



# SMU MOCK TRIAL 2023 TRYOUT PACKET

## ***READ THIS:***

First things first, please know that Mock Trial is truly an invaluable experience. It will give you lifelong friends, some incredibly useful skills and knowledge, and the ability to travel all around the country. We are so excited you are trying out and can't wait to meet you!

## **How to try out:**

*Step 1: Sign up for a tryout using the google sheet*

*Step 2: Fill out the google form questionnaire.*

*Step 3: Prepare your witness.*

*Step 4: Prepare a 1-2 minute speech (if you want to be considered for an attorney role).*

*Step 5: Tryout!*

## **Step 1: Sign up!**

Tryouts will be August 30th, August 31st, and September 1st. Each tryout will be approximately 10 minutes. A link to the sign-up sheet will be posted on our website ([smumocktrial.com](http://smumocktrial.com)). If you are unable to attend during any of the times listed on the sign-up sheet, please contact Anuj Trivedi at (510)-610-7607

## **Step 2: Fill out the online questionnaire.**

Please complete the online questionnaire so we can get to know you a little better:

<https://forms.gle/rQVTBQia8p3Fjyt6>

This helps us understand you better prior to walking in the tryout room and gives us more information as to how you'll help our team.

### Step 3: Prepare your witness.

Everyone who tries out must prepare a witness. Individuals who choose to tryout as just a witness must prepare ONE of the witnesses listed below. To try out as an attorney, you must prepare both of the following: (1) EITHER a witness named **Cyprus Cosmos** or one named **Emory Sands** and (2) a 1-2 minute speech (details below).

Once again, to try out as just a witness, you'll need to prepare ONE of the witnesses. Details on preparing a witness are included below.

For the witness portion of the tryout, a current SMU member or coach will be the attorney asking you questions as part of a direct examination. You should feel comfortable answering simple, informational questions, creating a response from scratch based on the document we have provided on our website for the witness of your choice ([smumocktrial.com](http://smumocktrial.com)).

For those trying out as only witnesses, you **must know the facts in your affidavit** and be able to include those in question responses during the direct examination. **For attorney tryouts, you may have the script with you. While you are allowed to use a script here, note that evaluations are partially based on how much you rely on and use notes.**

When preparing your witness, BE CREATIVE! Details and tips on that are included later.

### Step 4: Prepare a short speech (for attorney tryouts only).

If you want to be considered as an attorney, you'll also need to prepare a 1-2 minute persuasive speech.

**We would like you to deliver a closing argument for the trial of the murder of Peruna the Pony at an SMU Football Game. Your argument should answer the following questions: How was Peruna killed? Who did it? Why? How can we be sure it was them? Be creative and create an argument for why a certain party is responsible for Peruna's death. Feel free to make up facts, witness testimony, or evidence supporting your stance. Have fun with this and be creative!**

### **THERE ARE NO WRONG ANSWERS**

**\*THIS MUST BE MEMORIZED\***

We aren't grading you on the substance of the speech but your public speaking skills and ability to deliver a compelling argument. Don't worry about the law or the format of your speech, other than the loose guidelines we've provided above.

## Step 5: Come try out!

- Please fill out the tryout sheet for your time slot. This year's tryouts will be held in Florence Hall. This is behind Dallas Hall and to the left (if you're facing Dallas Hall). Feel free to text or call our VP of Membership Anuj Trivedi at (510) 610-7607 if you're having any trouble with this.
- Dress to impress! We want to see you in action, and it helps if you look the part. Wear business professional (a suit if you have one, or perhaps a nice shirt/blouse to appear professional) or business casual if you didn't bring those clothes to school. Please ask questions if you are unsure.
- Be prepared to be recorded during the tryout. Nobody will ever see this but our exec team. It helps us take a look back at candidates to reassess their tryout.
- Finally, be ready to be challenged on your answers. There will be a short interview portion in the tryout where we ask a few simple questions about your background, major, reason for joining, etc.... Be prepared to be challenged. Mock Trial is competitive and we love people who can hold their own.

***We will let you know about the results on September 5th! Good luck!***

## Case Summary and Instructions for Witness Tryouts

***I yelled out, "hey, what are you two doing? This is a private event! Show me your invitations!" It was at that point that I noticed that the security guards were strangely absent from the Entryway. Cameron and the other person in the ski mask looked at each other. They didn't speak but Cameron gestured Cameron's head towards me twice and then Cameron raised their shoulders like it was a question. The person in the ski mask nodded and started to reach for their back pants pocket.***

***During the annual charity gala for Sohi Children's Hospital, four masked individuals break into the vault at Miller Tower. During the heist, one of the armed robbers and Emory Sands, a Miller Tower security officer, are severely wounded. Two of the robbers flee via a helicopter on the rooftop and two flee into the streets of Santa Ivo City. After an extensive investigation on the local and federal level, Poe Cameron is arrested as one of the four suspected armed robbers, and local billionaire Berkley De la Porta is arrested for funding the criminal operation.***

***Remember, when preparing these witnesses, read the affidavit closely. Your answers should not mirror it word for word, especially for the open-ended questions without pre-scripted responses.***

# How to Be a Great Witness

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## ***Be interesting!***

No one likes to listen to someone who is boring. Think of a backstory for your witness and incorporate that into your portrayal. What kind of personality does this witness have? How old is the witness? Does the witness have any experiences that probably shaped their personality and/or their view of what happened? Does the witness have any accents? You only get one chance at a first impression! Capture the audience's attention.

## ***Be likable!***

Judges are more likely to score you well if they like you and find your testimony engaging. Think about a personality that people will pay attention to. Do you need to be high energy? Do you need to be sympathetic? Think about whether it's appropriate to smile at some portions and consider the importance of eye contact. Remember – don't talk too fast and don't mutter. Judges don't like folks they can't understand.

## ***Be believable!***

At the end of the day, this is a "mock" exercise but our job is to forget that for a short while and make the judges forget that as well. Don't go over the top with your portrayals, as it will make it that much more difficult to suspend disbelief. And remember, as a witness, your number one priority is credibility. The more fake your personality seems, the easier it becomes to discredit you. So think carefully about being as "real" as possible while still keeping things interesting.

***If you need help, reference this video of a Mock Trial round at the national tournament!***

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k01uLfAkaTI>

