



Rhode Island Mock Trial Tournament

THE RI MOCK TRIAL TOURNAMENT IS A PRODUCTION OF RHODE ISLAND LEGAL/EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIP

HIGH SCHOOL MOCK TRIAL RUBRIC

For use in teaching the mock trial process and for evaluating preparations.

These forms are provided to help teachers and coaches evaluate student learning in the mock trial process.

1 – not effective 2 – fair 3 - good/average 4 - strong/effective 5 - excellent

TEAM PARTICIPATION: *For use in teaching the mock trial process and for evaluating team presentation. This rubric is specifically formulated for students who are working as a team to accomplish a goal.*

1. Each member of the team has a clear understanding of the mock trial rules of procedure.
2. Each member of the team has a clear understanding of the burden of proof.
3. Each member of the team is able to present information in logical and articulate manner.
4. All members of the team contribute, listen and respect each other.
5. All members of the team understand the steps in the trial.
6. All members of the team attend meetings, practices and trials regularly.
7. All members of the team understand that they are limited to the materials provided in the mock trial packet.
8. All members of the team understand good citizenship and fairness.
9. All members of the team are aware of alternative dispute resolution processes.
10. All members of the team understand the American judicial system.

ATTORNEY OPENING/CLOSING: *For use in teaching the mock trial process and for evaluating student presentations. This rubric is specifically formulated for students who are assigned the task of crafting and presenting an opening statement or a closing argument.*

1 – not effective 2 – fair 3 - good/average 4 - strong/effective 5 - excellent

1. Student comprehends the various statements of fact and has a clear idea of the burden of proof.
2. Student provides an accurate synopsis of what needs to be discussed in an opening statement.
3. Student provides an accurate synopsis of what needs to be discussed in a closing argument, and understands that there are limits on what may be included based on what is discussed during the trial.

4. Delivery of opening and/or closing is clear and concise, with minimal reliance on notes.
5. Student speaks clearly and loudly enough to be heard throughout the room.
6. Student directs comments to the appropriate audience; including judge, jury or witness, with good eye contact.
7. Student exhibits appropriate courtroom decorum and respect for all parties in the trial, including opposing counsel and witnesses.
8. Statements are organized into thoughtful and methodical presentations.
9. Appropriate time limits are followed.
10. Students performing closing arguments use appropriate information only and indicate that they listened and understood opposing arguments.

ATTORNEY DIRECT/CROSS: *For use in teaching the mock trial process and for evaluating student presentations. This rubric is specifically formulated for students who are assigned the task of crafting and presenting questions for direct and cross examination.*

1 – not effective 2 – fair 3 - good/average 4 - strong/effective 5 - excellent

1. Student comprehends the various statements of fact and has a clear idea of the burden of proof and is able to establish a foundation for documents.
2. Student develops questions for direct that indicate a clear understanding of the case and how it should be proved.
3. Questions are appropriate for direct or cross, i.e. no leading questions on direct.
4. Delivery of questions on direct and/or cross is clear and concise, with minimal reliance on notes.
5. Student speaks clearly and loudly enough to be heard throughout the room.
6. Student directs comments to the appropriate audience; including judge, jury or witness, with good eye contact
7. Student exhibits appropriate courtroom decorum and respect for all parties in the trial, including opposing counsel and witnesses.
8. Statements are organized into thoughtful and methodical presentations.
9. Appropriate time limits are followed.
10. Student knows when to object, and on what grounds and is able to explain articulately why objections are made or should be overruled.

WITNESSES: *For use in teaching the mock trial process and for evaluating student presentations. This rubric is specifically formulated for students who are serving as mock trial witnesses.*

1 – not effective 2 – fair 3 - good/average 4 - strong/effective 5 - excellent

1. Students are familiar with all mock trial rules.
2. Students understand the burden of proof.

3. Students are familiar with their witness statement and any additional information provided in the mock trial packet that is relevant to the case at hand.
4. Student understands that they must respond accurately, within the information in their witness statement, to questions asked by mock trial attorneys.
5. Appropriate time limits are followed.
6. Student speaks clearly and loudly enough to be heard throughout the room.
7. Student directs comments to the appropriate audience; including judge, jury or witness, with good eye contact.
8. Student exhibits appropriate courtroom decorum and respect for all parties in the trial, including opposing counsel and witnesses.
9. Student portrays the witness in a convincing manner, within the rules (i.e., no costumes, props, dialects or accents).
10. Student can perform the role of witness without use of notes.

OTHER PARTICIPANTS IN THE TRIAL If a team is too large for all students to participate as mock trial witnesses or lawyers, other roles can be assigned to team members.

Judge
 Jury
 Bailiff
 Timer
 Court Reporter
 Journalist/Reporter
 Courtroom artist

ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES

Although mock trial teams participating in the Rhode island Mock Trial Tournament are limited to the materials provided in the tournament handbook, in the classroom teachers and students are encouraged to expand on the material provided by:

1. Conducting independent research, and developing additional witness statements to include, for example arresting officers, character witnesses, expert witnesses, etc.
2. Searching the internet for updated information on the topics discussed in years past.
3. Debating the issues brought forth in a particular case.
4. Mediating the issues brought forth in a particular case.
5. Assigning students the task of drafting a bench memorandum which explains the basics of the case and synthesizes what each side must prove.
6. Asking students to create witness statements or affidavits based on their favorite fictional characters.
7. Asking students to watch one of the movies listed below to create a witness statement or affidavit based on one of the characters depicted.

A Civil Action (1999)

A Few Good Men (1992)

A Man for All Seasons (1966)

Absence of Malice (1981)

Adams Rib (1949)
Anatomy of a Murder (1959)
Billy Budd (1962)
Breaker Morant (1980)
Class Action (1991)
Dead Man Walking (1995)
Gideon's Trumpet (1980)
Holes (2003)
Inherit the Wind (1960)
Knock on Any Door (1949)
Lord of the Flies (1990)
Kramer v. Kramer (1979)
Mr. Deeds Goes to Town (1936)
My Cousin Vinny (1992)
O Brother, Where Art Thou? (2000)
Paths of Glory (1957)
Presumed Innocent (1990)
Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves (1991)
Schindler's List (1993)
Sommersby (1993)
The Accused (1988)
The Caine Mutiny (1954)
The Crucible (1996)
The Devil and Daniel Webster (1941)
The Fugitive (1993)
The Insider (1999)
The Onion Field (1979)
The Rainmaker (1997)
The Thin Blue Line (1988)
Time to Kill (1996)
The Pelican Brief (1993)
The Sweet Hereafter (1997)
The Wrong Man (1956)
Twelve Angry Men (1957)
Whose Life is it Anyway? (1981)
Young Mr. Lincoln (1939)
Amistad (1997)
And Justice For All (1979)
Birdman of Alcatraz (1962)
Catch Me if You Can (2003)
Cool Hand Luke (1967)
Erin Brockovich (2000)
Gosford Park (2001)
I Am Sam (2001)
In the Name of the Father (1994)
Legal Eagles (1996)
Judgment at Nuremberg (1966)
Liar, Liar (1997)
Murder in the First (1995)
Nuts (1987)
Paris Trout (1991)
Philadelphia (1994)
Reversal of Fortune (1990)
Rules of Engagement (2000)
Snow Falling on Cedars (2000)
Suspect (1987)
The Castle (1999)
The Client (1994)
The Devil's Advocate (1997)
The Firm (1993)
The Incident (1989)
The Life of Emile Zola (1937)
The Paradine Case (1947)
The Star Chamber (1983)
The Winslow Boy (1948) (1999)
The Ox-bow Incident (1943)
The Shawshank Redemption (1994)
The Verdict (1982)
To Kill a Mockingbird (1962)
Wag the Dog (1998)
Witness for the Prosecution (1957)

