



North Carolina Advocates for Justice High School Mock Trial Competition

Mock Trial...Getting Started

What is a Mock Trial?

A Mock Trial is a trial where students simulate judicial proceedings by playing the roles of attorneys, witnesses and bailiffs. Teams will compete in at least two rounds of competition where they take turns arguing for the plaintiff's side and the defense side of the case. Volunteer attorneys from the local area act as advisors to help prepare the students for the competition day when they'll step into a real courtroom and present their case before a presiding judge and three evaluative jurors. The judge rules on objections and keeps the proceedings moving. The jurors evaluate the students on their presentation skills and not on the merits of the case. The judge and jurors in our mock trial competition are legal professionals who volunteer to participate in this educational program.

What are the benefits of Mock Trial?

This is a participatory learning tool that teaches students about the American justice system and the importance of trial by jury. It teaches students how to apply specific laws and gives them an appreciation for why the application of the rules of law are so important to reaching peaceful resolutions of problems.

Mock Trial is also a terrific tool for developing several skill sets, such as critical thinking, public speaking, team building and leadership skills. Another benefit of this program is the mentoring relationship that develops between legal professionals and high school students.

Who Participates?

All students in grades nine through twelve are eligible to compete. In North Carolina, almost 1,000 students participate and tens of thousands of high school and middle school kids are involved nationwide. Students who are interested in civics and law are drawn to playing the lawyer roles, whereas the drama students tend to be interested in playing the witnesses.

What are the steps to starting a Mock Trial team?

1. Talk with your social studies/ELP/civics teacher and ask them to serve as a coach to help recruit students, schedule practice sessions, be a liaison to the State Mock Trial office.
2. Form a team with no more than 8 students.
3. Register the team by downloading the registration form from the program's website
4. Case materials will be available on the website as of September 24, 2010.

5. Ask an attorney to volunteer two to three hours per week to coach your team between December and February (if you can not find an attorney, the Competition will assign you one).
6. For the Regional competition, all teams will go to their assigned courthouse and compete in two rounds of competition. All teams will play both sides of the case.
7. The two best teams in each region (there are 8 regions in all) will compete in a final round to determine the regional winner.
8. The 8 regional winners and 2 next highest scoring teams will compete at the State Finals competition in Raleigh in March.

How many students are on a team?

Teams must have a minimum of seven students and a maximum of eight.

Can a school have more than one team?

Yes. There is no limit on the number of teams that a school/organization can sponsor.

How much does it cost to register a team?

Mock Trial registration fees are \$75 per team.