

Mock Trial Definitions

Admissible Evidence	Evidence that can be legally and properly introduced in a civil or criminal trial.
Affidavit	A portion of the case that contains the witness' sworn statement.
Alternate	Students on the team serving as backups listed on the Team Roster Form (approved at the on-site registration). Alternate students can substitute for missing, late, and/or sick students prior to completing the practice scoresheet at the beginning of each round.
Answer	The defendant's response to the plaintiff's allegations as stated in the complaint. An item-by-item, paragraph-by-paragraph response to points made in a complaint; part of the pleadings.
Attorney Coach	An attorney volunteer who works with a school's teacher(s) and students in preparing for a Mock Trial competition.
Bailiff	A student serving as a court attendant with the responsibility of announcing the opening of the court, swearing in the witnesses (if on the Plaintiff/Prosecution side of the team), monitoring the courtroom for improper communication, and ensuring all exhibits are in order before and after each trial and in their neutral location.
Ballot	Refers to the decision made by a scoring judge as to which team scored the most points in a given round. The team earning the highest points on a scoring judge's scoresheet is the winner of that ballot. The team earning at least two of the three ballots, wins the round. The number of ballots earned is one of the determining factors when power matching and for the purposes of ranking teams.
Bar	The "bar" in a courtroom is traditionally a railing or low wall separating the visitors from the presiding judge, scoring judges in the jury box, attorneys, and testifying witnesses.
Bench Conference	When a student attorney requests to meet at the presiding judge's bench along with one of the opposing team's student attorneys; which is not permissible in Mock Trial unless requested by the presiding judge.

Bye Round	A special round put in place when there are an odd number of teams competing in a regional competition since each trial requires two teams. The team not assigned to compete in a round is provided a courtroom. The bye round procedure allows for the odd team not performing in any given round an alternate way to temporarily have scores for the purposes of power matching. (See Rule 5.9 Effect of Bye Round.)
Bye Team	Due to an uneven number of teams competing in a regional competition, this team is the team without an opponent in a round. This team sits out the indicated round. Due to the “bye” team assignment, the bye team is guaranteed to perform at least once with both sides of the case. This team experiences the bye round procedure for purposes of power matching. (See Rule 5.9 Effect of Bye Round.)
Case	A fictitious fact pattern drafted for the purposes of Mock Trial. The document contains statement of facts, indictment pleadings, stipulations, witness affidavits, jury charges, and exhibits.
Case in Chief	The portion of a trial whereby both the Plaintiff/Prosecution and Defense in the case present their individual evidence.
Circumstantial Evidence	Evidence based on inference and not on personal knowledge or observation.
Civil Case	A case involving disputes involving two or more people, between people and companies, or between people and government agencies; generally about something another person did or failed to do.
Closing Argument	An opportunity to provide a clear and persuasive argument to convince the scoring judges the evidence presented is sufficient to win the case for the side represented. The closing student attorney makes the final plea about what evidence is credible or not and which witnesses should be believed or not. Only facts presented in the trial may be discussed in this phase.
Competing Team Member	A student performing during a particular trial round.
Competitive Team	A team that competes in all assigned rounds at regionals and is eligible to advance to the state competition.
Complaint	The first legal document filed in a legal lawsuit. It includes a statement of the wrong or harm done to the plaintiff by the defendant and a request for a specific remedy from the court. A complaint in a criminal case is a sworn statement regarding the defendant's actions that constitute a crime.
Coordinator	The lead person running the on-site competition for a regional competition and/or state competition.
Criminal Case	A case brought by the government, through a prosecutor, against a person thought to have broken the law. (Criminal law is a broad field of law involving action taken by the state against a person accused of committing a crime.)

Cross-Examination	When a student attorney asks the opposing team's witness a series of questions to show weakness or less believability in the witness' testimony. Questions asked on cross-examination are leading questions and are not limited to the direct examination questioning.
Declarant	The person who made the statement.
Dispute Process	The opportunity provided to teams at the conclusion of the trial to raise a rule violation committed by a team or team member during the competition round.
Direct Evidence	The testimony of a person who asserts or claims to have actual knowledge of a fact, such as an eyewitness.
Direct Examination	When a student attorney asks one of his/her witnesses direct/open-ended questions to allow the witness to tell his/her story through a series of asked questions; questions that evoke facts from a witness.
Discussion Forum	A place to post questions online concerning the content of the Case Materials, the Competition Rules, and the competition. Once registered on line with the discussion forum, it takes up to 48 hours to be approved. Teams are accountable for any changes made to Competition Rules and/or case on the discussion forum. The discussion forum closes within ten business days of a competition.
Evidence	Information presented through testimony or in documents.
Exhibit	A document or other item introduced as evidence during a trial or hearing.
Forfeiting Team	A team that decides to no longer compete in the remainder of the competition. Other than an emergency, a team forfeiting a round is automatically disqualified and ineligible to compete the following school year.
Hearsay	A statement that: (1) the declarant does not make while testifying at the current trial or hearing; and (2) a party offers in evidence to prove the truth of the matter asserted in the statement.
Inadmissible	Cannot be admitted or received as evidence according to the Rules of Evidence.
Impeachment	To bring attention to an inconsistency or an omission in a witness' testimony.
Indictment	A written accusation by a grand jury charging a person with a crime.
Judging Panel	A group of attorney volunteers that make up of the presiding judge and the scoring panel (three scoring judges).

Jury	A group of attorney volunteers that are considered scoring judges.
Jury Charge	A set of directions or guidelines that a judge gives a jury concerning the law of the case.
Material Fact	A fact that cannot be reasonably inferred from the affidavit or exhibits in the Case Materials and that would provide one side a significant legal advantage.
Motion	Oral or written request made by a party to an action.
Non-Competitive Team	A team that chooses to participate in the regional competition for experience only and is not eligible to advance to the state competition.
Non-Forfeiting Team	The team that was assigned to a trial with an opposing team that forfeited.
Objection	A formal statement opposing something that has occurred, or is about to occur, in court and seeking the presiding judge's immediate ruling on the point
Opening Statement	The introduction of the case. It is the first time the student attorneys from each side have an opportunity to say what happened to their client and in the overall case. This opening statement includes foreshadowing what will be proven through witness testimony and the admission of evidence.
Overall Team Performance	A score that is worth up to ten points and takes into account the overall team's civility/incivility, abusive/excessive objections, scripting, delay tactics, usage of exhibits, thematic presentation, and consistency of legal arguments.
Overrule	A ruling made by a presiding judge when the evidence is admissible.
Pleadings	A formal document in which a party to a legal proceeding sets forth or responds to allegations, claims, denials, or defenses.
Power Match	The act of pairing teams together for the next round of competition based on a previous round's results; wins, ballots, points and point spread.
Presiding Judge	The person on the judge's bench who oversees pre-trial matters, the trial process, and post-trial process. The presiding judge makes rulings that are final.
Probative Value	Evidence which is sufficiently useful / important to prove something in a trial.
Random Pairings	When teams are randomly drawn and paired prior to the competition day and are not paired on any criteria.
Rebuttal	The time given to a party to present contradictory evidence or arguments. Only the Prosecution/Plaintiff may offer a rebuttal.

Recess	A break provided before closing arguments allowing competing team members an opportunity to prepare their closing arguments.
Re-Cross-Examination	Questions asked that are limited to the scope of the re-direct examination.
Re-Direct Examination	Questions asked that are limited to the scope of the cross-examination.
Round	A group of trials scheduled to occur at the same time.
Rules of Evidence	Standards governing whether evidence in a civil or criminal case is admissible.
Scope	The extent of the area or subject matter that something deals with or to which it is relevant.
Scoresheet	This term is used in reference to the form on which points are recorded. Scoresheets allow for evaluation up to ten points for each individual's performances as well as overall team performance.
Scoring Judge	A judge who completes a scoresheet, which also may be a presiding judge under Rule 5.2 Composition of Judging Panels; also referred to as members of the jury. All judges are volunteers.
Scoring Panel	Three scoring judges that may be referred to as members of the jury.
Scrimmage	After all the initial trial preparation is done, teams are allowed to arrange independent meetings to practice the trial before the scheduled competitions. Because scrimmages are independently coordinated, scrimmages do not impact any competition pairings.
Seeding	Advancing state teams are power matched for only the first state competition round based on total wins, ballots, points, and point spread earned at their regional competitions.
Sequestration	The removal or separation of a witness from the courtroom. In Mock Trial, sequestration is done fictionally and Mock Trial witnesses remain in the courtroom.
Statement	A person's oral assertion, written assertion, or nonverbal conduct, if the person intended it as an assertion.
Statute	A law passed by the legislative body.
Stipulation	An agreement by attorneys on both sides of a civil or criminal case about some aspect of the case.
Sustain	A ruling made by the presiding judge when the evidence is inadmissible.

Teacher Coach	A teacher who sponsors and promotes Mock Trial, recruits/auditions students, helps students prepare for Mock Trial, works with the attorney coach, facilitates completion of paperwork for the SC Bar and the school/school district, serves as a representative for the school, serves as a school approved chaperone for the students, etc.
Team Member	A student registered to compete serving the role as an attorney, witness, timekeeper, bailiff, and/or as an alternate.
Team	A group of Mock Trial teacher coaches, attorney coaches, and students.
Timekeeper	A student on the team responsible for fairly and accurately keeping and reporting the time during the trial presentation.
Trial	A single competitive match between two teams. A formal examination of evidence before the presiding judge and scoring judges. The trial consists of opening statements from both parties, the Plaintiff's / Prosecution's Case in Chief, the Defense's Case in Chief, and the closing arguments from both parties.
Visitor	An individual attending the competition to view a specific team. Teams have a limited number of visitors allowed in the courtroom. Each visitor is responsible for knowing and following all the Competition Rules that apply to them.
Voir Dire	To challenge the qualifications of an expert witness by addressing questions to the witness, which is not permissible in Mock Trial.
Wild Card Team	The next highest ranking teams based on wins, ballots, points, and point spread from across the state.
Witness	A person who testifies to what he or she saw, heard, or otherwise experienced.