



Inherit the Wind

 Webquest for Background


Inherit the Wind is a work of fiction, but it is clearly drawn from the events of the 1925 trial of John Scopes. In order to understand the historical events and real life individuals that provide the raw material for the play, you will explore several Web sites to look at some primary and secondary source information. Your task is to explore the required Web sites and answer fully the questions pertaining to each.

Why was Scopes put on trial?

 In March 1925, Tennessee passed a law banning the teaching of evolution. Go to www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/scopes/tennstat.htm.

After reading the 1925 Tennessee Law, answer the following questions:

1. What types of schools were prohibited from teaching evolution?
2. How did the state of Tennessee “define” Evolution Theory?
3. If convicted, what was the penalty for breaking the law?
4. Scroll further down the page for an additional document. How long did the 1925 law stay on the books?

 At the bottom of the screen you will see a link to the *Scopes Trial Home Page*. ADD THIS WEB SITE TO THE “FAVORITES” on your computer. (An alternate way to access this site is www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/scopes/scopes.htm.) Take a look at the photograph of Darrow and Bryan. What is your first reaction/ question as you look at this photo?

Read “The Scopes Trial: An Introduction,” which begins underneath the photo of Darrow and Bryan.

- What was the key issue of the trial?
- When did the trial take place?
- Identify the following key players. Make sure that you not only identify the role of each in the Scopes trial, but that you also can explain the accomplishments and reputation of each.
 - John Scopes
 - Clarence Darrow

- William Jennings Bryan (the “Great Commoner”)
- H.L. Mencken
- George Rappalyea
- John Raulston

➔ Be an ACTIVE reader. Note any questions you have or unfamiliar vocabulary words you encounter during your reading.

How carefully did you read? Can you answer these?

- With what did the trial open? Who objected to this and why?
- The article notes that Scopes’s acquittal was not “at the heart of the defense strategy.” What *was* the primary goal of the defense team?

🕒 How relevant to today’s world are the issues raised by the Scopes Trial? Answer briefly, citing at least one reason for your answer.

⌘ After you have written your answer, check out the Web article from less than four years ago at http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/10545387/ns/technology_and_science-science/

⌘ Summarize what you learned in the article that you read, and describe and explain your reactions to the article.

⌘ This is the end of your required Webquest. If you are finished early, try to answer the trivia questions below. If you complete these, return to the Scopes Trial Home Page and explore the menu's selections. Options include "Hell and High Schools" (not as interesting as the title) and "Inherit the Wind." Be ready to share your findings with the class.

Trivia

⌘ When did the US Supreme Court first rule that state laws forbidding the teaching of evolution are unconstitutional?

⌘ In addition to being one of the most famous in legal history, the Scopes Trial was also notable in broadcasting history. Why?

Now that you know the players, learn about the first round of the legal battle:

📖 Read the [NYTimes](http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/990525onthisday_big.html) article from May 25, 1925, “Scopes Is Indicted in Tennessee for Teaching Evolution” found at http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/990525onthisday_big.html

Answer these questions:

1. As you can see from the headline, this story reports Scopes’ **indictment**. An indictment is a pre-trial proceeding. What exactly does it mean to be indicted? (Check out www.dictionary.com if you’re not sure.) Put the definition into your own words if possible.
2. When will the actual trial take place?
3. What attorneys will represent Scopes? Where are these attorneys from? Given their place of residence, what problem might these men experience in their efforts to be effective attorneys for Scopes?
4. Who will be one of the prosecuting attorneys?
5. Could the Grand Jury have decided that the law was a foolish one and refused to indict Scopes? Explain your answer.
6. What do the judge’s words at the beginning of the last section of the article **imply** about Scopes’ attitude toward his arrest and indictment?
7. Do you see any **situational irony** in the judge’s acknowledgement that the schoolroom is a place to develop the power of thought? (Look up situational irony if you can’t remember what it means.)
8. Do you agree or disagree with the judge’s concern about the example that a teacher sets in the classroom? Would your answer change depending upon the age of the students? Explain your answer.
9. *Old friend*: This article uses the words “precept” (7th paragraph). This is a variation of a recent vocabulary word. What does it mean in this context?
- 10. What questions did wonder about as you read the article?**

How relevant to today's world are the issues raised by the Scopes Trial? Answer briefly, citing at least one reason for your answer.

⌘ After you have written your answer, check out the Web article from less than three years ago at <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/6470259/#story>

⌘ Summarize what you learned in the article that you read, and describe and explain your reactions to the article.

⌘ This is the end of your required Webquest. If you are finished early, return to the *Scopes Trial Home Page* and explore the menu. Options include “Hell and High Schools” (not as interesting as the title) and “Inherit the Wind.” Be ready to share your findings with the class

So on what grounds did Clarence Darrow hope to win his case on appeal? Read the First Amendment to our Constitution:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

The passage in italics has been interpreted by courts to require a church-state separation that extends to public schools because they are considered to be “an arm of the government.” As interpreted by the courts, this provision (which is known as the “establishment clause”) of the First Amendment requires that **public school teachers, principals, and school boards be religiously neutral:**

- They may not promote a particular religion as being superior to any other.
- They may not promote secularism in general as superior to a religious approach to life.
- They may not demonstrate bias against religion in general or a particular religious belief.
- They may not demonstrate bias against secularism.
- They must neither advance nor inhibit religion.

👁 Do you see eye-to-eye with the Supreme Court? Test your “establishment clause” savvy:
Are the following permitted in public schools? Yes or no

___ A student-led 5th Block Bible study club?

___ A early morning (before school) prayer around the flagpole, organized and led by students?

___ A prayer led by a school coach with her team after the close of the school day?

___ A student-led, student-written prayer before a big game when such an activity is part of the game program?

___ A student wearing a t-shirt with a religious text?

___ A teacher-led “libation session” during class asking Athena to help students pass their next grammar test?