

Courtroom Journalist Contest Information

- ❑ **Registration requirements (deadline is February 28th), all participating journalists must:**
 - be affiliated with a participating county Mock Trial team.
 - complete the online registration form.
 - pay a \$95 registration fee.
 - complete and submit a waiver/release form authorizing the publication or reprinting of their Journalist Contest submission for educational purposes. No financial compensation will be awarded.
- ❑ **Procedures**
 - **Journalist Check-in and Welcome Ceremony (March 14 at the Biltmore)**
 - 12:00 - 1:00 pm journalists must check in and collect their registration packet.
 - 1:00 pm is the Welcome Ceremony
 - **Journalists Workshop (March 14 at the Stanley Mosk Courthouse)**
 - All journalists must attend the workshop at 5:30 pm.
 - Bring a copy of your county submission for review.
 - A meal will be provided.
 - **Practice Round - Round 2 (March 15 at the Stanley Mosk Courthouse)**
 - Introduce yourself to the scorers and identify yourself as the courtroom journalist.
 - If space is available, you may sit in the jury box away from the scorers.
 - **Official Drawing - Round 3 (March 15 at the Stanley Mosk Courthouse)**
 - Introduce yourself to the scorers and identify yourself as the courtroom journalist.
 - Once you are in the courtroom, you may not have any contact with anyone from your county (parents, teachers, or students). You must draft your article completely independently.
 - Journalists may only report on their own county team's trial and must write their article based on their county team's Round 3 trial.
- ❑ **Rules**
 - You must draft your article completely independently. Submitted articles must be in the voice of a reporter covering a criminal trial. Use of dictionaries and thesauruses will be permitted.
 - After Round 3, all journalists must type their articles. Submissions must be a 12-point Times New Roman font with one-inch margins. The article must be double-spaced, and may not exceed 850 words, excluding the journalist's name and team code.
 - Completed submissions must be emailed to daisy@teachdemocracy.org by 6:00 p.m. on March 15th. All submissions must be submitted as a WORD document or as a PDF file. Do not put article in the body of the email. Label your article with your name and team code only.
 - Contestants may refer to the California Mock Trial case materials, the Journalism Reporters Handbook, and the Judging criteria during the contest.

Courtroom Journalist Contest - Scoring Criteria

Each courtroom journalist entry will be judged based on the following criteria:

- 1 - Enticing Lead Paragraph with Basic Elements of the Case** - Did the reporter develop an enticing lead paragraph with the necessary and basic elements of the case? (Who, what, where, when, why, and how.)
- 2 - Newsworthy Facts** - Did the reporter write about the most newsworthy facts that occurred during the trial and not merely reiterate the case packet?
- 3 - Story Structure** - Did the reporter properly structure the story with the most important elements early in the article (inverted pyramid)?
- 4 - Vivid Reporting** - Did the reporter make the article vivid by using well-chosen direct quotes from testimony and/or descriptions of the courtroom scene, participants, or their behavior? And did the reporter write as if this was a real trial and not a high school competition?
- 5 - Mechanics** - Did the reporter use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation?
- 6 - Pretrial** - Did the reporter include appropriate coverage of the pretrial motion?
- 7 - Legal Procedures and Judicial Process** - Did the reporter demonstrate a sufficient understanding of legal procedures and the judicial process?
- 8 - Fair and Accurate** - Did the reporter present a fair and accurate account of events without any apparent editorial slant?
- 9 - Headline** - Did the reporter have an accurate headline that does not editorialize?
- 10 - Dateline** - Did the reporter have the proper dateline?
- 11 - Holistic Assessment** - Review the article in its entirety. Review for its overall accuracy, storytelling, and did the reporter follow the rules/requirements.