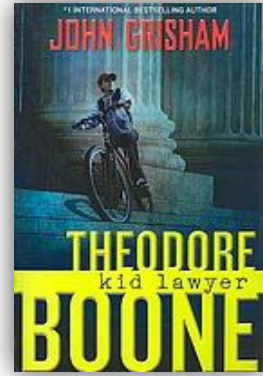


**Title:** Theodore Boone: Kid Lawyer  
**Author:** John Grisham  
**Grade Level:** 4<sup>th</sup> Grade



### **SUMMARY**

13-year old Theodore Boone has landed in the middle of a murder trial. He has been secretly informed of an unknown witness to this murder who is afraid to come forward. As the only child of two lawyers, he cut his teeth, so to speak, on the legal system, and he is asked to dispense legal advice to friends and acquaintances. This is much more than amateurish advice; this is for real. John Grisham has created a legal thriller series for kids.

Families will want to read just one more chapter each night. 4<sup>th</sup> grade students will love the energy that propels them from chapter to chapter. Luckily, at the end of the book, there is more. This is the first book in a series of 3. Parents may want to determine the appropriateness of this story since it is based upon a murder.

### **QUESTIONS TO TALK ABOUT WHILE READING**

#### **VOCABULARY**

It's important to make sure that your child has an understanding of key words in the book. Talking about words while reading is a great way for your child to learn new words.

In this book, you might talk about these words:

- secured (pg. 16)
- players (pg. 20)
- alternates (pg. 22)
- addressed (pg. 29)
- debris (pg. 51)
- establish (pg. 53)
- proceed (pg. 57)
- proximity (pg. 62)
- tidy (pg. 68)
- dual (pg. 72)
- modestly (pg. 88)
- disclose (pg. 129)
- credibility (pg. 130)
- thick (pg. 202)
- allegations (pg. 213)

You might use questions like:

*In the book, what does the word "secured" mean? When might you use the word in speaking and writing?*

**KEY IDEAS and THEMES**

In addition to words, it's important to talk about key ideas and themes and how they develop over the course of the book. Here are some examples to get you started:

1. Theodore is a teenager who is involved in a legal case. While that is not typical for most teenagers, is he a believable character? Discuss what traits or behaviours make him believable or not. Point out parts of the book to support your thinking.
2. Talk about Marcella and Woods Boone, Theodore's parents. Compare them as individuals and discuss how they parent Theodore. How has having them as parents impacted Theodore?
3. At different points in the story, Theodore states that he doesn't want to go to school, that he learns more in the courthouse and dabbling in the law. Together with your child, consider his argument. Based on evidence in the book, see if you can support his claim. Talk about what he is learning. Assume the point of view of Theodore's parents, Judge Gantry, and his Uncle Ike, who provide the counter claim that he must go to school.
4. Review the interactions between Judge Gantry and Theodore. Using details from the book, discuss their relationship and what Judge Gantry thinks of Theodore.
5. Knowing how to frame an argument is an important skill. Consider the arguments that the prosecution and defense are laying out for the case. Talk with your child about the claims they make and the evidence they use to support these claims. Evaluate both sides.

**EXTRA ACTIVITIES**

1. After reading *Kid Lawyer*, watch one of the movies based on a John Grisham novel. (*The Firm*, *The Pelican Brief*, *The Client*) Of course, parents will need to ensure that the movie is appropriate for their children. After watching, compare the two stories. Discuss the hallmarks of a story by Grisham.
2. Compare the story arc of this legal thriller with a movie or television show of the same genre. For example, watch old episodes of *Perry Mason*, *Matlock*, or another similar show. Old episodes can be found online.
3. Visit a local courthouse and watch a trial. Compare what you observe with the dynamics you see in movies, on television and in books.