

EMILY: Hey Winston, what do lawyers shout out in a courtroom when they hear something unfair or against the rules?

WINSTON: Um, uh, no takey backsies. I don't know, Emily.

EMILY: Well, come along with me as we unveil the curious world of lawyers and we'll find out together. Oh, hey Winston!

WINSTON: Uh, hey Emily! What's up?

EMILY: I'm just watching a TV show about lawyers while I eat my lunch. Wanna join me?

WINSTON: Sure! What's the show about?

EMILY: It's a show called Lawyer Lewis, and every episode two lawyers try to win a case in a courtroom. It's kinda like a competition to see which person knows the law the best.

WINSTON: Wow, um, why'd that lady in the black dress just yell, I object! She sounds angry.

EMILY: No, she isn't angry. It's a phrase lawyers use in a courtroom when they think something is unfair.

WINSTON: Oh, well, sounds like she's arguing to me. Adults get mad when I argue.

EMILY: Well, this is a different type of arguing. Lawyers get paid to do this. It's their job.

WINSTON: Whoa, wait. They get paid to argue? I like the sound of that. Will someone pay me to argue with the kids who take too long to go down the slide on the playground? I always have to wait forever!

EMILY: When lawyers argue in a courtroom, there are rules that they have to follow. They have to base what they say on the law. It's right there in their name. Law. Yours. Lawyer. But they're also known as attorneys, which is a different word for lawyer.

WINSTON: But what do they argue about, Emily?

Who gets the bigger slice of cake? Or, uh, what superpowers is the best one? Um, it's obviously the ability to shapeshift, and anyone who says different has no clue what they're talking about.

EMILY: Well, let me give you an example. One day, my neighbor Steve was super upset because his garden turned into a doggy potty.

WINSTON: Uh oh, sorry Steve. That's definitely not cool. So, uh, what did Steve do?

EMILY: Well, neither Steve or his neighbor the dog owner could agree about what to do. Tie the dog up so he stayed in his own yard or let him roam free.

WINSTON: So, did they have to bring in lawyers to help? Um, did they have to bring in dog lawyers to help? And by that I mean lawyers who are actually dogs?

EMILY: Well, people, lawyers, yes. Both neighbors went to court and each had their own lawyer. So, in court, the lawyers each told their sides of the story and the judge listened carefully.

WINSTON: So lawyers are kind of like storytellers too?

EMILY: Exactly! But they're supposed to tell the truth always. So, based on each lawyer's story, the judge ordered the dog's owner to build a fence so that he'd stop pooping in Steve's yard.

WINSTON: Oh boy, that seems like a very good idea, as well as closed toed shoes.

EMILY: I think so too, but not all court cases in court are that easy peasy. For instance, Amal Clooney is a real life lawyer who's kind and caring.

In fact, she's kind of like a superhero lawyer who fights for fairness. A few years ago, she helped an amazing journalist called Maria Ressa when she was in a sticky situation.

WINSTON: What happened with Maria, Emily?

EMILY: Well, some people said Maria didn't pay the taxes she was supposed to, but they were making it all up.

And in court, Amal showed everyone the truth, and that Maria hadn't actually done anything wrong.

WINSTON: So Amal won Maria's case, and she was able to help her?

EMILY: She did, Winston. Thanks to Amal, Maria was proven innocent. And they both were really happy about that. In fact, Maria's not your ordinary journalist. She won the Nobel Peace Prize for her very honest and talented work as a writer. The United Nations called Amal's win for Maria a victory for media freedom as well as justice.

WINSTON: Wow! So lawyers like Amal can really help others in a big way. Aww, lawyers are just so lovable.

EMILY: Well, sure, Winston. Many people do appreciate their lawyers. But think about it this way. If one lawyer wins in court, that means another has to lose, right?

WINSTON: Uh, yeah, I guess so.

EMILY: If a lawyer loses a case, it can be really sad for the person they're trying to help.

WINSTON: Oh, I get you. That makes sense. So being a lawyer is a really big responsibility, too. How do people become lawyers anyway, Emily?

EMILY: To become a lawyer, you have to graduate school, and then go to three more years of law school. And when you're finished, you have to pass a test called the bar exam.

WINSTON: Well, I don't like tests, but I do love chocolate bars. So please tell me this test is about eating chocolate bars, because I would pass with fly colors!

EMILY: Uh, I'm sorry to tell you that there are no chocolate bars involved in this test, Winston.

But, if you pass the bar exam...

WINSTON: Then you get to be a lawyer! And you can help people!

EMILY: Yep, that's exactly right. And if you were a lawyer, you could use your salary to buy all the chocolate bars you could ever want. Lawyers make money. Pretty good money, you know.

WINSTON: Okay, that's it. I'm packing for law school. Gonna pack a couple chocolate bars just in case.

EMILY: Don't pull out your suitcase just yet. You have a few more years of grade school to finish first. Being a lawyer is an important job, so it takes a good amount of school. That's where they learn how to uncover crimes.

WINSTON: Hey, but that's what detectives do, Emily.

EMILY: Yes, detectives do that too, Winston. And lawyers also need to do detective work if they want to get to the truth.

WINSTON: Whoa, do they get a large magnifying glass and look for fingerprints?

EMILY: You've been watching some old detective cartoons, I see. Nowadays, lawyers mostly look at photos, videos, or emails for evidence.

But how else do you think they find out the truth? I don't know, Emily. Lawyers ask a lot of questions, and sometimes they talk to witnesses, the people who saw or heard what happened.

WINSTON: Hmm, and do they work in offices or in courtrooms? Like the one that was on the TV show you were just watching.

EMILY: You have a lot of great questions, Winston, just like a real life lawyer would.

But I think it's best to show you what happens in a courtroom rather than just tell you. But first, I want to take you back to visit a very famous lawyer from Springfield, Illinois. The year is 1842.

WINSTON: That sounds fun, Emily! Let's take a trip through time!

EMILY: Here we go!

WINSTON: Whoa! There's a ton of old books here.

EMILY: Yep. Lawyers have to read a lot, Winston. They need to stay up to date on all the current laws, and they have to have a good understanding of the old ones, too. And trust me, there are a lot of laws.

WINSTON: Whoa. Makes sense why there's so many books in here after all, then. But, uh, where are we again, Emily? Illinois, right?

EMILY: Yes, Springfield, Illinois, 1842. And this is a law office. It's one of the places lawyers work, outside of a courtroom.

WINSTON: Cool. And who's the man riding at the desk with the beard and tall hat?

EMILY: That is Abraham Lincoln. You've heard of him, right?

WINSTON: Abraham Lincoln? But, but he was a president, not a lawyer!

EMILY: You're right. He was president. A great one, too. But guess what job he had before he became president?

WINSTON: He was a lawyer?

EMILY: That's right. Lincoln was a lawyer for many years before being elected president. In fact, out of the 46 presidents we've had so far in the U. S., 25 of them first worked as lawyers.

WINSTON: Really? That's more than half.

EMILY: Yep. And you want to know something else amazing? Abraham Lincoln actually never went to law school.

WINSTON: Wait. Pump the brakes, Emily. You said you had to go to law school to pass a test to become a lawyer. So, was Abraham Lincoln not a real lawyer then? Is everything I know a lie? Did he even have a top hat?

EMILY: Oh, no, no, no. He was definitely a real lawyer. But here's the crazy part. He taught himself how to be a lawyer. And before that, he even taught himself to read and to write. And he did all of that without the internet or computers. Pretty crazy, right?

WINSTON: I thought my mind couldn't be blown any more than it was before. So if I'm smart enough, maybe I can skip law school and that big test and just go straight to being a lawyer like Abraham Lincoln.

EMILY: Hmm, sorry to tell you this, but you can't skip out on the bar exam these days. It was different back then.

WINSTON: Lucky Lincoln. But all must have been a genius.

EMILY: He was a very smart man. But during the 1800s, most lawyers didn't go to law school, especially if they lived far out in the country.

WINSTON: Well, how could they learn to be lawyers then? Did they just have to read lots and lots of books like these? Sorry, Mr. Lincoln. I'll just put these back on the shelf.

EMILY: Careful with Mr. Lincoln's books, Winston. Maybe you can just sit in these chairs while we talk. So, to answer your question, if lawyers don't go to law school, they're taught by other lawyers. Usually a more experienced lawyer. But they still have to read a lot of books to learn about all the laws.

WINSTON: So if they learn from other lawyers, and those lawyers learn from other lawyers, and those lawyers learn from other lawyers before them, and those lawyers.

EMILY: Snap out of it, Winston. You're stuck in a lawyer loop.

WINSTON: Thanks, Emily. So if all the lawyers learn from the lawyers before them, who started the lawyer loop?

EMILY: You mean, who was the very first lawyer? Yeah, that's what I've been trying to say. Actually, nobody knows.

WINSTON: Wait, nobody? Not even you? But you know all the facts about jobs.

EMILY: Nope, not even me.

WINSTON: But, how could nobody know? I mean, I know who the first president was, and the first person who walked on the moon, and my first grade teacher. But how could nobody know who the first lawyer was?

EMILY: Well, nobody forgot, Winston. The details just weren't recorded back then. The first lawyers were probably from ancient Greece, but they weren't officially allowed to call themselves lawyers back then.

WINSTON: Wait, so you mean it was against the law to be a lawyer?

EMILY: Yeah, sort of thousands of years ago in Greece, people who knew the law could help their friends, but they weren't allowed to get paid for it like they do today.

WINSTON: You mean they gave people advice for free? Like, as a favor?

EMILY: Yep, and lawyers today still help people out for free.

It's called doing pro bono work.

WINSTON: Wow, it sure is nice of them to help people like that.

EMILY: Yep. Some lawyers do a lot of good for people in need.

WINSTON: Emily, uh, do you think we could visit like a real life courtroom right now?

EMILY: Absolutely, Winston. Let's go see what it's like to be a lawyer in action.

VOICE : Order! Order!

WINSTON: Whoa, check out the man with the hammer. It's the tiniest hammer I've ever seen, but it sure is loud.

EMILY: That tiny hammer is called a gavel. Judges use it in court because it is loud. It's to get people's attention.

WINSTON: Well, he sure got my attention, Emily.

EMILY: Me too.

WINSTON: So this is court. It's way bigger than I thought.

EMILY: Yep, this is a courtroom. The man with the robe at the tall desk in front is the judge. He's the one in charge. Hey, why don't we pretend to be lawyers?

WINSTON: Okay, Emily, uh, where's my evidence?

EMILY: Oh, yes, everything you need to know is all in these papers. Let's begin.

WINSTON: I object.

EMILY: No, no, no, no. Winston, no one's even said anything for you to object to yet.

WINSTON: I object to that. I, I mean, sorry, Emily.

EMILY: Oh, it looks like everyone's taking a break for lunch.

WINSTON: Oh, man. But I wanted to do another court case. Being a lawyer is fun.

EMILY: Sorry, Winston. It's time for us to get back to the lab.

WINSTON: I object! Just kidding, Emily.

EMILY: Thanks for tuning in, everyone. Today we discovered how lawyers are like detectives in court, finding clues and asking questions to uncover the truth.

Remember, lawyers play a big part in helping people and making the world a better place. Until next time. Keep learning, and stay curious, friends!

WINSTON: See you next time!

EMILY: Hey Winston, are you curious for more? You know it! Check out Lingokids, the number one learning app for kids. They have a ton of original games and videos and songs that are fun, educational, and can help boost your math, reading, and literacy skills. Download the Lingokids app and give it a try for free!