

Final Tips for the Big Night.

Court Reporter:

What to Bring: Have copies of your work ready to hand out to people when you are in the courtroom. You will greet people and pass out materials as you welcome them to the trial. You should dress presentably. You will also need some tools to write down information that you are recording, such as a pad of paper and a pencil.

Where to sit/stand: When people arrive, you should be greeting them at the door while you hand out materials. Direct jurors to the jury box. After guests arrive, there should be some desks near the bench and close to the witness stand. It is important to be close to the witness stand because you need to clearly hear the witnesses.

Etiquette: Avoid sitting in areas where the judge, witnesses, juror and attorneys will be seated. Avoid distracting others and drawing attention to yourself. Be attentive to what is being said and take notes on what is being said during the trial.

Bailiff/Clerk:

What to Bring: Bring notes of anything you need to remember such as what to say in the beginning or what you will say to swear in witnesses. You will also make sure that all exhibits are brought to the courtroom and laid out for the attorneys at one of the desks near the witness stand. You should dress presentably. You will also need to keep the verdict slips handy for when the jury deliberates. If you have anything that makes you look like an officer, you may wear that as well.

Where to sit/stand: Sit down at a desk near the witness stand and next to the Court Reporter. When announcing the judge you should stand in the area in front of the two tables where the attorneys are sitting. When a witness is called to the stand, you should walk in front of the stand and have them take an oath. When the jury goes to deliberate, you will guide them to the deliberation room, and you will escort them back in. Ask your teacher what your responsibility will be as the verdict is read aloud.

Etiquette: When you are giving the oath, have them raise their right hand and say, "Do you solemnly swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?" Speak loudly enough for the entire courtroom to hear. Witness should answer with an "I do" or "Yes."

Witness

What to Bring: Bring your notes of what you plan to say when questioned by the attorneys. You may also wish to have a copy of your witness statement. You should dress for the part of the person you are playing or dress presentably for the court room.

Where to sit/stand: You will sit in the seats directly behind the table where your attorneys are sitting. When the attorney calls you to the stand, you will walk up to the witness with your notes and remain standing. The clerk will ask you to take an oath to tell the truth. Then you will be asked to sit. You will remain seated on the witness stand until all attorneys are finished questioning you. Then, you will be dismissed to return to your seat behind the attorneys.

Etiquette: When you are taking the oath, raise your right hand and answer, "I do," to the clerk. Answer each question that is asked of you by the attorneys loudly and clearly. The courtroom, particularly the jury, needs to hear your responses in order to determine a verdict. Stay true to your character and his/her witness statement when you answer. You are not permitted to fabricate, or make up, information.

Judge:

What to Bring: Bring your script of what you will be saying throughout the trial and/or any notes/reminders that you need. For boys, wear a white collared shirt with tie (if you have one), and for girls, wear a white blouse with nice pants or a skirt. If you have a robe (similar to a graduation gown) you may use it.

Where to sit/stand: Before the trial begins, you will stand in the doorway between the courtroom and the hallway that leads to the jury deliberation room. The clerk/bailiff will introduce you to the audience. When you are introduced, you will enter the courtroom and walk across to the judge's bench and be seated. You will remain seated at the judge's bench throughout the duration of the trial. When it is time for the jury to deliberate, you will leave the courtroom the same way you entered until a verdict is determined. You will re-enter the courtroom with the jury once the verdict is obtained and sit down at the judge's bench. The clerk will bring the verdict form to you to review before the clerk reads the verdict to the audience.

Etiquette: The order and flow of the trial is your responsibility. Be polite, but also be direct. You are the leader of the courtroom. Everyone in the courtroom will be looking to you for advice. Listen intently to everyone. If someone objects, consider whether or not it is a valid objection. You may ask an attorney to explain the objection to you if you are not sure whether or not to uphold it. Your goal is not to help anyone win. Your goal is to keep the game fair and keep the trial moving properly. It is up to the lawyers to handle the behaviors of their witnesses (unless they turn to you for help), but it is up to you to keep the lawyers behaving properly.

You will lead us through all parts of the trial, with phrases like the following:

"You may be seated."

"Does the prosecution/defense team wish to make their opening statement?"

"Does the prosecution/defense team wish to call their first witness to the stand?"

"Does the prosecution/defense team wish to call any further witnesses to the stand?"

"Does the prosecution/defense team wish to make a closing argument?"

(If teacher allows for a rebuttal) Does the prosecution team wish to rebuttal?

"Has the jury reached a verdict?"

Ending Court:

Penalties (if guilty): _____ (defendants name) I sentence you to _____ (penalty) for the crime of _____

Ending court: Hit the gavel on the wood block and say "Court dismissed."

Attorneys:

What to Bring: You will want to bring any notes you will need to use for questioning and copies of the witness statements that you will need. Make sure any evidence that you will be using has been brought to trial. You will want to dress as professionally as possible. Lawyers usually wear black suits and white shirts/blouses because it creates a good image for you. You will also want to bring a notebook to take notes while listening to witnesses and opposing attorneys.

Where to sit/stand: You will sit at the table closest to the jury box if you are a prosecution lawyer, and you will sit at the table on the opposite side of the jury box if you are the defense team. When it is your turn to speak, you will mostly want to stand in the area between the jury box, witness stand, and prosecution table.

Etiquette:

Addressing the judge: Be polite (Yes, Your Honor. Thank you, Your Honor, May I please...,Your Honor?)

Things you may need to say to the judge:

“Your Honor, we would like to call...to the stand.”

“Your Honor may I please approach the bench?” (When you want to hand the witness a piece of evidence)

“I have no further questions, Your Honor.”

“The defense/prosecution rests, Your Honor.”

“Objection, Your honor...(explain).”

Addressing the witness: Be in control, but make sure you don't come across as a bully. Look at the witness when you speak to them. If a direct witness is not giving you what you are looking for, be careful not to lead the witness. If a cross examination witness is giving you a difficult time, use things to refresh their memories such as rewording a question, showing evidence, or using testimonies. Avoid getting upset. Use transitions with your witness, such as, “Let's talk about the scene of the accident.” Address them by Mr. or Ms. unless they ask to be addressed by their first name.

Addressing the jury: Remember that the jury are the most important people at the trial. The outcome is in their hands. You must make things clear to the jury and explain things carefully since it is the first time they are hearing about any of the laws or facts of the case. Also, try not to speak in terms that they cannot understand. Bring technical terms to their level of knowledge. Make sure to look at each and every member of the jury as you give your openings and closings. Involve them with movement towards them as well.

