

Lesson 8
How do I prepare for a mock argument?

Lesson Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Identify the strengths and weaknesses in their party's main arguments
- Prepare arguments with textual support from the fictional depositions and the supporting Supreme Court opinions
- Anticipate and respond to questions addressing weaknesses in each party's arguments

Materials

- Handout 19: Mock argument role assignments
- Handout 20A: Prep for introduction
- Handout 20B: Prep for argument
- Handout 20C: Prep for conclusion
- Handout 20D: Prep for judges

Lesson Assessments

- Mock argument preparation handouts

Instructional Activities

Anticipatory Set

- Instruct students to retrieve **Handout 7: Fact and Argument Organizer**, from Lesson 3.
- With a partner, students should review the handout and decide which argument seems to be the strongest and the weakest for the Plaintiff, and which argument seems to be the strongest and the weakest for the Defendant.
- After students have had a chance to discuss for 5 minutes, call on some volunteers to share their answers with the class and defend their reasoning.

Guided Practice

- Break students into teams. Half the class should be Plaintiffs, half the class should be Defendants, and several students should be judges.
- Distribute **Handout 19: Mock argument role assignments**. Read through the order of proceedings.

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- Note that this handout creates roles for 20 students. If there are more students in your class, you may have students present the arguments, introductions, and conclusions in pairs instead of individually. For the Plaintiff's arguments, one student could present the 2 minute argument and another student could present the 1 minute rebuttal. For Defendant's arguments, the pair could split their time speaking.
- This handout creates a sequence of events that adds up to 44 minutes. You may choose to lengthen or shorten the timing of each argument to fit the needs of your class.
- Assign the roles and fill in students' names in the chart on **Handout 19: Mock argument role assignments**.
- Now students will have time to prepare their introductions, conclusions, arguments, or questions (if they are judges.) Distribute the appropriate preparation worksheets to each student according to his or her role.
 - Students delivering the introduction get **Handout 20A: Prep for introduction**
 - Students making an argument get **Handout 20B: Prep for argument**
 - Students delivering the conclusion get **Handout 20C: Prep for conclusion**
 - Students acting as judges get **Handout 20D: Prep for judges**
- Instruct students to work through the questions on their handouts. These questions will help them organize and prepare their piece of the argument. They may complete the questions individually or with a partner on their team (Plaintiff or Defendant).
- While students are answering questions and preparing their arguments, circulate the room to answer questions and help any students who may be stuck.

Independent Practice / Homework

- Once students have finished filling out their preparation handout, they will choose another student from their team (Plaintiff or Defendant) and practice structuring and delivering their piece of the oral argument out loud. The partner should ask questions and provide feedback, and then switch. Students should complete this process with two different partners, and have each partner sign the bottom of their preparation handout in the designated space.

Closure

- Instruct students to practice their arguments, introductions, or conclusions at home so that they are prepared to deliver them tomorrow in class.