



MSBA High School Mock Trial Program Information

Mock Trial teams are made up of 8-14 students. (The average team has 10) The case materials will be released online in late October. Each year, we host an online training session for teams and coaches. At this training, we give general guidelines to help teams start to prepare their arguments and also some more case-specific prep information. Materials made in conjunction with this training are later placed online for teams to utilize along with the link to view the training video at your convenience. We also offer a Q & A session for new coaches in November and a Timekeeper Training in December to help prepare them for the competitions.

What's the timeline of the program?

From late October until early January, teams work to prepare their arguments for the competition before the competition starts. Schools may also host invitational tournaments to gain extra practice. Participation in invitational tournaments is entirely voluntary and has no bearing on the competition. Each team is guaranteed four trials in the tournament. Trials in greater Minnesota are typically held during the regular business day. Trials in the metropolitan area are held during the evening hours. After four rounds of competition, the field of teams is reduced based on power matching criteria and the remaining teams compete in a single-elimination round, in hopes of becoming Regional Champions and representing their region at the State Mock Trial Tournament. The winner of the State Tournament represents Minnesota at the National High School Mock Trial Championship (May 2025).

How do I get started?

After securing support and funding from your school district, the next hurdle is getting the students to commit to being on the team. Mock trial is truly a team sport. The participation and dedication of ALL team members is absolutely essential. Students who are committed to the team find the experience very valuable. Along with the unique inside look at the legal system, mock trials help students hone these skills: precise, quick analytical thinking; teamwork; reasoning and listening; public speaking.

Where can more information be found?

Our website is really the main hub of information for teams that are interested and who are already participating in the competition. The website has additional information about all things mock trial. You might be certain to look under the "Resources" link. Four documents would be particularly useful to a newcomer. (They're the teacher coach, attorney coach and the two student participant documents.) These documents should give you a better grasp of what exactly is involved and help your students decide if they are interested in participating. There is also an ABA publication there: "Putting on Mock Trials" which might give your students a little more information about the mock trial process.

If you have any specific questions, please feel free to contact Kim Basting, Mock Trial Director at kbasting@mnbars.org or (612) 278-6306. If you're interested in talking with a more experienced coach about starting a program, we'd be happy to put you in touch with someone.