

Name _____ Per _____

WHAT'S THE REASON?

DIRECTIONS: Study these laws and explain why you think each is necessary. Then answer the question at the bottom.



Why is it illegal to...

Drive over the speed limit? _____

Purposely kill someone? _____

Drive before the age of 16? _____

Cheat on your income taxes? _____

Steal a car? _____

Be a spy for another country? _____

In general, explain the purpose for laws. Why do you think laws are necessary?



The Twelve Tables

Table I

If one is called to court, he is to go.
If he does not,
he shall be captured
and brought before
the court by force.

Table II

If one's witness does
not come to court, he
who called can wail
outside the witness's
house every three
days to summon
him to appear.

Table III

A person who owes
a debt has thirty days
to pay. Then he can be
enslaved by the lender
or sold as a slave
to repay that debt.

Table IV

Seriously deformed
children must be
put to death.

A son can be free from
his father if the father
sells the son into
slavery three times.

Table V

Women must always
have guardians,
even adult women.

If a man goes insane,
the nearest male
relative shall take
over his property.

Table VI

If one makes an
agreement involving
property, it shall be
binding by law.

No one can remove
beams from vineyards
or buildings.

Table VII

Property owners must
keep roads around
their property in repair,
or else others may
drive their animals
wherever they wish.

Table VIII

If one kills a thief
in his own home,
it is not a crime.

If one purposely burns
down a house, he
shall be put to death.

Table IX

Taking bribes or
committing treason
are crimes that shall
be punished by death.

Table X

No one can burn
or bury corpses
in the city.

Women are not
to wail at funerals.

Table XI

Marriages are not
permitted between
plebeians (lower
class) and patricians
(upper class).

Table XII

If a slave commits
a crime, that slave
shall be punished;
not the master.

YOU BE THE ROMAN JUDGE



DIRECTIONS: Read the following cases. Decide which of the Twelve Tables would apply, and explain how you think the Romans would rule in each case.

1. A man calls for the city guards because strange noises have been coming from his neighbor's house. When the house is searched, the guards find evidence that the man may be plotting to harm members of the government.
2. A man's neighbor has a tree on his land that he does not care for properly. The tree breaks and falls onto the man's house, causing much damage. The man is very angry and asks the court to step in.
3. A woman is called to court to testify on behalf of her neighbor. She is nervous and afraid and does not want to go, so she asks her uncle to go in her place.
4. A boss owes one of his workers money, so the worker asks the court to force him to pay the money owed.
5. A man and his neighbor have been enemies for years. A passer-by hears the two men shouting and calls for the guards. When the guards arrive, they find the man has stabbed his neighbor to death on his own (the killer's) property.
6. A father is beginning to show signs of forgetfulness, so his son wants to take over control of all of his money and property. He asks the court to help.