



Dear Potential Mock Trial Participant:

It's that time of year again! Thousands of students each year participate in the annual Texas High School Mock Trial Competition. This is highly motivating, energetic, and challenging academic competition gives students the opportunity to gain an "insider's view" of our judicial system and have a lot of fun at the same time. We know that due to COVID-19 your endeavor to start a team may be especially daunting. Please know that we are here to help you! And that mock trial competition will be taking place whether in person or virtually!

The competition begins at the regional level with trials held between January and February 2021. Regional winners will then advance to the state competition held March 5 - March 6, 2021 in Dallas, TX. The State of Texas champion will then move on to the National Mock Trial Competition held in Evansville, Indiana on May 13-15, 2021.

In the event you are unfamiliar with this program, the Texas High School Mock Trial Competition is conducted outside of the academic day, but may be a part of any class, club, or school project. Teams are composed of 6-10 students who portray the roles of attorneys, witnesses, and a team timekeeper. In addition, a teacher-coach helps provide leadership to each team. Teacher-coaches will be provided with competition materials (i.e. a case packet) that contain all of the rules, procedures, and the case problem. Teams should seek the assistance of a volunteer attorney to help with courtroom decorum and trial skills. Each team will bear its own expense to all competitions.

The statewide program, made possible in part by grants from the Dallas Bar Foundation, offers various awards and recognition for all state finalists, including \$8,500 in scholarship awards to be divided among the top four winning teams.

Former participants agree that the benefits of preparation and participation are well worth the time and effort spent in preparation. Educators, attorneys, and judges have been very impressed with the high caliber of the program, the students involved, and their sponsors.

Broad guidelines and a registration for the competition is available online at: <http://www.texashighschoolmocktrial.com/>. It's easy to register! The registration fee is \$175.00. Once payment has been received, the competition materials (i.e. case packet) will be sent to the team coach by email. Deadline is DECEMBER 15, 2020.

For more information about the competition, please refer to the Texas High School Mock Trial website: <http://www.texashighschoolmocktrial.com/>

Sincerely,
Melissa Garcia, State Coordinator
Texas High School Mock Trial Competition



Registration Procedures for Teams

- Teams are required to complete their registration online and submit the state registration fee of \$175.00. The link to register can be found at www.texashighschoolmocktrial.com. We accept credit cards and checks made payable to: **DALLAS BAR ASSOCIATION-COMMUNITY SERVICE FUND. District checks and money orders are accepted when submitted along with the registration form, no Purchase Orders please.** Only those schools that are registered and have paid fee(s) will be eligible to both participate in the regional competition and have the chance to advance to state.

- Registration forms can be returned to the state office by the following:

Email: mgarcia@dallasbar.org (acceptable for Credit Card payment (PDF or Word only))

Fax: 214-220-7465 (acceptable for Credit Card payment)

Mail: Texas High School Mock Trial Competition, 2101 Ross Avenue, Dallas, Texas 75201 (acceptable for Credit Card or Check payments—POs are not accepted)

We will notify the team coach of the registration/payment receipt and processing at the time when the Case Packet materials are sent in early October. Please be patient as we receive a lot of registrations at once.

NOTE: Registration fees are non-refundable.

- The competition case will be made available on our website on October 1st. All teams will be able to able to download it, print, and read it. You do not have to registered to access the case.
- A list of registered teams will be sent to their regional coordinator on a regular basis. The regional coordinator will contact the schools separately with information pertaining to the regional competition dates and any additional fees they may require. **Regional fees**, if any, may be assessed at the discretion of each region/host organization; and such fees, if imposed, will be collected directly by the region prior to competition. **Regional coordinators are requested to notify the teams as soon as possible of any deadlines and additional requirements.**
- The Texas High School Mock Trial Competition case packet is under copyright law. Permission to copy is given for the use of the team only; therefore, no registered school may make a copy of the case packet for any other purpose than to distribute to team members and attorney advisors only.



TIMELINE 2020-2021

SEPTEMBER 2020	Regional coordinators inform local districts about mock trial program and dates; enlist teams; and solicit local bar support; Teams can begin to register at: http://www.texashighschoolmocktrial.com/
OCTOBER 1, 2020	State office will post online the case packet for teams – packets available for download at: http://www.texashighschoolmocktrial.com/materials/ .
OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2020	Mock Trial Clinics offered by the regional coordinators will notify registered teachers and teams. The state office will offer a virtual mock trial clinic on Saturday, November 14, 2020. Free for all to participate.
DECEMBER 15, 2020	Final Deadline to register for the 2021 competition season.
MID-JANUARY – MID_FEBRUARY. 2021	Regional competitions are held during this time period.
FEBRUARY 12, 2021	Deadline to submit winning teams/member names from regional competitions to the state office.
MARCH 5 – 6, 2021	State Tournament (Dallas, TX) – includes: registration/check-in 3:00-7:00 p.m. (Thurs., March 4th).
MAY 13 - 15, 2021	National High School Mock Trial Championship, Evansville, ID (teams will want to plan to arrive by May 11 th or 12 th).

DATE CONFLICTS: All participants are cautioned to **check all dates** of other activities (U.I.L. events, test dates, etc.) to avoid withdrawing from the competition or losing team members close to the tournament date.

PLEASE NOTE: Dates for State and National Championships are non-negotiable.



Guidelines/Helpful Information for Teams

1. Teams consist of 6-10 high school students--from any grade; all team members must be enrolled in the same school or homeschool area.
2. Team members must meet T.E.A. requirements for eligibility for participation in extracurricular activities.
3. Teams will first compete at the regional competition level based on the T.E.A. Education Service Center regions (Regions 1-20); regional coordinators will be responsible for informing registered teams about the date, location and any additional fees in competing at the regional level. Teams can figure out what region they are in by going to the "District Locator" tab on the Texas Education Agency's website--
<http://www.tea.state.tx.us>
4. The fact situation, rules, and informational materials (i.e. the "case packet") developed by the Texas High School Mock Trial Program will be used throughout the state and at each level of the competition.
5. Teams interested in participating in the program will need to complete a registration form online and submit the required fee in order to participate (and receive a copy of the case packet materials). Teams register at: <http://www.texashighschoolmocktrial.com/>
6. Teams are encouraged to enlist assistance from an attorney in preparing for the mock trial process.
7. New teams might be interested in purchasing additional helpful materials in preparation for competition – New Sponsor Handbooks, DVDs of past competitions, prior case packets, etc. Check out the '[Materials](#)' page of our website and our [YouTube page](#) for additional resources.
8. Attorneys and judges will be responsible for judging teams in the competition.
9. All case materials and criteria for judging are included in the case packet materials.
10. At the state level tournament, if the number of qualifying teams equals an uneven number, the state coordinator will draw one wild card team (from all regions that have more than two teams competing) and that wild card team will be notified and have the opportunity to advance to state.
11. Opposing school teams will be randomly paired in the first round of the competition then go to the power match system after. *Anyone wanting to learn more about the power match system should inquire with the State Coordinator.*
12. The state championship team will advance to the National High School Mock Trial Championship in May.



Summary of Rules of Competition

The following summarizes selected Rules of the Competition and procedures:

1. **Team Composition:** Each school may enter one team in its regional competition to qualify to advance to the State Finals. Teams consist of a minimum of six and a maximum of ten members. No alternates are allowed. Roles team members present in each trial are at the discretion of the team advisors.
2. **The Problem:** The mock trial problem material contains stipulations, relevant documents and six (three per side) witness statements. A witness is required to testify only to that information contained in his/her witness statement and is not permitted to testify to facts or conclusions which are inconsistent with or cannot be reasonably inferred by his/her own statement.
3. **Trial Presentation:** All trials are governed by the Rules of the Competition and the Texas High School Mock Trial Rules of Evidence only. Teams must prepare to present both sides of the case.

There are eight (8) attorney tasks to be divided evenly among the team's three attorneys. The eight tasks are opening statement (1); direct examination of own witnesses (2), (3), (4); cross-examination of opponent's witnesses (5), (6), (7); and, the closing argument (8). Thus, one attorney presents the opening statement and conducts one direct examination and one cross-examination. Another attorney conducts one direct examination, one cross-examination and presents the closing argument. **One attorney conducts one direct examination and one cross-examination only.** Attorneys are limited to calling their own witnesses and may not re-call any witness; objections during examination should be made by the attorney responsible for that witness; e.g., the attorney who handled direct examination of the witness is to be the attorney who makes objections during the cross-examination; the attorney who will cross examine the witness may object during direct examination.

Attorneys will stand during opening and closing statements and have the option to either stand or be seated at the counsel table during witness examination. Attorneys will stand when making and responding to objections. Team attorneys may ask the judge for permission to approach the bench or witness at appropriate times during the trial. Attorneys may use notes in presenting their cases (witnesses **may not** use notes while on the witness stand).

Attorneys may cite only the materials contained in the case packet, and they may introduce into evidence **only** those documents given in the packet. In addition, students may not use, even for demonstrative purposes, any materials which are not provided in the competition packet. Neither props, costumes nor enlargements are permitted. During the trial, coaches and all other observers may not talk to, signal, or otherwise communicate with or coach their teams. This includes breaks, if any should occur, in the trial.

4. **Time Limits:** Each trial requires approximately 110 minutes to present the case. Trial sequence is in blocks of time with teams having the discretion of how much time will be used for each witness, etc. The blocks of time listed in the case packet are the maximum times allowed per segment. Times not used in one segment may not be applied to any other segment. **One of the official team members is to serve as timekeeper.**
5. **Judging:** Judges may announce a "hypothetical" verdict on the merits of the case; however, it is the **presentation decision** that determines the winner of the trial. The judges' decision is final.

For a complete listing of the Rules of the Competition and the Federal Rules of Evidence (Mock Trial Version), please refer to the official case packet of the Texas High School Mock Trial Competition.