? Next?
Then what happened?

SOLUTION (Conclusion):

How did they solve the problem?

READERS' THEATER

Readers' theater offers students an opportunity for interpretive oral reading as they use voices, facial expressions, and hand gestures to interpret characters in stories. Readers' theater builds readers' confidence, brings stories to life through performance, animates content areas, and improves reading ability, comprehension, and oral reading skills. Have your students act out or watch this Readers' Theater script based on the character of Theo Boone.

THEODORE BOONE AND THE THRILL OF RIGHTS

CHARACTER LIST

Judge: Strict and serious, all business when it comes to the law.

Prosecutor: Arrogant and headstrong, has a personal grudge with Theo.

Theo Boone: Representing himself, knowledgeable about the law but still just a kid.

Witness Brooke Flynn: Security guard, responsible for guarding the Bill of Rights, easily flustered.

Bailiff: Responsible for the swearing in of the witness.

Judge: All right everyone, as you know we are dealing with the case of the *State of New York v. Theodore Boone* regarding the theft of the Bill of Rights. Prosecution, it is your turn to call a witness to the stand.

Prosecutor: Your honor, the prosecution would like to call Ms. Brooke Flynn to the stand.

Bailiff: Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

Brooke: I do.

Prosecutor: Ms. Flynn, don't you think that I'm handsome and funny and smart and awesome and . . .

Theo: Objection, your honor! Irrelevant! The question has nothing to do with the case!

Judge: Sustained.

Prosecutor: Fine, let me rephrase the question. Ms. Flynn, don't you think that Theo did it, that he was there, that he took the Bill of Rights, and that it was definitely him, and—

Theo: Objection! Leading the witness! He's putting words in her mouth!

Judge: Sustained. Proceed.

Prosecutor: Grr . . . okay. Ms. Flynn, Theo seems like the type of kid who wets the bed and does mean stuff, right?

Theo: OBJECTION! Lack of personal knowledge, and irrelevant!!

Judge: SUSTAINED! Prosecutor, get to the point.

Prosecutor: I was getting there! Ahem. Ms. Flynn, where did you find the stolen document?

Theo: OBJECTION! Ummm . . . leading the witness?

Judge: Overruled, this is relevant.

Brooke: I found the Bill of Rights in . . . Theo Boone's backpack.

Prosecutor: Thank you. No further questions, your honor.

Judge: All right, Theo, your witness.

Theo: Thank you, your honor. Ms. Flynn, we've been primarily hearing irrelevant questions, but I'd like to focus more on questions regarding what happened the day of the crime. Is that all right with you?

Brooke: Of course.

Theo: Where were you on the day the Bill of Rights was stolen?

Brooke: I was at work, so I was there at the library all day. I was guarding the Bill of Rights.

Theo: Not once did you leave your post? All day?

Brooke: Nope, not all day.

Theo: So you saw me steal the Bill of Rights?

Brooke: I didn't physically see you take it with my eyeballs. There was a moment when my back was turned and it could have happened then . . .

Theo: So you *did* leave your post?

Brooke: Well, just for a moment, there was a commotion and—

Theo: So you lied?

Brooke: Yeah, but not on purpose. I didn't mean to lie.

Theo: What else are you lying about?

Brooke: Nothing! I never saw you take the Bill of Rights, okay? There was a display that fell over, I went to help, and when I came back the Bill of Rights was gone. I don't know what happened! I can't be in two places at once. I messed up! Don't tell my supervisor, please. I need this job!

Theo: No further questions, your honor.

Brooke: You're good, kid. Real good.

Judge: This certainly seems to put reasonable doubt in my mind, and as this is a criminal case that is all that is needed for Theo to be found innocent.

Prosecutor: OBJECTION, YOUR HONOR!!!

Judge: To WHAT, Prosecutor?

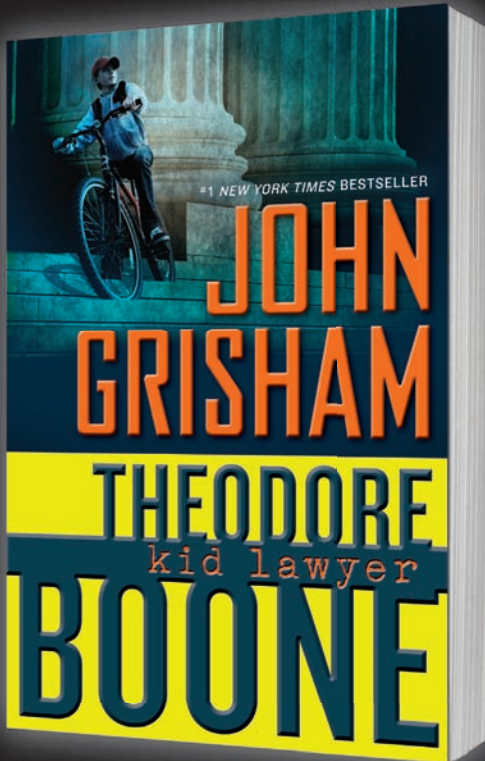
Prosecutor: To . . . me losing.

Judge: Overruled.

ONE PERSON KNOWS THE WHOLE TRUTH... AND HE'S ONLY THIRTEEN YEARS OLD

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- John Grisham's trademark high-quality writing and storytelling
- Experience a new genre: Courtroom Drama for Kids
- Ideal for mystery readers finished with Nancy Drew and The Hardy Boys

- Brimming with suspense and intrigue that will keep kids guessing and pages turning right until the end
- Connects to social studies, history, and government curriculum
- Ties into activities such as mock debates and trials
- Perfect for readers ages 8 and up



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Bring the Courtroom to the Classroom

E-mail schoolandlibrary@us.penguinroup.com to request your FREE Theodore Boone Activity Kit.

Please supply your mailing address and specify if you are a librarian or a teacher.

Questions? Comments? Looking to share teaching or library event stories?
E-mail us at schoolandlibrary@us.penguinroup.com

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