

MINI PROJECT: STREET LAW



Project Introduction:

So you're driving to school, and speeding because you're running late. You get pulled over. The officer becomes very interested in something on the back seat. She asks you to step out of the car and open the trunk.

Or, you're at a party having a good time. You are doing nothing illegal, but people around you are having a few beers. There may be some other shenanigans going as well: some kids keep disappearing into the bedroom and closing the door. You decide to leave but, suddenly, the police are in the house and things start to get serious.

How do you react in these situations? How should you respond to police questioning? Are the police telling you the truth – do they have to? What are your rights and protections? How do you confront a bristly adult law enforcement officer correctly to ensure that you enjoy all of your legal protections while not making the situation worse for yourself?

In these moments, there is no greater threat to you than your own ignorance. To enter the adult world, you must be equipped with some fundamental understandings of your rights and protections. What you don't know can and may be used against you.

In this mini-project, we'll try to unpack and answer some questions posed by the scenarios above.

Essential Question: *How do we balance the need for personal privacy (liberty) with the need to keep a safe, orderly, and just society?*

Objectives: students will...

1. Identify situations in which police can legally arrest/detain you both with and without a warrant.
2. Explain the legal difference between a hunch, suspicion, reasonable suspicion, and probable cause, and apply these differences to real-life situations.
3. Know what to do (and what not to do) during an encounter with the police.
4. Know the freedoms and restrictions on police search and seizure (when, where, why and under what circumstances a person or item may be searched or 'seized')
5. Understand that these protections come directly from the 4th Amendment to the US Constitution.
6. Present what they know to the larger student body individually, or in small groups, in a way that is fitting and appropriate.

