



TEACHER FIELD GUIDE

Legal concepts

A city you can actually reach

If the usual route is blocked, whose job is it to make the trip work?

Getting to school, a library or a city program depends on sidewalks, ramps, buses and information, and when one piece fails, someone's day falls apart. Knowing which law applies and which office to ask turns frustration into a request that can get a route fixed.

WHAT STUDENTS MAKE

Annotated map plus 3–4 sentences

THE CIVIC IDEA

Words that do the work.

Jurisdiction *Jurisdicción*

Which laws and which government bodies apply to a place or program.

ADA Title II covers the city-run workshop and city sidewalks. Private businesses fall under Title III.

Claim vs. evidence *Afirmación y prueba*

A claim says something is true; evidence is the record that supports or challenges it.

Mateo's photo shows one blocked curb ramp. It can't prove the whole route is inaccessible or illegal.

Program access *Acceso al programa*

Under ADA Title II, a government program as a whole must be accessible, even if not every older facility is.

The city can make the workshop accessible through another entrance or location. The question is whether it works.

Burden of proof *Carga de la prueba*

In a legal dispute, the side making a claim usually has to show evidence for it.

Sami doesn't need to prove anything to ask a question. A formal complaint would need documented facts.

ADA coordinator *Coordinador de la ADA*

A city employee responsible for ADA compliance and complaints; larger public entities must designate one.

Sami and Mateo find the city's ADA coordinator contact for their question.

Barrier **Barrera**

Something that blocks or limits participation.

Construction blocks the curb ramp before the bus stop; the detour sign points to stairs.



PAUTA

§ Title II covers city programs and sidewalks. Private businesses are Title III.



I don't need a viral video, Mateo. I need to know if there's a route that gets me to the bus in twelve minutes.

THE EVIDENCE

Handle the case file.

Every artifact comes with a question. The captions are the lesson.

NOTICE POSTED MONDAY; PHOTOGRAPHED
TUESDAY, 4:05 P.M.

**Construction detour sign at
the corner**

- 1 Where does this detour send people, and who can use that route?

FLOOR PLAN DRAWN BY SAMI AND MATEO

**Route map: home to the
city workshop**

- 2 Which stages of the trip does the photo leave out?

NOTICE POSTED BY THE PARKS DEPARTMENT

City workshop flyer

- 3 Does the flyer say how to request access or who to contact?



LUPA

⦿ The photo shows one blocked ramp at one time. It can't show the whole trip.

THE WORKSHOP

45 minutes, block by block.



5 MIN

The blocked route

TEACHER

Describe Sami's trip: blocked curb ramp, detour sign pointing to stairs, bus in 12 minutes.

STUDENTS

Write what Sami needs right now and what could be asked later.

CHECK

Students separate the immediate need from the follow-up.

10 MIN

What the photo shows

TEACHER

Show Mateo's photo. Ask what it proves and what it doesn't.

STUDENTS

Sort statements into "the photo shows" and "we'd need more."

CHECK

"The city broke the law" goes in "need more."

10 MIN

Which law?

TEACHER

Explain Titles II and III of the ADA and program access using the DOJ page.

STUDENTS

Match three places (city workshop, sidewalk, private café) to the right title.

CHECK

Workshop and sidewalk → Title II; café → Title III.

10 MIN

Route audit

TEACHER

Model a route audit: find, get there, enter, take part, leave.

STUDENTS

Complete an audit for Sami's trip using case evidence.

CHECK

Audit lists at least three stages, not just the entrance.

7 MIN

Write the request

TEACHER

Model a message to the ADA coordinator.

STUDENTS

Draft a 60–100 word message with location, observation and request.

CHECK

Message avoids declaring a violation and makes a specific ask.

3 MIN

Exit

TEACHER

Ask: which barrier would a photo miss?

STUDENTS

Write one.

CHECK

Answers include information, timing or communication barriers.

DIFFERENTIATED ROUTES

One case. Seven ways in.

Each route changes what students read, make and prove, not only how long it takes.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Grades 6–8: Map Sami’s trip from home to the workshop and mark each place something could go wrong.

SOURCES

The route map, the detour sign description and Sami’s conversation.

PRODUCT

Annotated map plus 3–4 sentences

RAISES THE RIGOR

Add one barrier a photo would miss, like missing information online.

Supports

- Printed route map with five stages
- Frames: “At __, the barrier was __. We could ask __.”
- Vocabulary: route, barrier, ramp, detour
- Talk with a partner first

Success looks like

- ☐ Marks at least three stages of the trip
- ☐ Describes the blocked ramp accurately
- ☐ Names one question for the city
- ☐ Asks what Sami wants instead of deciding for her

HIGH SCHOOL

Grades 9–10: Write an access report to the city’s ADA coordinator about the blocked route.

SOURCES

Case evidence plus the DOJ ADA and city governments page.

PRODUCT

Report, 120–170 words

RAISES THE RIGOR

Explain in one sentence why you are asking a question rather than claiming a violation.

Supports

- Report template: location, date/time, observation, effect, request
- Model report

Success looks like

- ☐ Precise location and time
- ☐ Observation separated from conclusion
- ☐ Specific request
- ☐ Correctly identifies Title II as relevant

HIGH SCHOOL

Grades 11–12: Write an explainer on ADA jurisdiction and program access using Sami's trip as the example.

SOURCES

DOJ Title II guidance and case evidence.

PRODUCT

Explainer, 400–500 words

RAISES THE RIGOR

Explain why an older building might not need a ramp at every door while the program still must be accessible.

Supports

- Jurisdiction chart: Title II vs. Title III
- Program-access explainer

Success looks like

- ☐ Accurately distinguishes Title II and Title III
- ☐ Explains program access correctly
- ☐ Uses the case to illustrate, not overclaim
- ☐ Names who to contact

HIGH SCHOOL

Honors: Argue what a city should do during construction to keep routes usable.

SOURCES

DOJ guidance plus a teacher-selected city detour policy.

PRODUCT

Argument, 550–650 words

RAISES THE RIGOR

Weigh cost, time and safety against access; propose a standard.

Supports

- Policy options chart
- Counterargument frames

Success looks like

- ☐ Clear policy proposal
- ☐ Uses legal concepts accurately
- ☐ Weighs trade-offs honestly
- ☐ Includes a way to check the policy works

AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE

AP Lang: Compare two messages to the city (one angry and absolute, one precise) and argue which is more likely to get the route fixed.

SOURCES

Two teacher-written messages and case evidence.

PRODUCT

Comparative analysis, about 500 words

RAISES THE RIGOR

Explain how matching claim strength to evidence builds credibility with an institutional audience.

Supports

- Claims-and-evidence chart
- Commentary stems

Success looks like

- ☐ Defensible thesis about effectiveness
- ☐ Analyzes claims and evidence in each
- ☐ Links choices to the institutional audience
- ☐ Commentary explains effect

MIDDLE YEARS

IB MYP: Investigate “What makes a city accessible?” and conduct a consent-based route audit of a public space near school.

SOURCES

Case sources plus the DOJ page; global context: Fairness and development.

PRODUCT

Audit report plus 200-word reflection

RAISES THE RIGOR

Include information and communication access, not only physical access.

Supports

- Inquiry statement frame
- Audit checklist
- Consent guidance

Success looks like

- ☐ Clear research question
- ☐ Audit covers several kinds of access
- ☐ Evaluates evidence limits
- ☐ Reflection is thoughtful

DIPLOMA

IB DP: Analyze accessibility as a question of rights versus design: whose responsibility is an accessible city?

SOURCES

Case sources and DOJ guidance.

PRODUCT

Analysis, 700–900 words

RAISES THE RIGOR

Compare a rights-based approach with a design-based approach like universal design.

Supports

- Perspective chart: city, resident, contractor, taxpayer
- Key concepts: rights, equality, power

Success looks like

- ☐ Accurate legal content
- ☐ Compares two approaches
- ☐ Represents several perspectives
- ☐ Reaches a reasoned conclusion

Access for every learner

- Provide a printed route map with stages labeled
- Read the DOJ summary aloud with a visual of Titles II and III
- Spanish vocabulary: ruta, barrera, rampa, desvío
- Allow an oral report
- Reduce to mapping two stages

Extension

- Find your city's ADA coordinator page and summarize its complaint process
- Research how your city communicates construction detours



ONDA

◆ The detour sign points to stairs. For Sami, that's not a detour.

ANNOTATED STUDENT WORK

What a draft shows us.

Write a message to the city about the blocked route.

FIRST DRAFT

¹ The city is breaking the ADA. There is ² construction blocking the ramp and ³ a wheelchair user I know couldn't get to the bus. We were standing there for like ten minutes trying to figure out another way and the sign just pointed to stairs. My friend almost missed her workshop because of it. This is discrimination and completely illegal. Nobody even cares about this. You need to ⁴ fix every ramp in the neighborhood right away or ⁵ we will post the photos everywhere.

¹ **GAP** One observation doesn't establish a violation. Describe what you saw and ask.

² **EVIDENCE** Good fact. Add the exact location and date.

3 AUDIENCE Did Sami agree to be mentioned? Ask before including her.

4 GAP Too broad to act on. Ask about this detour.

5 AUDIENCE Threats make a response less likely. State the follow-up you'll do instead.

REVISED

Hello, I'm writing about the construction at the corner of Elm Street and 4th Avenue, by the bus stop. On Tuesday at about 4 p.m., the curb ramp on the northeast corner was blocked, and the detour sign pointed to a route with stairs. My friend, who uses a wheelchair and agreed to be mentioned, could not reach the bus stop that way. Could you tell us whether there is an accessible detour during construction, how it's marked and how long the ramp will be blocked? We'd also like to know how to report this if it happens again. Thank you.

ASSESSMENT

One-page rubric.

Mark the evidence you see. Leave room for a comment and a next step.

CRITERION	BEGINNING	DEVELOPING	PROFICIENT	ADVANCED
Evidence	☐ No location or time.	☐ General description.	☐ Specific location, time and observation.	☐ Specific observation plus what remains unknown.
Reasoning	☐ Declares a violation.	☐ Mixes observation and conclusion.	☐ Separates observation from legal question.	☐ Connects observation to program access and asks the right office.
Audience & purpose	☐ Threatening or vague.	☐ Polite but no clear request.	☐ Specific, answerable request to the right office.	☐ Request plus how to report future issues.
Revision	☐ No change.	☐ Tone only.	☐ Adds specifics and removes the legal conclusion.	☐ Explains how each change helps the city act and respects Sami.

Evidence I saw

Next step

STANDARDS

What this case teaches, by the book.

CCSS 6–8

4

RI.8.8 Students evaluate whether a single photo is sufficient evidence for a claim about the whole route.

RH.6–8.7 Students integrate a route map with written observations.

W.7.2 Students write an observation report with precise details.

SL.6.1 Students discuss Sami's trip respectfully, asking what she wants rather than deciding for her.

CCSS 9–10

3

RI.9–10.1 Students cite the DOJ Title II guidance to explain program access.

RH.9–10.8 Students assess how well the evidence supports a claim of an ADA violation.

W.9–10.2 Students write a clear access report for a city office.

CCSS 11–12

3

RI.11–12.7 Students integrate a map, a photo, a detour sign and DOJ guidance to evaluate the route.

RH.11–12.8 Students evaluate the premises behind claiming a legal violation from limited evidence.

W.11–12.1 Students argue what a city owes residents when a route is temporarily blocked.

C3 Framework

4

D2.Civ.4.6–8 Students explain the powers and limits of local government offices responsible for access.

D2.Civ.12.9–12 Students analyze how people use the ADA to address local access issues.

D2.Civ.13.9–12 Students evaluate intended and unintended outcomes of a construction detour.

D4.7.6–8 Students assess their capacity to take action through a route audit and a question to the city.

AP English Language**3**

Claims and Evidence (CLE) Students match the strength of a claim to the evidence available.

Rhetorical Situation (RHS) Students write an access report for a city office that must act.

Reasoning and Organization (REO) Students organize a report: location, observation, effect, request.

IB MYP**3**

Individuals and Societies B: Investigating Students audit a route and collect evidence with consent.

Individuals and Societies D: Thinking critically Students evaluate what photo can a cannot show

Individuals and Societies A: Knowing and understanding

IB DP

2

Global Politics — key concepts: rights, equality and power

Students analyze disability rights as claims on public institutions.

Theory of Knowledge — Knowledge and the knower (core theme)

Students ask whose experience counts as evidence about a city.

TAKE IT OFF THE PAGE

Find your city's ADA contact.

1. With a trusted adult, search your city's website for "ADA coordinator" or "accessibility"
2. Save how to report a blocked sidewalk or curb ramp (often 311 or a public works page)
3. If you notice a barrier, note the location, date and time
4. Ask the person affected what they want before reporting on their behalf

WHO TO ASK

City ADA coordinator, 311 or public works, school transportation office for school routes

STAY SAFE

Don't film or post people with disabilities without clear permission. Stay out of construction zones.



DUDA

❓ Did anyone ask Sami what she wants reported, and by whom?