

**Fairfax Collegiate  
2026 Summer Program  
Mock Trial Course Syllabus  
Rising Grades 7-9**



**Course Description**

*Act as a judge, attorney, witness, or jury member to learn about the legal system.*

Learn about American courts, civil and criminal trials, due process, and standards of proof. Select jurors, deliver opening statements, examine witnesses, present evidence, make closing arguments, and deliberate verdicts.

Students in this course get to debate ideas, solve problems, and act out real-world scenarios. They become able to build confidence speaking, questioning, and arguing in front of others. With structured practice, students develop the skills needed to understand trials and participate in a full mock court case.

Students explore criminal and civil cases, courtroom roles, evidence, objections, witness examination, and more. Through hands-on activities like small-claims simulations, voir dire practice, analyzing exhibits, debating search-and-seizure issues, and preparing opening and closing statements, they learn how attorneys build persuasive arguments. Daily exercises help them master trial procedures and understand how judges, lawyers, juries, and precedents shape courtroom decisions.

Families receive a video of the final trial students participate in. Students leave the course with stronger public speaking skills, clearer critical thinking, and a deeper understanding of how justice is practiced in the courtroom.

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**Learning Objectives**

<b>Course Goals</b>	<p><b>Trial Process:</b> Students learn about how court trials are conducted, including who the people involved in them are.</p> <p><b>Court System:</b> Students learn about the various levels of courts, including district, appellate, and the supreme court, as well as juvenile courts.</p> <p><b>Constitutional Rights:</b> Students learn about the amendments in the Bill of Rights which pertain to protections of the accused.</p>
<b>Course</b>	<p><b>Courtroom Members and Vocabulary:</b> Students learn who is involved in court rooms, and they</p>

<b>Topics</b>	<p>are introduced to the unique vocabulary used during trials.</p> <p><b>Types of Cases:</b> Students learn about the differences between criminal and civil cases.</p> <p><b>Court System (1):</b> Students learn about the various types of courts used for different sorts of cases.</p> <p><b>Elements of a Lawsuit:</b> Students learn about the use of evidence and witnesses in a court case, including the selection of a judge.</p> <p><b>Jury:</b> Students learn about the selection of a trial jury and about how they deliberate and declare a verdict.</p> <p><b>Bill of Rights:</b> Students learn about the amendments of the Constitution that provide protection to those who are accused of a crime.</p> <p><b>Statements and Arguments:</b> Students learn about the statements and arguments made by lawyers during a trial.</p> <p><b>Precedent:</b> Students learn about the role of precedents in deciding the verdict for a case.</p> <p><b>Mock Trials:</b> Students participate in trial simulations to gain a better understanding of how court cases are handled.</p>
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## Course Schedule

<b>Class Meeting 1</b>	<p><b>Lawyers:</b> Students learn about the role that lawyers play in a courtroom.</p> <p><b>Court Background:</b> Students learn the role of courts in our society and why mediators are necessary for legal disputes.</p> <p><b>People in the Courtroom:</b> Students learn about the people present during a court trial and about their jobs, with substantial emphasis on the role of the jury.</p> <p><b>Court Vocabulary:</b> Students learn about the terminology commonly used during court cases.</p> <p><b>Common Law:</b> Students learn about the features of English law which continue to impact our practice of law.</p> <p><b>Criminal and Civil Cases:</b> Students learn about the differences between criminal and civil cases.</p> <p><b>Burden of Proof:</b> Students learn how the concept of the burden of proof differs between criminal and civil cases.</p> <p><b>Small Claims Court:</b> Students prepare for small claims cases, in which they act as a plaintiff or defendant.</p>
<b>Class Meeting 2</b>	<p><b>Types of Courts:</b> Students learn about the various types of courts that handle cases.</p> <p><b>Trial and Appellate Courts:</b> Students learn how court cases can be appealed and which courts hear those appealed cases.</p>

	<p><b>Federal and State Courts:</b> Students learn about the court systems at federal and state levels.</p> <p><b>Juvenile Courts:</b> Students learn about cases involving those under the age of 18, and the role of a court in these cases. They discuss the possibility of trying children as adults for serious crimes.</p> <p><b>Judge Selection:</b> Students learn how judges are selected for the various types of courts.</p> <p><b>Steps of a Lawsuit:</b> Students learn the process a case goes through until a verdict is reached.</p> <p><b>Accusing the Defendant:</b> Students learn how an accused person is brought to court after a crime or wrong is committed.</p> <p><b>Pre-Trial Proceedings:</b> Students learn about the events that take place before a trial begins.</p> <p><b>Trial Proceedings and Appeals:</b> Students learn the events that occur during a trial and how an appeal can be filed.</p> <p><b>Evidence:</b> Students learn about how evidence is used in a case, along with different types of evidence that can be presented.</p> <p><b>Witnesses:</b> Students learn about the role of witnesses in a trial and how they are questioned.</p> <p><b>Objections:</b> Students learn about the objections that an attorney may raise against a witness.</p> <p><b>Witness Examination:</b> Students use model scenarios to practice examining witnesses as attorneys.</p>
<b>Class Meeting 3</b>	<p><b>Jury Selection:</b> Students learn how a jury is selected and about the voir dire process.</p> <p><b>Twelve Angry Men:</b> Students view the film, Twelve Angry Men, and discuss the concepts in it.</p> <p><b>Examination With an Exhibit:</b> Students practice questioning a witness in a case where an exhibit is part of the evidence.</p>
<b>Class Meeting 4</b>	<p><b>Jury Selection Simulation:</b> Students act as potential jurors who will be selected by other students acting as attorneys to appear in a trial.</p>
<b>Class Meeting 5</b>	<p><b>Bill of Rights:</b> Students learn about the background of the Bill of Rights and the amendments that relate to court trials.</p> <p><b>Opening Statements and Closing Arguments:</b> Students learn about the particular points made by each side of a trial at the beginning and end of the trial.</p> <p><b>Trial Simulation:</b> Students participate in a simulated trial to practice using opening statements and closing arguments.</p>
<b>Class Meeting 6</b>	<p><b>Fourth Amendment Background:</b> Students learn more about the Fourth Amendment which will play a large role in the upcoming mock trial.</p> <p><b>Search and Seizure:</b> Students learn about the use of warrants in searches, including instances where warrants are not needed.</p> <p><b>Civil Trial:</b> Students conduct a civil trial to practice using the knowledge they have learned.</p> <p><b>Mock Trial Overview:</b> Students learn about the mock trial they will participate in on the last day of the session.</p>

<b>Class Meeting 7</b>	<p><b>Precedents:</b> Students learn about the role precedents play in our legal system.</p> <p><b>Trial With Demonstrative Evidence:</b> Students participate in a trial that involves demonstrative evidence to prepare for the upcoming mock trial.</p> <p><b>Mock Trial Introduction:</b> Students are introduced to the facts and characters in the mock trial they will participate in at the end of the week.</p> <p><b>Role Assignments:</b> Students are assigned roles for the upcoming mock trial.</p>
<b>Class Meeting 8</b>	<p><b>Trial Preparation:</b> Students prepare for the mock trial they will hold on the final day of the session.</p> <p><b>Motion Preparation:</b> Students prepare for the pre-trial motion hearing they will hold the following day.</p>
<b>Class Meeting 9</b>	<p><b>Motion Hearing:</b> Students hold a pre-trial motion hearing to determine whether certain evidence may be used in the upcoming trial.</p> <p><b>Final Trial Preparation:</b> Students complete preparations for the mock trial which will take place the following day.</p>
<b>Class Meeting 10</b>	<p><b>Mock Trial:</b> Students conduct a full-length mock trial which they have spent the past week preparing for.</p>