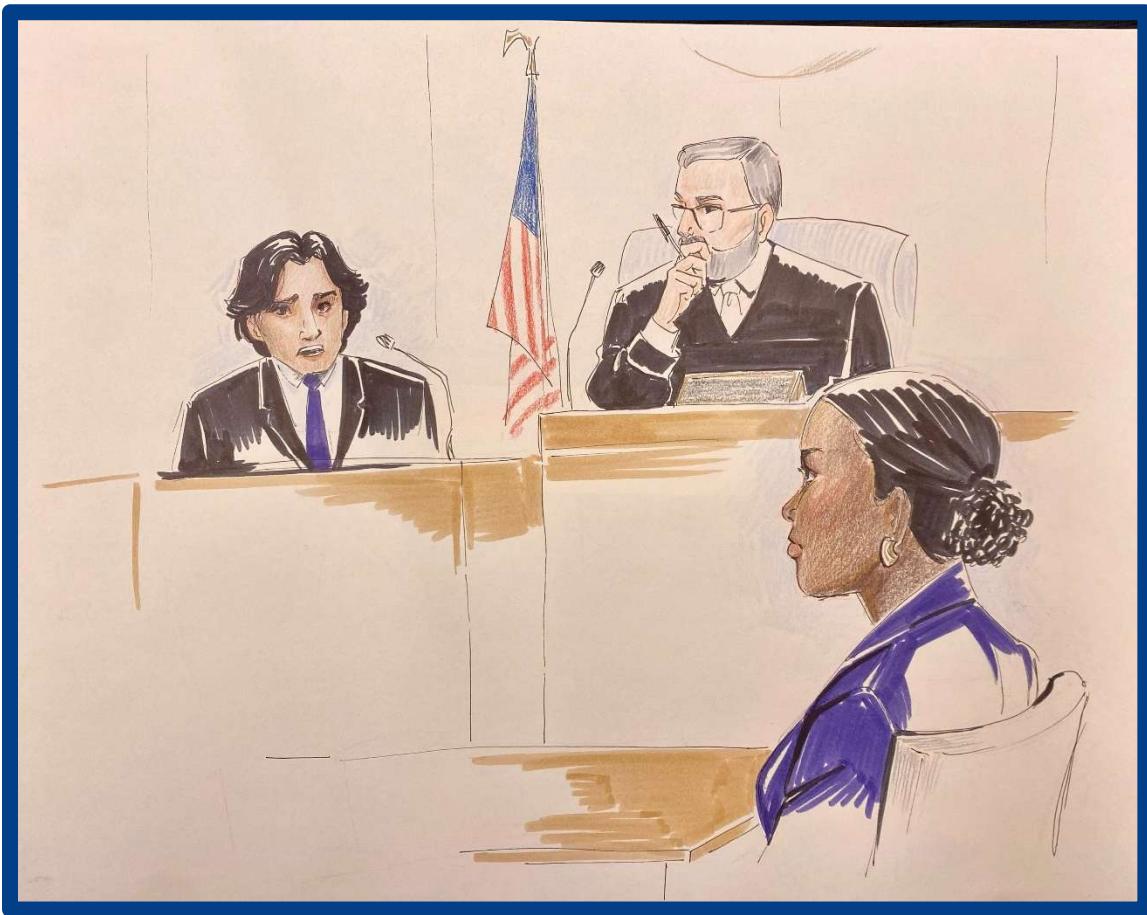




2026 California Mock Trial Finals

Judge/Attorney Handbook



Official Materials for the California Mock Trial Competition
A Program of Teach Democracy

Co-Sponsored by:
American Board of Trial Advocates
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Thank you for agreeing to serve as an attorney scorer or presider for this year's **Teach Democracy's California Mock Trial Finals**. Your commitment as a volunteer is essential, and you play a crucial role in creating an extraordinary learning experience for the Mock Trial participants. Your involvement enriches their education and inspires the next generation of leaders in our democracy.

Students have labored for months preparing this year's case, and they value your comments and scoring of their presentations. We ask that our judging panel volunteers prepare thoroughly for your important role in the competition.

Key Competition Orientation Points

Preparation and Time Commitment

- Before the competition, please review:
 - [The Case Material](#)
 - Fact situation
 - Pretrial materials
 - Witness statements
 - [Judge/Attorney Handbook](#)
 - Presiders— the presider scripts and CA Mock Trial Rules of Evidence.
 - Scoring attorneys— the rules excerpt and the evaluation/scoring criteria.
 - [Volunteer Orientation Webcast](#) – link will be provided before the competition.
- At the competition (Rene C. Davidson Courthouse):
 - Arrive no later than 30 minutes before your scheduled round
 - Check in the Jury Assembly Room on the 1st floor.
 - Receive last-minute instructions and trial assignments.
 - Trial will last 2 to 2 ½ hours.
 - Please bring a device (phone, tablet, or laptop) for scoring.

Volunteer Roles

- Judge/Presider: As a judge, you preside over the trial and help students enjoy this educational experience. As the presider, you will make all decisions regarding the running of the trial, including:
 - ruling on the pretrial argument,
 - ruling on objections based on the Mock Trial Rules of Evidence,
 - ruling on competition violations,
 - and announcing a verdict. Remember, the verdict is independent of which team may have won the trial.
- Attorney Scorers: Your role as the scoring panel is to numerically score the presentations via Tabroom based on the criteria in this handbook.
 - Complete the online scoresheet, do not leave anything blank.
 - (Optional) Award Nominations - Nominate students based on preparation, knowledge, and how well their presentation reflects that.
 - Submit your scoresheet with any nominations via Tabroom at the end of the trial. After submitting scoresheets, provide positive and constructive comments to students during the debrief (no more than a total of 10 minutes).

Mock Trial Program Goals & Rationale of the Competition

- Designed to help students acquire a working knowledge of our judicial system and understand their obligations and responsibilities as participating members of our society.
- Encourages young adults to develop their analytical abilities and communication skills while increasing their self-confidence.
- Fundamentally, it is an academic exercise. Although this is also a competition, the experience's lasting value comes from understanding our judicial system and the constitutional processes used as we strive to create a just society.

Student Expectations of Judging Panel Volunteers

- It is vitally important to the students that the judging panel is knowledgeable and fair.
- Students are keenly aware of every act by the judging panel listening to the case, and thus it is very important for you to prepare thoroughly by reading the case materials and other trial resources carefully before competition day.
- The Mock Trial competition is very different from real trials and college/law school mock trials. Our students are so keenly aware of the CA Mock Trial rules that they feel confused and cheated when a judging panel volunteer makes a statement such as, "That's not how it is done in real trials."

- Judging panel members should keep in mind that these are high school or middle students you are observing and critiquing, and tailor your expectations and comments accordingly.
- The Mock Trial competition should be a positive educational experience by having the students feel as positively about their participation in the program as possible, so whenever possible, offer positive, constructive criticism and avoid dwelling on the negative aspects of a presentation.
- As a mock trial volunteer, it is critical to create a positive learning experience, so your feedback must be fair, helpful, and positive. Your comments and accurate scoring of the trials you review are fundamental to making the mock trial an educational experience for all the students involved.

Thank you for your dedication to the youth of California and we hope you enjoy your Mock Trial judging/scoring experience!

Tabroom Guide (During the Competition)

Step One: Checking In

- Check in with Teach Democracy staff in the Jury Assembly Room on the 1st Floor
- Log into your Tabroom account at <https://www.Tabroom.com>.

You will see the screen with “Your Upcoming Judging”.

YOUR UPCOMING JUDGING

CA Mock Trial Finals
Category: Judges, Attorneys, and Law Students

Status: You are NOT checked in

Name	Lourdes Morales
Dates	Jan 6 - Mar 22
Pools	Round 1 - (3/20) 5:00 pm, Round 2 - (3/21) 8:30 am, Round 3 - (3/21) 1:00 pm, Round 4 - (3/21) 4:30 pm

https://californiamt.tabroom.com
Online Ballots

lourdes@crf-usa.org

Step Two: Round Assignment

Once all scheduled volunteers have checked in, all assignments will be posted.

- A Mock Trial staff will notify you to refresh your page:
 - To refresh your page, click on your **email address** in the top right corner.

You will see your assignment with (1) round number, (2) assigned courtroom, (3) your role (Presider or Scorer), (4) round start time, and (5) the two team codes.

- Once you receive your assignment, head to your **assigned courtroom**.

Shawn Yancy's Judging

Current Ballots

Round	Round 1
Courtroom	Courtroom B-144
Role	Scorer
Start	Fri 9:00 AM CDT
Entries	Prosecution ABC Defense ABD

Click Start Round to retrieve your scoresheet.

START ROUND

- Once you arrive at your assigned courtroom, click on “**Start Round**”

Scoring Instructions: The following steps are for the scoring panel (and the presider if they must score because there are less than three scorers in the assigned courtroom).

Step Three: Scoring

- Your scoresheet will be displayed, and you can start inputting scores as the trial proceeds.
 - If you prefer to write the scores on scratch paper and then enter them afterward, you can. Please enter the scores as soon as the trial ends and before the debrief.
 - **Do not** navigate away from the scoresheet or refresh the webpage during the trial—**this will delete your scores** (it is okay if your device sleeps and the screen turns off).

Room: Courtroom B-144 **TEAM ROUND 1** Shawn Yancy

We are all influenced by implicit bias, or the stereotypes that unconsciously affect our decisions. When judging, our implicit biases negatively impact students who are traditionally marginalized and disenfranchised. Before verbal comments or making a decision, please take a moment to reflect on any biases that may impact your decision-making process.

Thank you for volunteering for the National High School Mock Trial Competition. This is your official scoresheet. You can complete this form while watching the trial and submit it when the trial is done. You must submit this form before you start the debrief. This form must be completed independently and not shared with any students or coaches. If there is a problem, get in touch with your courtroom liaison.

You do NOT have to enter speaker's names; the drop down is there for your convenience only.

PROSECUTION Team ABC

Pro Opening Statement	Def Opening Statement
Select the speaker	Select the speaker
0 - 10	0 - 10

DEFENSE Team ABD

Def Opening Statement	Pro Atty Exam of Pro Witness #1	Def Atty Cross-Exam of Pro Witness #1
Select the speaker	Select the speaker	Select the speaker
0 - 10	0 - 10	0 - 10

- **Optional:**
 - **Student Drop-down Menu** - You are not required to use the drop-down menu to select the student's name for each role. That option is provided for your convenience only.
 - **Award Nominations** – You can nominate students for their individual roles you think deserve a nomination. These nominations are based on how well the individual's presentation reflects their preparation and knowledge for their role.

Step Four: Completing and Submitting your Scoresheet

1. Once you enter all your scores (and any Award Nominations), you will see the results of your scoresheet.
 - Check for any blanks. Make sure to complete each category with a score.
 - No Ties. If there is a tie on the **teams' total scores**, adjust scores to break any tie.

Pro Closing Argument Def Closing Argument

PROSECUTION TEAM TOTAL: 75	DEFENSE TEAM TOTAL: 73
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YOUR SELECTED WINNER: Team ABC Representing the PROSECUTION

Save Scores

- To save your scores, click on “Save Scores”

2. **Summary of your scores.** Review your scores (and any award nominations).

- If incorrect, click on “**No! Re-Enter Ballot**”
 - You will be back to your scores results page, make any modifications
 - Click on “**Save Scores**” to save your scores again

You voted for the
Defense: ABD

ABC on the Prosecution	LOSING SIDE	ABD on the Defense	WINNING SIDE
Pro Opening Statement	1	Def Opening Statement	1
Pro Atty Exam of Pro Witness #1	1	Def Atty Cross-Exam of Pro Witness #1	7
Pro Witness #1	1	Def Atty Cross-Exam of Pro Witness #2	5
Pro Atty Exam of Pro Witness #2	8	Def Atty Cross-Exam of Pro Witness #3	8
Pro Witness #2	6	Def Atty Exam of Def Witness #1	5
Pro Atty Exam of Pro Witness #3	6	Def Witness #1	7
Pro Witness #3	7	Def Atty Exam of Def Witness #2	6
Pro Atty Cross-Exam of Def Witness #1	7	Def Witness #2	7
Pro Atty Cross-Exam of Def Witness #2	6	Def Atty Exam of Def Witness #3	6
Pro Atty Cross-Exam of Def Witness #3		Def Witness #3	7
Pro Closing Argument	6	Def Closing Argument	8
TEAM TOTAL	49	TEAM TOTAL	67

Top Competitors

Best Attorney	Laura5 Lee	ABD
Second Best Attorney	Stephen Breyer	ABC
Third Best Attorney	Laura Lee	ABD
Best Witness	John Roberts	ABC
Second Best Witness	Niel Gorsuch	ABC
Third Best Witness	Elana Kagan	ABC

Please check the accuracy of the information above & confirm below.
You cannot change scores once they have been confirmed. You may write feedback until the end of the tournament.

NO! RE-ENTER BALLOT **YES! CORRECT! CONFIRMED!**

- If correct, click on “**Yes! Correct! Confirmed!**”

Once confirmed, Tabroom will display a confirmation message.

Results Confirmed



Thank you for your service! You can see your results until the end of the tournament by clicking on the Past tab of your Tabroom home screen. If you spot a data mistake, please contact the tournament officials.

Congratulations and thank you!

You have completed your judging assignment for this round.

The Ten Golden Rules of Presiding/Scoring the Mock Trial State Finals

- I. Any potential conflict with any team (including teacher or attorney coach) must be brought to the attention of the Teach Democracy staff before the trial begins.
- II. Please be mindful that this should be a positive educational experience for the students. No derogatory or inappropriate remarks should be made about the students or presentations.
- III. Please do not lecture or teach students during the competition. For example, referring “in real trial...” or suggesting they raise a more appropriate objection or suggesting a more appropriate question on direct or cross, etc.
- IV. Evidence is limited to the facts in the case packet. Do not ask students about other cases or information not included in the case packet.
- V. When possible, allow student attorneys to argue evidentiary objections before making a ruling.
- VI. All scoresheet fields must be filled, with no blanks and no ties.
- VII. Scorers must make their scoring decisions independently, as well as any student award nominations.
- VIII. A scorer may award points to a team despite an adverse ruling from the bench. The intent is to evaluate the students on their presentation, not the outcome.
- IX. Do not announce scores or winners at any time.
- X. During the debriefing, provide positive and constructive feedback. Comments should be brief and held within the 10-minute total time limit.

Presider's Checklist – Summary of Mock Trial Procedures

Before Starting

- Collect team rosters from the clerk and bailiff.
- Distribute the time remaining cards to the clerk.

Introduction (See Introductory script)

- Allow the bailiff to call the court to order.
- Conduct a welcome and prompts teams to introduce themselves.

Pretrial (See pretrial script)

- Begin Pretrial.
- Pretrial—you must ask questions of the pretrial attorneys, try to ask same number of questions for each side.
- Before the ruling, give teams the option to consult with coaches about rule violations for 30 seconds. If there are any rule violations, one team member has 30 seconds to note them orally to the court.
- Give ruling. If in favor of the defense, the prosecution may not use Exhibit A and the bracketed information during the trial.

Trial (See trial script)

- Begin Trial.
- Attorneys present physical evidence for inspection.
- States charges against the defendant.
- The prosecution delivers its opening statement. No questioning during opening statements.
- The defense can deliver its opening statement or wait until the prosecution has completed its case.
- The prosecution calls its witnesses; each witness is examined and cross-examined (redirected when necessary).
- The defense calls its witnesses; each witness is examined and cross-examined (redirected when necessary).
- The prosecution gives its closing argument, and then the defense presents its closing arguments. No questioning during closing arguments.
- Prosecution and defense present rebuttal arguments.

Conclusion

- At the end of the trial, before the verdict, give the teams the option to consult with coaches about rule violations for 30 seconds. If there are any rule violations, one team member has 30 seconds to note them orally to the court. Give a ruling on any alleged rule violations.
- Tell the teams they have two minutes to decide which student from their opposing team should receive the MVP certificate.
- As students confer, remind the scoring panel to complete and submit their scoresheets and any award nominations via Tabroom.
- Ask one team member from each team to present the MVP certificate to the selected opposing team member.
- Then deliberate and announce the verdict in the courtroom.
- Commence debriefing (**not to exceed 10 minutes total**).
- Collect the time remaining cards, timesheets, and observer forms.
- Return the time remaining cards, timesheets, and observers forms to the Teach Democracy staff in the Jury Assembly Room.

Presider's Introductory Script

The script incorporates some of the unique instructions of the mock trial competition. Feel free to use all or portions of the script to begin the trial.

1. The student bailiff will call the court to order.

“Would the Bailiff call the court to order?”

2. Opening Remarks

A few words of welcome or insight into the trial process can help put the students at ease.

3. Introductions

“To help myself and the scoring panel, will the Prosecution team state your name and role?”

“Defense team, state your name and role.”

4. Instructions

- *“You must complete your presentations within the specified time limits. The clerk will signal you as your time for each section of the presentation begins to run out. When your total time for each section runs out, you will be stopped, even if you have not finished. Attorneys must call four witnesses within the time limit.”*
- *“This is a bench trial. At the end of the trial, I will render a verdict of guilty or not guilty in relation to the charge brought. The teams will be rated based on the quality of their presentation, independent of my verdict.”*
- *“Barring unforeseen circumstances, no recesses will be called. If a recess is necessary for any reason, team members should remain in their appropriate places and have no contact with spectators or coaches.”*
- *“Remember that objections are limited to the California Mock Trial Simplified Rules of Evidence in the case packet.”*
- *“If there are no questions, the pretrial arguments will begin.”*

Summary of Pretrial Motion Procedures & Presider's Script

Presiders must ask questions of the pretrial attorneys during their arguments. Try to ask the same number of questions for each side as much as possible. This will help the scoring attorneys better evaluate the students. No objections are allowed during pretrial arguments. Two points must be deducted for each objection made during pretrial arguments.

1. The hearing is called to order.

"Both sides have four minutes to present their arguments. The defense will begin. I will interrupt to ask clarifying questions. Time spent answering my questions is not included in the four-minute time limit."

"At the conclusion of your arguments, each side will be offered two minutes of rebuttal time. Remember that the rebuttal time is to be used to counter your opponent's arguments. It cannot be used to raise new issues."

2. The presider asks the defense to summarize the arguments made in the motion. The defense has four minutes. The presider may interrupt to ask clarifying questions.

"Is counsel for the defense ready to begin? Please summarize your arguments."

3. The presider asks the prosecution to summarize arguments made in its opposition motion. The same conditions as in #2, above, apply to the prosecution.

"Is counsel for the prosecution ready to begin? Please summarize your arguments."

4. The presider offers the defense two minutes of rebuttal time. The rebuttal time is used to counter the opponent's arguments. It is not to be used to raise new issues.

"Does the defense have a rebuttal?"

5. The presider offers the prosecution two minutes of rebuttal time. The same conditions as in #4, above, apply to the prosecution.

"Does the prosecution have a rebuttal?"

6. At the end of the oral arguments, before ruling, the presider asks students if they would like 30 seconds to consult with teacher/attorney coaches regarding any **major** trial irregularities.

"Before I rule on the motion students may confer with their attorney/teacher coach regarding any major trial irregularities. Please do so now."

"Would the prosecution team like to note any trial irregularities? Defense team?"

7. The presider will rule on the motion and begin trial.

*If the presider rules in favor of the defense, Exhibit A and the bracketed text in the facts and witness statements may not be referred to or discussed during the subsequent trial. Please keep in mind that teams are not allowed to separate the exhibits (example Exhibit A and B are on the same page), so do not penalize a team if Exhibit A is shown while displaying Exhibit B.

Summary of Trial Procedures & Presider's Script

1. Evidence - Attorneys present physical evidence for inspection.

"Prosecution/Defense, do you have any physical evidence you would like to present for inspection?"

2. Charge - The Presider states charges against the defendant.

"The people of the state of California are charging the defendant, Haley Fromholz, with first-degree murder of celebrity judge Morgan Sears."

3. Opening Statements - The prosecution delivers its opening statement. No questioning during opening statements.

"Prosecution, are you ready to present the opening statement?"

At the conclusion of the opening statement, the defense may present their opening statement or wait until the prosecution has completed their case.

"Defense, are you ready to present the opening statement?"

4. Prosecution Witnesses - The prosecution calls its witnesses and conducts direct examination.

"Prosecution, you may call your first witness."

After each prosecution witness is called to the stand and has been examined by the prosecution, the defense cross-examines the witness.

"Defense, cross-examination?"

After each cross-examination, the prosecution may conduct re-direct examination of its own witnesses if necessary.

"Prosecution, would you like to redirect?"

"Prosecution, please call your next witness." (Repeat for all four witnesses)

5. Defense Witnesses - The defense calls its witnesses and conducts direct examination.

Begin with the opening statement (if it did not do so earlier) or call the first witness.

"Is the defense ready to proceed?" or "Defense, you may call your first witness."

After each defense witness is called to the stand and has been examined by the defense, the prosecution cross-examines the witness.

“Prosecution, cross-examination?”

After each cross-examination, the defense may conduct re-direct examination of its own witnesses if necessary.

“Defense, would you like to redirect?”

“Defense, please call your next witness.” (Repeat for all four witnesses)

When the defense team completes their case, begin closing arguments.

6. Closing Arguments - No questioning during closing arguments.

The prosecution gives its closing argument first.

“Prosecution, would you like to give your closing arguments?”

The defense presents its closing arguments.

“Defense, would you like to give your closing arguments?”

7. Rebuttal - Prosecution and defense present rebuttal arguments.

***“Rebuttal?”* (Prosecution and defense)**

8. 30-Second Rule - At the end of the trial before ruling, the presider asks students if they would like 30 seconds to consult with their teacher/attorney coaches regarding any major trial irregularities.

“Before I announce a verdict, students may confer with their attorney/teacher coach regarding any trial irregularities. Please do so now.”

“Would the prosecution team like to note any major trial irregularities? Defense team?

9. Conclusion

- a. While you deliberate your verdict, tell the teams that they have two minutes to decide which student from the opposing team should receive the MVP certificate.
- b. As the students are conferring, remind the scoring panel to complete and submit scoresheets and any award nominations via Tabroom.
- c. After two minutes, allow one student from each team to announce and present the MVP certificate to the student selected from the opposing team.
- d. Announce a verdict (do not announce any scores or winner).
- e. Commence debrief (no more than 10 minutes total) – presider and scoring panel provide positive constructive feedback. Do not announce any scores or winners.

Essential Excerpts from the 2026 CA MT Finals Team Rulebook

Rule 1.1 — Rules

A. The California Mock Trial Program is governed by the California Mock Trial Rulebook, California Case Materials, and the California Mock Trial Rules of Evidence.

Rule 1.2 — Code of Ethical Conduct

All participants (including coaches and attendees/observers) are bound by all sections of this Code and agree to abide by the provisions.

F. By participating in the program, students, teacher coaches, and attorney coaches are presumed to have read and agreed to the provisions of the Code. Violations of this Code of Ethical Conduct may be grounds for disqualification from the competition and/or suspension or expulsion from the program.

Rule 1.4 — Copyright and Plagiarism

C. Plagiarism* of any kind is unacceptable. Students' written and oral work must be their own. (*Webster's Dictionary defines plagiarism as, "to steal the words, ideas, etc. of another and use them as one's own.")

D. Trials are open to the public, but no intentional scouting is allowed (see Code of Ethical Conduct).

Rule 2.2 — Team Composition

A. A team must have a **minimum of 8 students** to participate and may have up to **a maximum of 25 students**. We highly encourage teams to have more than the (8) minimum of team members should there be a need for substitutes/understudies if team members are not able to make it to the competition at any given time. Pretrial attorneys may not serve as trial attorneys during the same round but may serve as witnesses, clerks, or bailiffs.

B. At each trial, a team must have a **minimum of 8 active team members** composed of registered team members only. An active team is defined as a student who will be serving a role in a round. In the event of an emergency that would cause a team to be unable to participate with a minimum of eight active team members, the team must notify the competition administrators as soon as possible. It is within the sole discretion of the competition administrators to determine that an emergency exists and will decide whether the team will forfeit or whether the team may continue with less than eight active team members for that round without point deductions. The competition administrators will notify the scoring panel if permission has been granted for the team to compete with fewer than eight active team members for that round and instruct them not to deduct points. **Points deduction should be taken if a team continues with less than eight active team members for more than one round.**

C. The official team roster must be submitted prior to each trial. The official team roster must identify the 8 minimum active registered team members and their roles. No changes may be made after submission and students must perform the roles as identified on the official roster. The clerk and bailiff must distribute team rosters to the presider, scoring attorneys, and the opposing team. Teams may add student photos to the team roster but may not add any other information.

D. **If any section on rules 2.2 – A to C has been violated, scorers must deduct five points from the team's participation score.**

Rule 3.1 — The Case

- A. The case material contains the sources for the Mock Trial Program. These sources include the facts, witness statements, all the pretrial materials, charges, exhibits, rules of evidence, stipulations, role descriptions, Mock Trial procedures, and California Mock Trial Simplified Rules of Evidence.
- B. The fact situation is a set of indisputable facts.
- C. Stipulations may not be disputed at trial.
- D. Stipulations will be considered part of the record and already admitted into evidence.
- E. Stipulations and charges will not be read into the record.

Rule 3.2 — Trial Procedures

- A. The Mock Trial Competition is a bench trial. Attorneys and witnesses cannot verbally address the scoring attorneys as if they were a jury (i.e., "Ladies and gentlemen of the jury...").
- B. When the trial begins, the presider will ask the team members, teachers, and attorney coaches to introduce themselves. Other than the clerk and bailiff when distributing the team rosters, team members must not communicate with the scoring attorneys until the conclusion of the trial.
- C. Teams will be identified by team code only and not by school/county name.
- D. All participants are required to wear appropriate courtroom attire. Spectators are prohibited from wearing clothing that identifies their school/county.
- E. Teacher coaches, attorney coaches, and spectators are to remain in the courtroom throughout the trial as much as possible to avoid disrupting the trial.
- F. The clerk and bailiff must distribute team rosters to the presider, scoring attorneys, and the opposing team. Teams may add student photos to the team roster but may not add any other information.
- G. All team members participating in a trial must be in the courtroom at the scheduled time, ready to begin the round, and are to remain in the courtroom throughout the trial. Incomplete teams must begin the trial without their other members or with their substitutes. **If a scheduled team is not present within 30 minutes after the scheduled trial time, that team forfeits the trial. It is subject to possible disqualification (subject to the discretion of Mock Trial staff).**
- H. Recesses will not be allowed for any reason (unless authorized by Mock Trial staff or presider).
- I. Use of laptop computers, tablets, cellular phones, or other electronic devices during trials is prohibited.
- K. If video recording is allowed by the courthouse and competition administrators, teams may only video/audio record a trial involving their school and must get approval from the opposing team. Any team has the option to refuse participation in video/audio recording and still photography. Any recording is for educational purposes only. The trial recordings can only be shared with the current team members and their families. The recordings may not be posted, streamed, or shared with anyone else. Team members and family members are also to be notified of this rule as any violations could bring sanctions to the team up to and including disqualification. Teach Democracy will not accept any video for complaint purposes.
- L. Other than the exhibits provided in the trial material, no other illustrative aids of any kind may be used.

- M. Props, costumes, and theatrical makeup are prohibited. Costuming includes hairstyles and clothing accessories that are specific to a role in the case. In keeping with the educational philosophy and objectives of the Mock Trial Program, teams should concentrate on presenting the trial in a realistic manner, with witnesses wearing appropriate courtroom attire and using their normal speaking voices. Portrayals of racial, ethnic, and gender stereotypes are inappropriate and are not allowed.
- O. Gender-neutral names allow for students of any gender to play the role of any witness, no points should be deducted for using the wrong pronoun. During the trial, questions regarding gender, race, or physical characteristics not included in the official case materials are not allowed. A witness is prohibited from referring to their own physical traits or gender as well as the physical traits or gender of other witnesses where such information is not included in any witness statement. (For example, a witness cannot call attention to their size to show the inability to complete some physical act included in the case materials or state that the witness was treated differently because of their gender.) An attorney is likewise prohibited from making arguments pointing out physical traits of a witness not otherwise included in the case materials. **Such references are unfair extrapolations, see Rule 3.5 for point deductions.** Teams are not prohibited, however, from raising issues about general or common human traits and abilities relevant to the case.

Rule 3.3 — Trial Communication

- A. Once the trial has begun, communication (including but not limited to signaling, texting, and passing notes) is prohibited between active team members and any teacher, coach, non-active team members, or spectators.
- B. The Mock Trial Competition is a bench trial. Attorneys and witnesses are not allowed to verbally address the scoring attorneys as if they were a jury.
- C. Communication between trial attorneys is allowed during the trial but must be non-disruptive.
- D. The defendant may sit at the counsel table and communicate with the defense attorneys. All communication must be non-disruptive to the trial.
- E. After the pretrial, the pretrial attorneys may not sit with the trial attorneys and may not communicate with the trial attorneys at any time.
- F. Once the trial has begun, there must be no communication with student team members, except for the 30-second rule.
- G. **If any section of rule 3.3 has been violated, scorers must deduct five points per score sheet per violation.**

Rule 3.4— Conduct of the Pretrial Motion

- A. The defense will argue the pretrial motion first.
- B. Each attorney arguing a pretrial motion has four minutes to present a statement and two minutes for rebuttal. During these proceedings, pretrial attorneys must be prepared to answer questions from the presider to clarify their position.
- C. No objections are allowed during pretrial arguments. **Two points must be deducted for each objection made during pretrial arguments.**
- D. To present a position in the most persuasive manner, attorneys should carefully review and become familiar with the materials provided in the mock trial case materials.

- E. Additional background research may supplement their understanding of the issues at hand, but such supplemental materials may not be cited in arguments.
- F. No written pretrial motion memoranda may be submitted at trial.
- G. The pretrial motion, motions entering exhibits into evidence, and motion to strike testimony are the only motions allowed. All other motions are prohibited. **If a motion is made that is not listed in this section, two points must be deducted from the team's total team presentation/participation score.**
- H. The presider's rule on the pretrial motion is final. If the presider rules in favor of the defense, the bracketed text in the facts and witness statements may not be referred to or discussed during the subsequent trial. Teams referring to or discussing bracketed text (after a presider has ruled in the favor of the defense) is an unfair extrapolation, see **Rule 3.8 – Unfair Extrapolation**.

Rule 3.5 — Attorneys

- A. The prosecution presents the opening statement and closing argument first.
- B. The attorneys may not make their opening statement, conduct their direct examination/cross-examination of witnesses, or closing argument from the well. They must remain behind the podium or counsel table. Attorneys may seek the permission of the presider to enter the well for the limited purpose of presenting an exhibit to a witness or questioning a witness about an exhibit or their witness statement. **Two points must be deducted per attorney's score per violation if any section of this rule has been violated.**
- C. Attorneys may conduct a re-direct examination when appropriate. No re-cross-examination is allowed. Witnesses may not be recalled to the stand.
- D. The attorney who conducts the direct examination of a witness is the only person allowed to make objections to the cross-examination of that witness. The attorney who conducts the cross-examination of a witness is the only person allowed to make objections during the direct examination of the witness. **Two points must be deducted from the offending team's score for each objection made by the wrong attorney.**
- E. Attorneys may use notes while presenting their cases.
- F. The Mock Trial competition proceedings are governed by the California Mock Trial Simplified Rules of Evidence in the case material. Only specified types of objections listed in the case materials will be recognized in the competition. Other rules may not be used at the trial.
- G. The pretrial motion, motions entering exhibits into evidence, and motion to strike testimony are the only motions allowed. All other motions are prohibited. **If a motion is made that is not listed in this section, two points must be deducted from the team's total team presentation/participation score.**
- H. No objections are allowed during opening statements or closing arguments. (The presider will be responsible for handling any legally inappropriate statements made in the closing, while scorers will also consider the closing argument criteria.) **Two points must be deducted for each objection made during opening statements or closing arguments.**

Rule 3.6 — Physical Evidence

- A. The prosecution team must bring to each trial the physical evidence listed under the heading "Physical Evidence" in the case materials. All reproductions can be as small as the original size

of the exhibits found in the case material, but no larger than 22 x 28 inches. If more than one exhibit is contained on a page on the official case, the exhibits cannot be separated at any time. Teams will not be penalized if they choose not to reproduce and enlarge the exhibit as found in the case material. If the prosecution team fails to bring physical evidence to court, it may be reflected in the team presentation/participation score.

- B. No other physical evidence will be allowed. All physical evidence and witnesses found in this case, but not made physically available for trial, are unavailable and their availability may not be questioned.
- C. Procedures for introducing items into evidence —Attorneys may introduce physical exhibits if any are listed under the heading “Physical Evidence,” provided that the objects correspond to the description given in the case materials. Below are the steps to follow when introducing physical evidence (maps, diagrams, etc.). All items are presented before trial.
 - 1- Present the item to an attorney for the opposing team before trial. If that attorney objects to the use of the item, the judge will rule whether the evidence is appropriate or not.
 - 2- Before beginning the trial, mark all exhibits for identification. Address the judge as follows: “Your honor, I ask that this item be marked for identification as Exhibit #___.”
 - 3- When a witness is on the stand testifying about the exhibit, show the item to the witness and ask the witness if he/she recognizes the item. If the witness does, ask him or her to explain it or answer questions about it. This shows how the exhibit is relevant to the trial.
- D. Moving the Item into Evidence — Exhibits must be introduced into evidence if attorneys wish the court to consider the items themselves as evidence, not just the testimony about the exhibits. Attorneys must ask to move the item into evidence during the witness examination or before they finish presenting their case.
 - 1- “Your honor, I ask that this item (describe) be moved into evidence as People’s (or Defendant’s) Exhibit # and request that the court so admit it.”
 - 2- At this point, opposing counsel may make any proper objections.
 - 3- The judge will then rule on whether the item may be admitted into evidence.
- E. Whether a team introduces, uses, and moves the physical evidence into evidence is entirely optional, but all physical evidence must be accessible by all team members.
- F. Evidence should not be altered in any way. Marking on the exhibits is not permitted, including separating exhibits that are contained on one page on the official case. Any alterations to the exhibits may be grounds for disqualification from the competition.
- G. Illustrative aids of any kind are prohibited, including but not limited to the use of electronic or light-projected aids.
- H. The official diagrams establish only relative positions. Because the scale (if any) is approximate, the diagrams cannot be used to definitively establish distances. The issue of distances should be based on the witnesses’ testimony and is a matter of fact for presiders.

Rule 3.7 — Witnesses

- A. Although witnesses are excluded from the trial proceedings in actual trials, for educational purposes, witnesses in the Mock Trial Program will remain in the courtroom for the entire trial. Witnesses will sit in designated seats at the front of the courtroom.

- B. The fact situation, witness statements, stipulations, and exhibits are the official case materials and make up the sole source of information for testimony.
- C. A witness can only testify to their own witness statement and any portion of the fact situation, stipulations, and exhibits of which they would reasonably have knowledge. Witnesses may not testify or respond to another witness' testimony unless otherwise stated in the stipulations.
- D. Unless otherwise stated, attorneys may not solicit information from a witness that requires the witness to testify to information from another witness' statement or information not included in their own statement.
- E. The witness statements contained in the case material should be viewed as signed statements made to the police by the witnesses. Unless otherwise specified, a witness can be impeached if they contradict the case material contained in their witness statement or fact situation using the procedures as outlined in the case material.
- F. Because this is a mock trial, witnesses may not be treated as hostile witnesses.
- G. All witnesses must be called in the allotted time. If the direct examination attorney runs out of time without calling one or more witnesses, the direct examination attorney and the witness will each automatically receive a score of zero for each witness not called, and the cross-examination attorney will automatically be awarded ten points for each witness not called.
Once the time allotted for witnesses has ended, direct examination attorneys may not call any other witnesses.
- H. Cross-examination is required for all witnesses. If the cross-examination attorney does not cross one or more witnesses, the cross-examination attorney will receive a cross-examination score of zero for the witnesses.
- I. Witnesses are not allowed to use notes while testifying during the trial.

Rule 3.8 — Unfair Extrapolation

- A. It is each student's responsibility to work closely within the record.
- B. An unfair extrapolation (UE) occurs when a witness creates a material fact not included in their official record. A material fact is one that would likely impact the outcome of the case.
- C. Witnesses may, however, make fair extrapolations from the materials. A fair extrapolation is one in which a witness makes a reasonable inference based on their official record. A fair extrapolation does not alter the material facts of the case.
- D. Unfair extrapolations are best tackled through impeachment and the closing argument. They should be dealt with by attorneys during the trial. (See Impeachment during Cross-Examination in the case packet.)
- E. Attorneys shall not ask questions calling for information outside the scope of the case materials or requesting an unfair extrapolation.
- F. If a witness is asked for information not contained in the witness's statement, the answer must be consistent with the statement and may not materially affect the witness's testimony or any substantive issue of the case.
- G. Attorneys for the opposing team may refer to this rule as a special "unfair extrapolation" objection.
- H. When a "UE" objection is made, possible rulings by a presider may be one of the following:
 - a) No extrapolation has occurred. Objection overruled.

b) An unfair extrapolation has occurred. Objection sustained.
c) The extrapolation was fair. Objection overruled.

I. The decision of the presiding judge regarding extrapolations or evidentiary matters is final. Scoring attorneys must take the presiding judge's ruling on unfair extrapolations into consideration when determining the point deduction.

J. Witnesses and attorneys making unfair extrapolations and attorneys who ask questions that require the witness to answer with an unfair extrapolation should be penalized by having one point deducted from their individual scores.

K. If a team has an individual or several team members making unfair extrapolations, in addition to the individual point deductions, five points should be deducted from the offending team's presentation/participation score.

Rule 3.9 — Clerk, Bailiff, and Unofficial Timers

A. The Mock Trial competition involves timed presentations. The clerk is the official neutral timekeeper for the trial. The clerk must keep accurate time for both teams, provide time remaining warnings, and complete a timesheet. In addition, any member of the team presenting defense may serve as an unofficial timer. This unofficial timer must be identified before the trial begins. To avoid timing issues, both the clerk and unofficial timers must sit next to each other during the trial.

B. The clerk and unofficial timer must bring a stopwatch or timer (no cell phones, tablets, or other electronic devices), the official timesheet, and timecards to each trial. The clerks may only use the timecards from Teach Democracy's website, printed out on white paper (card stock recommended but not necessary). At the State Finals, teams must use the laminated timecards provided by Teach Democracy, which will be distributed by the presider. The timecards must be returned to the presider after each trial. The timecards will have the following time-remaining warnings:

- 2 minutes
- 1 minute
- 30 seconds
- Stop

C. Modification of time intervals is not permitted.

D. Running of the opposing team's time is not allowed. The running of time is best addressed at the time when the witness is on the stand and dealt with by opposing the attorney through objections such as non-responsive or narrative. The scoring attorneys will use their discretion to determine independently how many points, up to 5 points, will be taken off the offending witness' score, should they determine that a witness is running the opposing team's time. In addition, if it repeatedly happens, the presider may admonish the witness.

E. Each team will have 40 minutes to present its case, including the pretrial motion. The time may be utilized however they choose, but the maximum allowable totals for each section must be observed. Time limits for each section are as follows:

- Pretrial Motion (4 minutes) and Rebuttal (2 minutes)
- Opening Statement/Closing Argument (9 minutes) and Rebuttal (1 minute)
- Direct/Re-direct Examination (14 minutes)
- Cross-Examination (10 minutes)

F. The time will start when each attorney starts to speak (i.e., first word of pretrial, opening, direct, cross-examination, and closing. Examples include but are not limited to:

- “May it please the court...”
- “Your Honor...”
- “Please state your name for the court...”

G. The time will be stopped when:

- Witnesses are called to the stand
- Attorneys make objections
- Presider questions attorneys and witnesses
- Presider offers their observations
- A witness asks for a question to be repeated
- Attorneys request the time remaining (Note: The clerk must provide the time remaining for both teams when a request is made by an attorney.)

H. The time will not stop while an attorney or witness approaches an exhibit. Time will not be rounded off and must be measured to the whole second.

I. One minute is automatically reserved for rebuttal at the conclusion of the closing argument. Only issues that were addressed in an opponent's closing argument may be raised during the rebuttal. Formal reservation of rebuttal time is not required.

J. Both visual and verbal warnings will be given a two-minute, one-minute, and 30 seconds before the end of each section. The time remaining cards must be displayed in a manner to ensure that there is a clear view for the counsel and presiding judge. The clerk will stop students (both visually and verbally) at the end of the allotted time for each section. Thus, there will be no allowance for overtime. Two points must be deducted per clerk's score if any section of this rule has been violated.

K. If timing variations occur of 15 seconds or more at the completion of any task during the trial, the timers will notify the judge immediately that a time discrepancy has occurred. Any time discrepancies less than 15 seconds are not considered a violation. No time discrepancies will be entertained after the trial concludes. The judge shall determine whether to accept the clerk's time or make a time adjustment.

L. At the end of the pretrial motion and the trial, the clerk will time the 30-second rule.

M. The presider and attorney scorers will be allowed 10 minutes for debriefing. Following the verdict, the clerk will begin timing the debriefing. The clerk will provide the presider and attorney scorers with 2-minute, 1-minute, and 30-second visual warnings, and will stop (both verbal and visual) the debriefing.

N. The clerk will not be scored on timing the debriefing, consultations, and any formal presentations regarding irregularities. No extensions of time will be granted.

O. The bailiff's role is to assist the presider, call the court to order and swear in the witnesses.

P. The bailiff will assist the presider by bringing a copy of the 2025-26 Team Rulebook and Case Packet to provide to the presider should they need to refer to them to clarify an issue or question.

Q. Before calling the court to order, the bailiff will remind the audience to turn off all cell phones and that ABSOLUTELY NO FOOD is allowed in the courtroom. Water is OK. If spectators must step outside, they should do so quietly to avoid disrupting the trial. Once the trial begins, no communication is allowed between bailiff and any spectators. The bailiff will call the court to order using the following language:

"All rise, Superior Court of the State of California, County of _____, Department ___, is now in session. Judge _____ presiding. (Allow time for the presider to take the bench.) Please be seated and come to order."

R. The bailiff will swear in the witnesses by using the following language:

"Do you solemnly affirm that the testimony you are about to give will faithfully and truthfully conform to the facts and rules of the Mock Trial competition?"

Rule 3.10 —Deliberate Running of the Opponent’s Time “Filibustering”

A. Although a witness may be permitted to give a brief, responsive answer other than a simple “yes” or “no” to questions on cross-examination, consistent with common trial practice, no witness may provide non-responsive or narrative answers on cross-examination to consume the other team’s cross-examination time. Student attorneys can object with “narrative” and/or “non-responsive” objections during the trial.

B. The scoring attorneys will use their discretion to determine independently how many points will be deducted from the offending team’s score for filibustering and whether the presiding judge has directed the witness to answer more responsively.

C. If a team has several team members filibustering, in addition to the individual point deductions, five points should be deducted from the offending team’s participation score.

D. Any effort to deliberately consume the opposing team’s time through these techniques may also violate the Code of Conduct and may be sanctionable under Rule 1.2.

Rule 3.12 — 30-Second Rule

A. There will be 30 seconds provided, if needed, at the end of the pretrial and at the end of the trial for active team members from each team to confer with their team’s teacher and attorney coach to discuss any trial irregularities.

B. If there are any irregularities regarding the rules of the competition, which a team would like the presider and scorers to be aware of, one active team member will have 30 seconds to orally note the irregularities to the court. Coaches may not directly make claims on behalf of the team.

C. The active team member noting a violation of the rules must be able to point to the specific incident of the misconduct and cite the corresponding rule in the team rulebook and/or case material to the presider.

D. The presider will hear the alleged violation and corresponding cited rule and decide whether a violation has occurred, the presider’s decision will be final.

E. If the presider determines a violation has occurred, the presider will direct the scoring attorneys to take the violation into consideration. The scoring attorneys will use their discretion to determine independently how many points (if any) will be taken off the offending team’s participation score.

F. The 30-second rule should be used for substantial rule violations only. Arguing for hyper-technical interpretations of the rules, especially when designed to embarrass others or to gain an unfair advantage, is prohibited and five points must be deducted from the team’s participation score.

G. The 30-second rule is not to be used to argue additional points of law or rebut the opponent’s arguments.

Rule 4.1 — Rule Interpretation

- A. The rules are designed to introduce the procedures of law to participants and to foster good sportsmanship. Interpretations of the rules should be guided by common sense.
- B. No bench conferences are allowed.
- C. Unless a specific point deduction for a particular infraction is provided in the rules, each scorer will determine the appropriate amount of deduction individually.
- D. Any specific point deduction without a designated category can be deducted in the team participation and presentation category.
- E. Scorers are not bound by the decision of the presider regarding whether there has been a violation of the rules and how many points (if any) should be deducted for that violation. This is left to the sole discretion of each scorer, to the extent that a rule provides for a specific deduction or otherwise conflicts with this rule, that rule controls.
- F. All decisions of the presider and scoring attorneys are final. No exceptions.

Rule 4.2 — Judging Panel

- A. The judging panel will typically consist of three to four people (a presider and several scoring attorneys). In some cases, beyond the Mock Trial staff's control, a scoring panel may consist of one presider and one scoring attorney. In that situation, the presider will be required to both preside and score the trial.
- B. The scoring panel may consist of people with substantial Mock Trial coaching/scoring experience, law students, paralegals, attorneys or judges. There will be at least one attorney on each scoring panel. The presider shall be either an attorney or a judge.
- C. Subject to the discretion of the county coordinator, attorney and teacher coaches cannot serve as scoring attorneys or presiders if their team is still active in the tournament.

Rule 4.3 — Point Scale

- A. Students are to be rated on the ten-point scale for each category (except for the clerk and bailiff) according to the criteria appropriate to each presentation.
 - Clerk and bailiff are evaluated using a scale of 1-5.
- B. Scoring attorneys should consider a "5" as a starting point and move up or down based on the presentation.
- C. Scoring attorneys must award points individually and not with consultation from other scoring attorneys.
- D. Some scores are weighted and therefore can affect a team's score more dramatically. These include the pretrial motion (x2) and the closing argument (x2).
- E. The scoring attorneys will use the evaluation and scoring criteria to score the individual presentation in each category.
- F. The scoring attorneys are not evaluating the legal merits of the case.

Rule 4.5 — Forfeit

- A. If a scheduled team is not present within 30 minutes after the scheduled trial time, that team forfeits the trial and is subject to disqualification within the sole discretion of competition administrators.

Evaluation Criteria

Pretrial Motion (X2) – Pretrial Attorney

- A clear and concise presentation of issues and appropriate use of case materials.
- Well-developed, reasoned, and organized arguments.
- A solid understanding of the legal reasoning behind the arguments.
- Responded well to the presider's questions and maintained continuity in the argument.
- Effective rebuttal countered the opponent's argument.

Opening Statement – Attorney

- Provided a case overview.
- A theme/theory of the case was identified.
- Overview of key witnesses and their testimony.
- Introduction of attorneys.
- Outlined burden of proof.
- Mention of applicable law or statutes to be covered.
- Request for relief (what the side is asking the court to decide).

Direct/Re-Direct Examination – Attorney

- Questions required straightforward answers and brought out key information for their side of the case.
- Properly introduced exhibits and, where appropriate, properly introduced evidence as a matter of record.
- Properly phrased and rephrased questions and demonstrated a clear understanding of trial procedures.
- Responded to objections utilizing rules of evidence or the rules of competition.
- Made effective objections to cross-examination questions of their witness when appropriate.
- Did not make unnecessary objections and used only those objections listed in the Summary of Evidentiary Objections.
- Made appropriate use of time throughout questioning.
- Avoided leading questions.
- Did not ask opinion questions unless the witness is an expert.

Cross-Examination – Attorney

- Made effective objections to direct examination (of the witness they cross-examined) when appropriate.
- Used narrow questions that suggested a yes or no answer and did not allow the witness to provide a narrative explanation.
- Responded to objections utilizing rules of evidence or the rules of the competition.
- Followed protocol to introduce exhibits.
- Utilized objections to forward the case and not just to throw the other side off their game; unnecessary objections, excessive interruptions, and/or obstructionist behavior.
- Properly phrased and rephrased questions and demonstrated a clear understanding of trial procedures.
- Exposed contradictions in testimony and weakened the other side's case.
- Impeached the witness without appearing to harass or intimidate them.
- Referred to witness testimony and followed rules for showing the testimony to the witness.
- Demonstrated a clear understanding of the rules of competition and evidence.

Evaluation Criteria - Continues

Witnesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Was believable in their characterizations and presented convincing testimony.Was well prepared to answer the questions posed to them under direct examination and responded well to them.Responded well to questions posed under cross-examination without unnecessarily disrupting or delaying court proceedings.Understood the facts.consistently testified to key facts and avoided irrelevant comments.Did not disrupt the trial with unreasonable inferences.Played up the strengths of their statements and adequately explained the weaknesses.Did not use notes.Sounded spontaneous and not memorized.Did not wear a costume.
Closing Arguments (x2) – Attorney
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The presentation contained elements of spontaneity and was not based entirely on a prepared text.Incorporated examples from the actual trial, while also being careful not to introduce statements and evidence that were not brought out during the trial.Outlined the strengths of their side's witnesses and the weaknesses of the other side's witnesses.Asked for the verdict, including a request for relief, and explained why the verdict was justifiable. Made an organized and well-reasoned presentation summarizing the most important points for their team's side of the case.Effective rebuttal countered the opponent's arguments.Reviewed the exhibits and how they helped the case.Stated the applicable law or statutes and how they supported the side's theory.
Clerk
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Present and punctual for trial.Performed their role so that there were no disruptions or delays in the presentation of the trial.Conducted themselves professionally without attracting any unnecessary attention.Knowledgeable of all categories' time limits.Properly used verbal and visual time warnings.
Bailiff
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Present and punctual for trial.Performed their role so that there were no disruptions or delays in the presentation of the trial.Conducted themselves professionally without attracting any unnecessary attention.Knowledgeable about script and role in the trial.Followed script.
Team Participation and Presentation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Team members were courteous, observed general courtroom decorum, spoke clearly and distinctly, and displayed good sportsmanship to all competitors, regardless of trial results.Team members were involved in the presentation of the case and actively participated in fulfilling their respective roles.Witnesses performed in synchronization with attorneys in presenting their side of the case.As much as possible, each trial attorney displayed examination and argumentation skills, and when appropriate, displayed knowledge of California Simplified Rules of Evidence in making objections.Team members demonstrated cooperation and teamwork, as well as following the set rules.The teachers and attorney coaches displayed good sportsmanship.

Guidelines for (1-10) Scoring

Attorneys
9-10 - Excellent
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Excellent understanding of the case, rules, and legal issues.• Questions and arguments advanced the case and didn't ask for answers that asked for unfair extrapolations.• Persuasive and articulate delivery made without the use of notes.• Thought well on their feet, were in control of the situation, and responded to the other team's presentation.• Objected when appropriate; clearly understood how to respond to objections.• Maintained eye contact with the presider and witnesses.• Did not verbally address the attorney scorers.• Spoke in a clear and audible voice.
7-8 - Above Average
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good understanding of the case, rules, and legal issues• Most questions and arguments advanced the case and didn't ask for unfair extrapolations.• Mostly persuasive and articulate delivery; used notes occasionally.• Able to think on their feet some of the time.• Most objections were appropriate; usually understood how to respond to objections.• Mostly maintained eye contact with the judge and witnesses. Did not verbally address the attorney scorers.• Mostly spoke in a clear and audible voice.
5-6 - Average
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fair understanding of the case, rules, and legal issues.• Verbally addressed the scoring attorneys as if they were a jury.• Used notes, sometimes stumbled on delivery.• Some questions and arguments advanced the case and didn't ask for unfair extrapolations.• Prepared for trial but often relied on preparation and not responding to the other team's presentation.• Missed appropriate opportunities to object; didn't always understand how to respond to objections.• Sometimes forgot to maintain eye contact with the judge and witnesses.• Sometimes difficult to hear.
3-4 - Below Average
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrated little understanding of the case, rules, and legal issues.• Needs work on poise and delivery; didn't respond to the other team's presentation.• Read mostly scripted questions; relied heavily on notes.• Few questions and arguments advanced the case; may have asked questions that required unfair extrapolations.• Struggled to understand when to object and how to respond to objections; used objections to interfere with the other team's presentation.• Often forgot to maintain eye contact with the judge or witnesses.• Verbally addressed the scoring attorneys as if they were a jury.• Often difficult to hear.
1-2 - Far Below Average
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Did not understand the case, rules, or legal issues.• Not persuasive or articulate in delivery; read entirely from script.• Not prepared for trial; not able to think on their feet.• Questions and arguments didn't advance the case; asked for answers that required unfair extrapolations.• Did not know when to object or how to respond to objections.• Disruptive/disrespectful/inappropriate actions.• Did not maintain eye contact with the judge or witnesses.• Verbally addressed the scoring attorneys as if they were a jury.• Unclear or inaudible voice.

Guidelines for (1-10) Scoring - Continues

Witness
9-10 - Excellent
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Excellent understanding of the case, witness statements, and exhibits (if applicable).Convincing, credible presentation.Answers were thorough, accurate, persuasive, and natural, not scripted.Didn't provide answers that embellished facts and/or went outside the scope of case materials.Maintained eye contact with the judge and student attorneys.Did not verbally address the attorney scorers.Spoke in a clear and audible voice
7-8 - Above Average
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Good understanding of witness statements and exhibits (if applicable)Mostly convincing, credible presentationMost answers were thorough, accurate, persuasive, and mostly natural, not memorized.Rarely provided answers that embellished facts and/or went outside the scope of case materials.Sometimes forgot to maintain eye contact with the judge and student attorneys.Did not verbally address the attorney scorers.Mostly spoke in a clear and audible voice.
5-6 - Average
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Fair understanding of witness statements and exhibits (if applicable)Verbally addressed the scoring attorneys as if they were a jury.Running of time of the opposing team's timeSomewhat convincing, credible presentationAnswers were not always thorough, accurate, or persuasive; sounded scripted, not natural.Some answers embellished facts and/or went outside the scope of case materials.Sometimes forgot to maintain eye contact with the judge and student attorneys.Sometimes difficult to hear.
3-4 - Below Average
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Struggled to understand witness statements and exhibits (if applicable.)Presentation not convincing, credible; often unrealisticVerbally addressed the scoring attorneys as if they were a jury.Answers were generic and often didn't seem natural but based on memorized script.Sometimes stumbled over responses.Often provided answers that embellished facts and/or went outside the scope of case materials.Often forgot to maintain eye contact with judge and student attorneys.Often difficult to hear.Deliberately use up opposing counsel's time.
1-2 - Far Below Average
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Did not understand witness statements and exhibits.Presentation not convincing or credible; seems unrealistic.Answers were not thorough, accurate, or persuasive, and didn't sound natural; stumbled over responses.Answers not consistent with the facts and/or went outside the scope of case materials.Did not maintain eye contact with the judge or student attorneys.Weak, inaudible, or unclear voice.Disruptive/disrespectful/inappropriate actionsGave excessively long, non-responsive answers on cross-examination.Deliberately use up opposing counsel's time.Verbally addressed the scoring attorneys as if they were a jury.

Guidelines for (1-10) Scoring - Continues

Clerk
5 - Excellent
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very professional demeanor. Clear understanding of procedures; excellent timekeeping. Clear, audible voice when issuing verbal warnings (if applicable). Visual warnings were clearly visible to student attorneys. Able to think well on feet, and in control of the situation.
4 - Above Average
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional demeanor. Good understanding of procedures; good timekeeping. Mostly spoke in a clear, audible voice when issuing verbal warnings (if applicable). Visual warnings were mostly clearly visible to student attorneys.
3 - Average
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good demeanor. Basic understanding of procedures; able to keep time. Was heard when issuing verbal warnings (if applicable). Visual warnings were visible to student attorneys.
2 - Below Average
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demeanor lacked professionalism. Demonstrated little understanding of procedures, timekeeping not entirely accurate. Not clear or audible when issuing verbal warnings (if applicable). Visual warnings may not have been visible to student attorneys.
1 - Far Below Average
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete lack of professionalism. No understanding of procedures; timekeeping was inaccurate. Verbal warnings not used or completely inaudible (if applicable). Verbal warnings not used or not at all visible. Disruptive/disrespectful/inappropriate actions.
Bailiff
5 - Excellent
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very professional, believable presentation. Consistent use of clear and audible voice, and eye contact. Consistently natural delivery of script. Excellent understanding of the role and procedures.
4 - Above Average
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional, believable presentation. Used clear, audible voice, and eye contact a lot of the time. Knew script and delivery were mostly consistently natural. Good understanding of the role and procedures.
3 - Average
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mostly natural, believable presentation. Audible voice, some eye contact. Apparent that the script was memorized. Understood role and procedures.
2 - Below Average
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The presentation was not realistic and lacked professionalism. Voice not all that clear or audible; little eye contact. Used notes and stumbled with the script. Did not have a good understanding of role and procedures.

Guidelines for (1-10) Scoring - Continues

1 - Far Below Average
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete lack of professionalism.• Voice not audible or clear; no eye contact.• Relied almost entirely on notes/script.• Did not understand role and procedures.• Disruptive/disrespectful/inappropriate actions.
Participation and Team Presentation
9-10 Excellent
All competitors, teachers, coaches, and other attendees/observers: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Showed courtesy and respect for their student opponents, all courthouse staff, judges, scoring attorneys, attorney coaches, teacher coaches, volunteers, and mock trial staff.• Showed dignity and restraint, irrespective of the outcome of any trial. Trials, contests, and activities were conducted honestly, fairly, and with civility.• Conformed to the highest standards of behavior.• Focused on the educational value of the Mock Trial Competition.• Used proper procedure and decorum.• Abided by the letter and the spirit of the competition's Rules and the Code of Ethical Conduct.• Did not employ tactics they believed to be wrong or in violation of the Rules.• Did not willfully violate the Rules of the competition in spirit or practice.• Team members' presentation was natural; no overacting.
5-6 Average
Competitors, teachers, coaches, and other attendees/observers: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Showed basic courtesy and respect for their student opponents, all courthouse staff, judges, scoring attorneys, attorney coaches, teacher coaches, volunteers, and mock trial staff.• Showed basic dignity and restraint, irrespective of the outcome of any trial. Trials, contests, and activities were conducted with basic honesty, fairness, and civility.• Conformed to the basic standards of behavior.• Showed basic understanding of the educational value of the Mock Trial Competition.• Used basic procedure and decorum.• Showed basic understanding of the spirit of the competition's Rules and the Code of Ethical Conduct.• Team members' presentation was mostly natural; believable presentation.
1-2 Far Below Average
All competitors, teachers, coaches, and other attendees/observers: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Did not show courtesy and respect for their student opponents, all courthouse staff, judges, scoring attorneys, attorney coaches, teacher coaches, volunteers, and mock trial staff.• Did not show dignity and restraint, irrespective of the outcome of any trial. Trials, contests, and activities were not conducted honestly, fairly, and with civility.• Did not conform to the highest standards of behavior.• Did not focus on the educational value of the Mock Trial Competition.• Did not use proper procedure and decorum.• Did not abide by the letter and the spirit of the competition's Rules and this Code of Ethical conduct.• Employed tactics they believe to be wrong or in violation of the Rules.• Willfully violated the Rules of the competition in spirit or practice.
Note: Any specific point deduction without a designated category can be deducted in the team participation and presentation category.

Summary of Allowable Evidentiary Objections

These are the only objections allowed and are modified for the mock trial competition. (See Mock Trial Simplified Rules of Evidence of the case packet for more details.)

- 1. Unfair Extrapolation:** "Objection, your honor. This question is an "unfair extrapolation," or "This information is beyond the scope of the statement of facts."
- 2. Relevance:** "Objection, your honor. This testimony is not relevant," or "Objection, your honor. Counsel's question calls for irrelevant testimony."
- 3. More Prejudicial Than Probative:** "Objection, your honor. The probative value of this evidence is substantially outweighed by the danger of undue prejudice (or confusing the issues, wasting time, or misleading the trier of fact)."
- 4. Foundation:** Objection, your honor. There is a lack of foundation."
- 5. Personal Knowledge/Speculation:** "Objection, your honor. The witness has no personal knowledge to answer that question." Or "Objection, your honor, speculation."
- 6. Opinion Testimony (Testimony from Non-Experts):** "Objection, your honor. Improper lay witness opinion," or "Objection, your honor. The question calls for speculation on the part of the witness."
- 7. Expert Opinion:** "Objection, your honor. There is a lack of foundation for this opinion testimony," or "Objection, your honor. Improper Opinion."
- 8. Character Evidence:** "Objection, your honor. Inadmissible character evidence," or "Objection, your honor. The question calls for inadmissible character evidence."
- 9. Hearsay:** "Objection, your honor. Counsel's question calls for hearsay," or "Objection, your honor. This testimony is hearsay. I move that it be stricken from the record."
- 10. Leading Question:** "Objection, your honor. Counsel is leading the witness."
- 11. Compound Question:** "Objection, your honor. This is a compound question."
- 12. Narrative:** "Objection, your honor. Counsel's question calls for a narrative." Or "Objection, your honor. The witness has lapsed into a narrative answer."
- 13. Argumentative Question:** "Objection, your honor. Counsel is being argumentative," or "Objection, your honor. Counsel is badgering the witness."
- 14. Asked and Answered:** "Objection, your honor. This question has been asked and answered."
- 15. Vague and Ambiguous:** "Objection, your honor. This question is vague and ambiguous as to _____."
- 16. Non-Responsive:** "Objection, your honor. The witness is being non-responsive."
- 17. Outside Scope of Cross-examination:** "Objection, your honor. Counsel is asking the witness about matters beyond the scope of cross-examination."