**How Courts Work  
Steps in a Trial**

**Pre-trial Conferences**

Answer the following questions after completing the readings:

Vocabulary

***status***: the position of affairs at a particular time  
***disputes***: arguments***facilitate***: bring about***full-fledged***: complete***arbitration***: a procedure in which a dispute is submitted, by agreement of the   parties, to one or more arbitrators who make a binding decision on the dispute. In choosing arbitration, the parties agree to a private dispute resolution procedure instead of going to court. ***mediation***: disputing parties work with a neutral third party to resolve their disputes.  
***techniques***: skills  
  
1.  Describe the purpose of a "status conference."  
2.  How are child custody disputes decided?  
3.  How does arbitration work?  
4.  What are the big advantages of arbitration over going to court?    
5.  What does a mediator do?  
6.  Why are arbitration and mediation "private?"   
7.  How do some states determine if arbitration or mediation is  mandatory as a first step?  
8.  What can some judges try to settle cases?  
9. What happens at an "issue conference?"  
10. What is a "stipulation?"