

# Criteria for Scoring a Trial Presentation

The Georgia High School Mock Trial Competition is spread out over a large geographic area, involves three levels of competition, and asks for scoring from several hundred volunteers. It is imperative that as much consistency as possible is achieved when scores are assigned during a trial.

Mock Trial is a subjective exercise when scoring. It is ultimately up to the perception of each individual Scoring Evaluator as to how effective the students and teams are in presenting their side of the case. To achieve consistency in point applied to each portion of the case, the next page show criteria that should be considered by scoring Evaluators during the course of a team's trial presentation. This is meant to be a list of what to expect from each stage of the trial. Students' and teams' proper handling of these items will translate to the score you give each stage. These criteria are taken directly from the Scratch Scoresheet provided to each Judging Panel member during each Round of the competition.

So as to achieve as much consistency from one Round to the next and between competition sites and levels, please adhere to the following pages as much as possible when considering potential scores for the competition. The "Explanation of Performance Ratings" section on the next pages provides more details on each number of the scoring scale and will assist in evaluating student performance and assigning scores.

Evaluators should start each presentation expecting a score of 6 and adjust accordingly from there. In order to show the good from the bad from the great, *there must be a differentiation between scores; everyone cannot get a 9 and 10*. Being a competition, someone has to win and someone has to lose. The scores must reflect what the students did during the trial round accurately to advance the competition properly. The comment sheet may be used to provide additional feedback and context for the scores.

# WHAT TO LOOK FOR WHEN SCORING TEAMS

## ATTORNEYS

Opening Statement	<p>Provided overview on the witnesses and their testimony, evidence, and how it will prove the case</p> <p>Introduced a theme/theory of the case</p> <p>Outlined the burden of proof</p> <p>Requested relief (what the side is asking the court to decide)</p> <p>Non-argumentative</p>
Direct Attorney/ Examination	<p>Asked properly phrased open ended questions that allowed explanation or description of the situation</p> <p>Sequenced questions logically</p> <p>Did not ask questions that required any unfair extrapolations</p> <p>Laid foundation for witness testimony</p> <p>Elicited relevant, important evidence from witnesses</p> <p>Continued with consistent theme/theory of the case</p> <p>Provided proper objections during opposing team's cross-examination</p> <p>Utilized objections to move the case forward and not just to throw the other side off their game</p> <p>Made/defended objections utilizing rules of evidence or the rules of the competition</p> <p>Recovered well after objections</p> <p>Adjusted to judges' rulings</p> <p>Addressed actual testimony</p> <p>Followed proper protocol for handling and introducing exhibits</p> <p>Demonstrated an understanding of the rules of competition and evidence</p> <p>Limited re-direct to scope of cross-examination</p> <p>On re-direct, rehabilitated witnesses</p>
Cross Attorney/ Examination	<p>Continued with consistent theme/theory of the case</p> <p>Provided proper objections during opposing team's direct examination</p> <p>Made/defended to objections utilizing rules of evidence or the rules of the competition</p> <p>Utilized objections to move the case forward and not just to throw the other side off their game</p> <p>Recovered well after objections</p> <p>Adjusted to judges' rulings</p> <p>Addressed actual testimony</p> <p>Elicited facts favorable to the attorney's case</p> <p>Asked properly phrased questions that weakened the testimony given during direct examination</p> <p>Used appropriate leading questions suggesting a "yes/no" answer</p> <p>Attempted to appropriately control the witness consistent with the judges' rulings</p> <p>Properly impeached the witness, if needed, without appearing to harass or intimidate</p> <p>Followed proper protocol for introducing exhibits</p> <p>Demonstrated an understanding of the rules of competition and evidence</p> <p>Limited re-cross-examination to scope of re-direct examination</p>
Closing Arguments	<p>Incorporated what transpired during trial</p> <p>Summarized the evidence with reasoned arguments</p> <p>Outlined the strengths of his/her side's witnesses and the weaknesses of the other side's witnesses</p> <p>Discussed relevant exhibits when appropriate</p> <p>Theme was carried through to closing</p> <p>Refers to jury instructions or other legal standards when necessary</p> <p>Asked for the verdict, including a request for relief, and explained why the verdict was justifiable</p> <p>Effectively answered and rebutted opponent's case</p>

## WITNESSES

Performance	<p>Presented an interesting and authentic character</p> <p>Played up the strengths of his/her statements and adequately explained the weaknesses</p> <p>Understood the facts of the case and the exhibits</p> <p>Provided logical testimony</p> <p>Sounded spontaneous and not memorized</p> <p>Did not give excessively long or non-responsive answers on cross-examination</p> <p>Portrayed a consistent character under cross-examination</p> <p>Maintained factual position under cross-examination</p> <p>Did not offer answers that included any unfair extrapolations</p> <p>Recovered well after objections</p> <p>Remained in character when not on the witness stand</p>
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**\*\*\* Do NOT reward excessive explanations and/or obstructionist behavior meant to waste opposing team's time.**

**\*\*\* Do NOT reward unfair extrapolations.**