



## New Jersey State Bar Foundation STUDENT COURTROOM ARTIST CONTEST RULES

### Requirements

- Teachers must submit the Courtroom Artist Competition Form to register student artist participants. **This must be completed by October 29.**
- All participants (and teachers) must sign the Mock Trial Courtroom Artist Competition [Code of Conduct](#) to participate in the competition. **This must be submitted by December 2.**
- Art submitted must have been solely completed by the student competitor and may not be edited/alterd by other sources.
- The student artist may play the role of an attorney, witness, or timekeeper, but **not** in the same trial. For example, if the student is an attorney/witness/timekeeper in trial A, the student cannot double as an artist in that trial. However, the student may serve as an artist in trial B, in which they are not assuming any other role.
- The student artist is subject to all mock trial rules, restrictions, and eligibility requirements.
- All submissions become the property of the New Jersey State Bar Foundation and may be used for any purpose it deems appropriate, including, but not limited to, reproduction and dissemination by any means and through any channels, whether print, digital, social media, or other media, including the internet.
- The New Jersey State Bar Foundation grants permission to the artist to publish, disseminate or share the artwork after the entire State competition is completed. No artwork should be published, disseminated, or shared before that time. No financial compensation will be awarded.

### Contest Procedures

- The courtroom artist contest drawings/sketches will be produced during the county competitions in January and/or February.
- Student artists will be assigned to a mock trial team to observe. This may be the mock trial team from the student artists' high school or another school in their county if their school does not participate in the NJSBF Mock Trial Competition.
- Each artist will compete solely on their own efforts and will NOT be considered as part of their assigned mock trial team in terms of advancing or not advancing in the competition.
- The drawing/sketch must depict an actual courtroom scene that is observed during the trial.
- The courtroom artist will sit toward the front of the courtroom, in the jury box or off to the side of the jury.
- The courtroom artist is responsible for ensuring their work area is left neat and orderly with all trash disposed of in the appropriate trash receptacle.
- Once the trial begins, courtroom artists may NOT move about the courtroom.

- Artists must not communicate, either verbally or non-verbally, with any member of the mock trial teams or any visitors in the courtroom during the trial rounds.
- All drawings for the competition must be submitted to the teacher within 24 hours of the completed (observed) trial.
- The teacher will complete the submission form and attach an image (jpg preferred) of the drawing(s) using the “Courtroom Artist Submission Entry” form found [here](#).
- The submission form and images **MUST** be submitted within 24 hours of the completed trial. ***Drawings received after this deadline will be disqualified.***
- Each student artist may submit up to 3 (three) drawings.

### Drawing Parameters

- Student artists must supply their own materials. A clipboard of hardbacked sketch pad is recommended.
- It is advisable to put one to three key players in the drawing. *See the **Judging Components** and **Suggestions** sections for more information.*
- The drawing must be on white paper of the dimensions 11” X 14”.
- The courtroom art drawing/sketch may be done in color or in black and white.
- The drawing may be done in any of the following mediums: color pencil, pen and ink, pastel, marker. Watercolors and paint are not recommended.
- The use of laptops, other devices or AI are not permitted.

### Judging Components

- Drawings/sketches are evaluated and scored by a team of judges. Scoring areas include:
  - **Overall Composition and Authenticity:** The drawing should depict a scene in the courtroom with one to three players.
  - **Likeness and Proportion:** The drawing should look like the people in the court. Observe facial features, body language, etc.
  - **Animation of Figures/Gestures:** Subjects should be in motion, pointing, gesturing, speaking. Tell the story with the drawing.
  - **Details:** Important but should not be overdone. Use court items (e.g., flag, podium) to tie to the court setting but don’t over focus. The key players are most important.
- The winners will be contacted and announced prior to the State Mock Trial Finals in March.
- Student artists and their guests will be invited to attend the State Finals, where they will receive awards and will have an opportunity to sketch the final championship round.
- The first-place winner will be invited to travel with the State Mock Trial champions to represent New Jersey in the Courtroom Artist Contest at the National Mock Trial Championship in May.
- NJSBF will provide funding for the student and an adult chaperone to attend.

## Suggestions

- Student artists are encouraged to review the trial case and obtain a copy of the list of witnesses and exhibits from the case materials in the NJSBF's Mock Trial Workbook. This can be downloaded from [mocktrial.njsbf.org](http://mocktrial.njsbf.org).
- Anticipate courtroom layout and procedures. Gain some understanding of how courtrooms operate, including typical seating arrangements for prosecution/plaintiff and defense.
- Let the viewer know that this is a courtroom. Include items that convey the setting.
- Compose a scene with two or three elements...for example:
  - Judge and witness
  - Witness and lawyer
  - Attorney at the podium with client
  - Attorney at the table with client
  - Tight shot of witness with jury and background
- Student artists should look for the most newsworthy action that occurred in the courtroom.
  - Perhaps there is an "ah-ha" moment, an intriguing witness, a shocking development with which to capture the emotion of the trial.
  - The artist must remember that this is true reporting and must be the "eyes of the court."

## Legal Terms Glossary

*This is purely informational to help the artist understand what is going on during the trial.*

*Primary source: United States Department of Justice*

**acquittal** - Judgment that a criminal defendant has not been proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

**affidavit** - A written statement of facts confirmed by the oath of the party making it. Affidavits must be notarized or administered by an officer of the court with such authority.

**allegation** - Something that someone says happened.

**beyond a reasonable doubt** - Standard required to convict a criminal defendant of a crime. The prosecution must prove guilt so that there is no reasonable doubt to the jury that the defendant is guilty.

**charge to the jury** - The judge's instructions to the jury concerning the law that applies to the facts of the case on trial.

**closing arguments to the jury** - Closing argument is the lawyers' final opportunity in a trial to tell the jury why they should win the case. They do so by explaining how the evidence supports their theory of the case, and by clarifying for the jury any issues that they must resolve to render a verdict. Closing arguments take place after all the evidence has been presented and both sides have rested their cases.

**court** - Government entity authorized to resolve legal disputes. Judges sometimes use "court" to refer to themselves in the third person, as in "the court has read the briefs."

**cross-examine** - Questioning of a witness by the attorney for the other side.

**defendant** - In a civil suit, the person complained against; in a criminal case, the person accused of the crime.

**direct examination** - The prosecutor(s) or plaintiff's attorney(s) question each of their own witnesses.

**evidence** - Information presented in testimony or in documents that is used to persuade the fact finder (judge or jury) to decide the case for one side or the other.

**exhibit** - Physical evidence or documents that are presented in a court proceeding, such as contracts and photographs.

**hearsay** - Statements by a witness who did not see or hear the incident in question but learned about it through secondhand information such as another's statement, a newspaper, or a document. Hearsay is usually not admissible as evidence in court, but there are many exceptions to that rule.

**impeachment** - The process of calling something into question, as in "impeaching the testimony of a witness."

**indictment** - The formal charge issued by a grand jury stating that there is enough evidence that the defendant committed the crime to justify having a trial; it is used primarily for felonies.

**judge** - Government official with authority to decide lawsuits brought before courts. Judicial officers of the Supreme Court and the highest court in each state are called justices.

**juror** - A person who is on the jury.

**jury** - Persons selected according to law and sworn to inquire into and declare a verdict on matters of fact. There are distinct kinds of juries, such as a petit (traditional trial) or grand (which determines if a criminal indictment should be issued).

**lawsuit** - A legal action started by a plaintiff against a defendant based on a complaint that the defendant failed to perform a legal duty, resulting in harm to the plaintiff.

**litigation** - A case, controversy, or lawsuit. Plaintiffs and defendants in lawsuits are called litigants.

**oath** - A promise to tell the truth.

**objection** - A protest by an attorney, challenging a statement or question made at trial. Common objections include an attorney “leading the witness” or a witness making a statement that is hearsay. Once an objection is made, the judge must decide whether to allow the question or statement. (See definitions of overrule and sustain below.)

**opening statements to the jury** - The prosecutor in a criminal case (or plaintiff’s attorney in a civil case) summarizes the evidence which will be presented to prove the case. The defendant’s attorney in a criminal or civil case summarizes the evidence which will be presented to rebut the case the prosecutor or plaintiff’s attorney has made.

**overrule** - The judge rejects an attorney’s objection to a question to a witness or admission of evidence. By overruling the objection, the judge allows the question or evidence.

**plaintiff** - The person who files a complaint in a civil lawsuit.

**preponderance of the evidence** - Standard of proof in a civil case that requires the party with the burden of proof to show that it is more likely than not that their version of events is true.

**prosecute** - To charge someone with a crime. A prosecutor tries a criminal case on behalf of the government.

**statute** - A law passed by a Legislature.

**sustain** - If the judge agrees with the attorney’s objection, the judge sustains the objection and does **not** allow the question or evidence.

**testify** - Answer questions in court.

**testimony** - Evidence presented orally by witnesses during trials or before grand juries.

**trial** - There are two types of trials for the purposes of the Mock Trial Competition: (1) civil case – consists of a disagreement between two or more people or businesses; and (2) criminal case – involves a person who has been accused of committing either a misdemeanor or a felony offense.

**verdict** - The decision of a petit jury or a judge.

**witness** - A person called upon by either side in a lawsuit to give testimony before the court or jury.

*For more information on trial procedures, rules of procedure and rules of evidence, see Parts IV-VI in NJSBF’s High School Mock Trial Workbook which can be downloaded from [mocktrial.njsbf.org](http://mocktrial.njsbf.org).*