

FOLDABLE PROJECT
STATE & LOCAL GOVERNMENTS



JUDICIAL BRANCH

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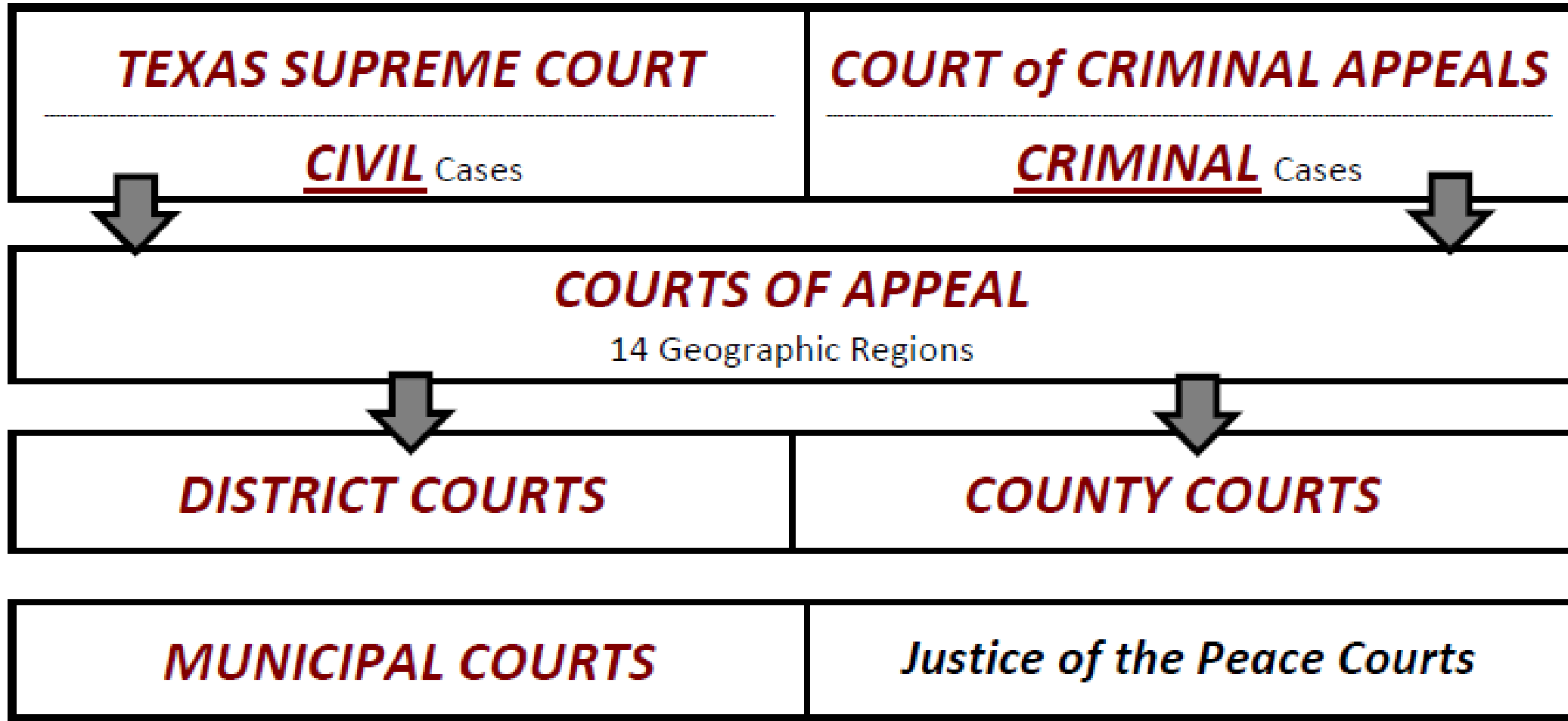
1. Main duty of the Judicial Branch:

Interpret the Laws

JUDICIAL BRANCH

2. FLOW CHART: The Court System.

[Lone Star | 502]



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3. **JURY DUTY:** U.S. citizen | Texas resident | **Must be at least 18 (age)**

4. **VOCABULARY: Judicial Branch.** *(Use reading—p. 500—to define terms)*

A. capital offense: ***CRIMES THAT CAN BE PUNISHABLE BY DEATH***

B. grand jury: ***A GROUP OF 12 CITIZENS THAT DECIDES IF THERE IS ENOUGH EVIDENCE AGAINST THE ACCUSED TO JUSTIFY A TRIAL***

C. indictment: ***A FORMAL CHARGE OF WRONGDOING***

D. complaint: ***A SWORN STATEMENT THAT THERE IS EVIDENCE THAT THE ACCUSED HAS COMMITTED A CRIME***

E. plea bargain: ***AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE STATE AND THE DEFENDANT THAT OFTEN BENEFITS BOTH PARTIES***

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TEXAS LAW

5. Civil Law Cases

- A. Definition: *DISPUTES BETWEEN TWO OR MORE PEOPLE OR GROUPS*
- B. Often involve (3): *PROPERTY RIGHTS, FAMILY MATTERS, PERSONAL INJURIES*
- C. Also deal with: *CIVIL RIGHTS*
- D. Two common types: *UNPAID LOANS & CHILD CUSTODY*
- E. Plaintiff: *THE PARTY WHO CLAIMS TO HAVE BEEN HARMED*
- F. Defendant: *THE PARTY ACCUSED OF WRONGDOING*
- G. Lawsuit: *THE LEGAL ACTION THE PLAINTIFF BRINGS AGAINST THE DEFENDANT*



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6. Criminal Law Cases

A. Definition: ***PROTECT PEOPLE AND MAINTAIN ORDER***

B. Misdemeanors (lesser crimes)

- Examples (2): ***THEFT (UNDER \$1500) / DISORDERLY CONDUCT***
- Punishments (2): ***FINES / JAIL TERMS OF UP TO ONE YEAR***

C. Felonies (serious/major crimes)

- Examples (2): ***ARMED ROBBERY / MURDER***
- Punishments (2): ***JAIL TERMS: RANGE FROM 180 DAYS TO LIFE IN PRISON***



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THE COURT SYSTEM *(Please list types of cases handled)*

7. Justice of the Peace (How many exist across the state? **NEARLY 900**)

A. ***DEAL WITH MINOR OFFENSES PUNISHABLE BY FINES***

B. ***DEAL WITH CIVIL CASES THAT INVOLVE SMALL SUMS OF MONEY***

8. Municipal Courts (Many of these operate in **LARGER CITIES.**)

A. ***DEAL WITH MINOR CRIMES***

B. ***MOSTLY TRAFFIC LAW VIOLATIONS***



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9. County Courts (Both of these courts are headed by a JUDGE.)

County Courts at Law

A. *HEAR CIVIL CASES THAT INVOLVE AMOUNTS UP TO \$100,000*

B. (Both) *TRY CRIMINAL MISDEMEANORS PUNISHABLE BY JAIL TIME*

Constitutional County Courts

A. *HEAR SMALL CIVIL CASES*

B. (Both) *TRY CRIMINAL MISDEMEANORS PUNISHABLE BY JAIL TIME*

10. District Courts (These are the MAIN TRIAL COURTS in the state.)

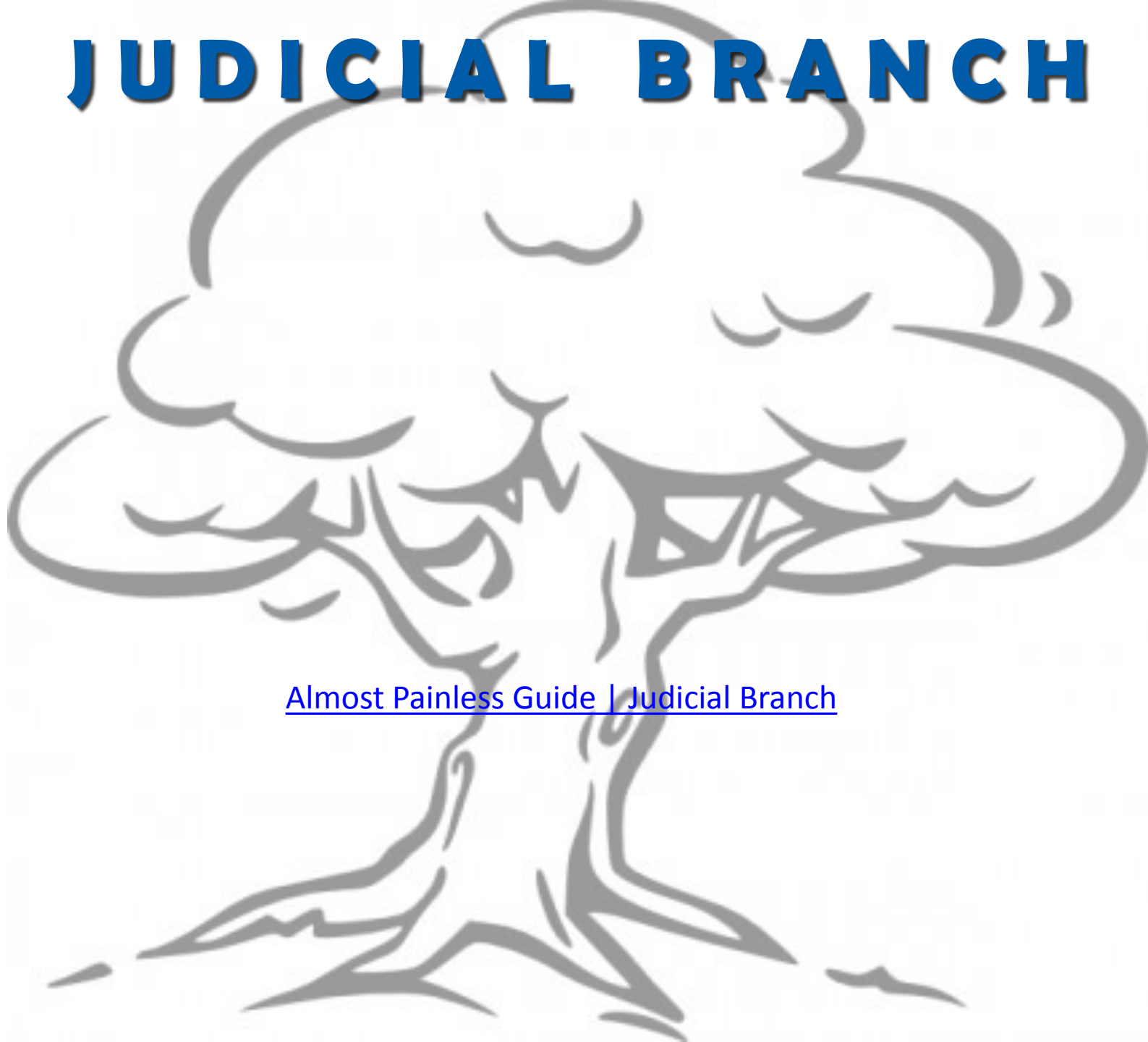
A. *ONE OR MORE DISTRICT COURTS SERVE EACH COUNTY*

B. *TRY ALL FELONY CRIMINAL CASES & CIVIL CASES (DIVORCE/LAND)*

C. *HEAR LAWSUITS WHERE AMOUNT IS GREATER THAN \$200*

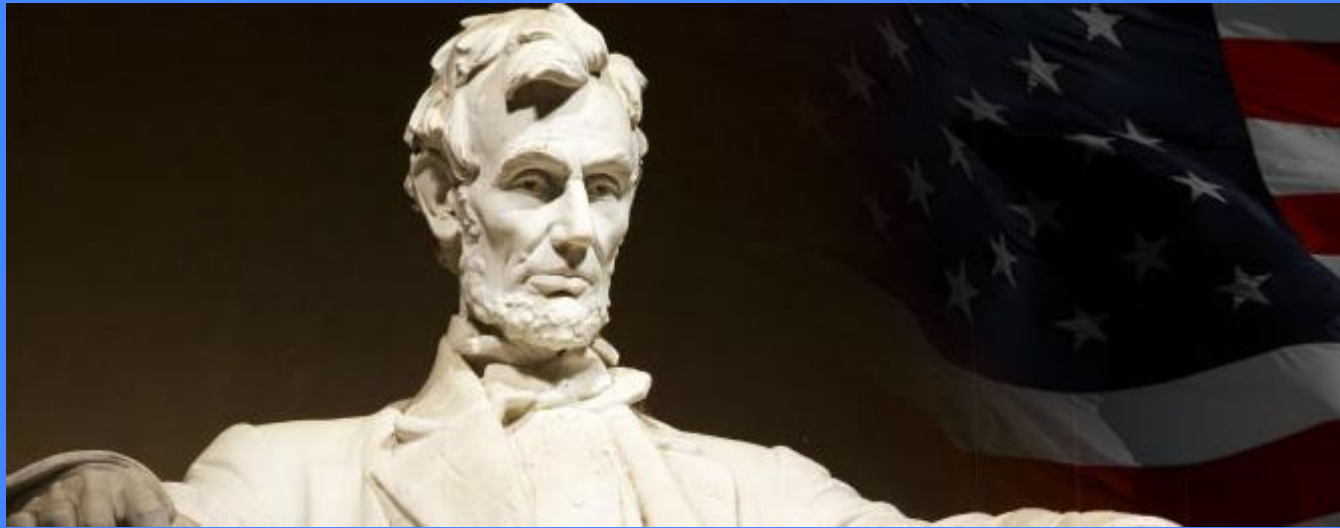
D. *VOTERS ELECT DISTRICT COURT JUDGES*

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