



## Middle School Mock Trial FAQ

### What is mock trial?

Mock Trial is a program for middle school students that teaches the judicial branch of government and the legal system. Students learn to present arguments for both the prosecution and defense while acting as attorneys and witnesses

### What are the benefits of Mock Trial?

New Mexico Mock Trial, a longstanding tradition, has operated for more than 25 years. New Mexico at the high school level. The middle school program began in 2022. This program offers students valuable academic experience, enhancing their speaking, writing, reading, and analytical skills through immersion in the judicial system. Participants take on roles as attorneys and witnesses in simulated legal cases. The Center for Civic Values is dedicated to educating future leaders by deepening their understanding of the legal system.

#### 1. Critical Thinking and Problem Solving:

One of the most significant benefits of middle school mock trial is its ability to foster critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Students must analyze case materials, consider different legal perspectives, and come up with sound arguments to support their positions. This requires them to think on their feet and approach problems from various angles, skills that will serve them well not only in the courtroom but in every aspect of their lives.

#### 2. Teamwork and Collaboration:

Another key element of mock trial is teamwork. A trial isn't won by just one person; it takes a collaborative effort. Students work together in teams, learning to delegate responsibilities, support each other, and build strategies as a group. These are essential life skills that will help them in future academic settings, careers, and social environments.

#### 3. Confidence and Public Speaking:

Mock trial also helps students develop confidence and public speaking skills. Whether acting as a lawyer making a compelling argument or a witness providing



testimony, students must speak clearly, persuasively, and with conviction. Over time, they gain self-assurance in their ability to express themselves, and this confidence extends beyond the courtroom into school presentations, interviews, and other public settings.

#### 4. Legal Knowledge and Civic Engagement:

While mock trial is an exciting, hands-on experience, it also provides students with a deep understanding of the legal system and its role in society. They learn about legal procedures, courtroom etiquette, and the importance of justice. By engaging in these simulations, students become more informed citizens who understand their rights and responsibilities, preparing them for active participation in civic life.

#### 5. Leadership and Responsibility:

Mock trial encourages leadership. Whether they're leading a team as the head attorney or organizing case strategies, students take on important roles that require them to step up, make decisions, and take responsibility. These experiences help them become more capable leaders and role models among their peers.

### **Who participates in Mock Trial?**

Over 150 middle school students compete each year (and it's growing!). Each team consists of five to twelve students. This consists of two attorneys and two witnesses per side and a timekeeper. The teams can also have one courtroom artist and one courtroom journalist. There are three trials in one day for every team.

### **I want to start a mock trial team at my school. What do I do?**

Great to hear! If you're a student, you should talk to a teacher or administrator at your school to get them on board. If you're a legal advisor, you should contact your local school to see how you can help them with the program. If you're a teacher, you'll need to gather a group of students interested in mock trial. Once you have your group, start working on trial basics, organizing your case theme, and preparing for the competition. The Center for Civic Values will be here to support you and assist as needed.

### **What kind of cases will the students argue, draw and write about?**

The case or problem differs each year, but it will be either a criminal or civil case. The case will be posted online at [www.civicvalues.org](http://www.civicvalues.org) on September 1 of each year.



### **How do I get the case?**

The case will be released on the middle school mock trial page of Center for Civic Values website on September 1. This is a free download.

### **How do I register to participate in mock trial?**

Registration forms are posted on the Center for Civic Values website in. Each team will also register. You may have a maximum of three teams from each school.