



# Wyoming High School Mock Trial

## Criteria for Scoring a Trial Round

The following criteria should be considered while scoring mock trial rounds. Consider “5” the average point award. All points assessed in a trial round are subjective and should be awarded independent of consultation among judging panel members.

### Opening Statement

- Provides a case overview
- Describes case theme and theory
- Mentions witnesses and their testimony
- Offers a clear and concise description of their team’s side of the case
- States the relief requested
- Discusses the burden of proof
- Presents a statement, rather than an argument
- Uses notes minimally or not at all
- Stays within time limit (points are deducted if opening exceeds time limit)

### Direct Examination

- Asks non-leading questions
- Observes proper courtroom procedure
- Shows understanding of facts, issues and law
- Uses case theme and theory appropriately and effectively
- Handles/uses objections appropriately and effectively
- Asks questions that did not call for an unfair extrapolation
- Shows understanding of the Modified Federal Rules of Evidence
- Handles physical evidence appropriately and effectively (if applicable – Rule 4.20)

### Cross Examination

- Properly phrases questions – leading
- Effective questioning
- Properly impeaches witness
- Handles objections appropriately and effectively
- Asks questions that did not call for an unfair extrapolation
- Shows understanding of the Modified Federal Rules of Evidence
- Handles physical evidence appropriately and effectively (if applicable – Rule 4.20)



### **Witness Performance**

- Has no notes
- Portrays character credibly
- Shows understanding of the fact of the case
- Sounds spontaneous, not memorized
- Is poised; observes appropriate courtroom decorum
- Avoids unnecessarily long and/or non-responsive answers on cross examination
- Does not extrapolate unfairly (points deducted for unfair extrapolation)

### **Closing Argument**

- Continues theme and theory in closing argument
- Summarizes the evidence
- Emphasizes points that supported
- Emphasizes points that damaged opponent's case
- Concentrates on the important, not the trivial
- Uses applicable law
- Discusses burden of proof
- Presents argument persuasively
- Responds to any questions from the judge with poise
- Shows minimal reliance on notes during closing argument
- Stays within time limit (points deducted if closing argument exceeds time limit)