



2021 San Diego County High School Mock Trial Competition Zoom Presentation Reminders and Tips

This year's online competition will be conducted via Zoom. The following are reminders and general information to ensure your successful use of the Zoom platform in competition and to enhance your team's performance:

- 1) Use the most recent Zoom app for best results.** If you are unable to download the app, you may still join using the provided Zoom link via a web browser.
- 2) Zoom Security - The password and waiting room features will be used.** The link and password will be emailed to teachers, registered coaches, judges, attorney scorers, and monitors prior to each trial. **Please do not share the link or password with anyone other than the participants and do not post on social media or other platforms.**
- 3) By mid-January, each team will be assigned a team code** to be used throughout the competition. **On the day of trial, each team will receive an email with their assigned trial/courtroom number, along with their Zoom link and password. Attorney scorers, judges, and monitors will receive their assigned trial/courtroom number, Zoom link and password via email the day prior to the round for which they have volunteered.**
- 4) Follow the Naming Rules -** All participants including team members, substitute team members, coaches, teacher sponsors, judges, attorney scorers, and monitors must follow the naming rules to be admitted to the virtual courtroom for each round of the competition. **The Naming Rules for all participants are attached and available on the website at sdmocktrial.org.**
- 5) Trial Team Roster - All teams are required to submit their Trial Team Roster no later than 11:00 a.m. the day prior to each round.** The Trial Team Roster (TTR) must identify each active team member and team substitutes, with their individual roles for that particular round of competition. The TTR must also identify the teacher sponsor(s) and attorney coaches who will be present during the round. No changes to the TTR may be made after submission and students must perform the roles as identified on the TTR. The TTRs and directions as to how to submit them are available at sdmocktrial.org on the Materials page. (Note: **TTRs are different than the team rosters submitted in December which listed all team members. The last day to submit changes to your Team Roster, providing an accurate and current list of team members, is January 15, 2021.**)
- 6) When to Enable Video and Microphones During Competition -** During the trial, the following individuals must turn on their video and unmute their microphone when:
 - o All team members, including substitutes, coaches, and teachers, are introducing themselves to the court;
 - o Pretrial attorney is presenting their pretrial argument, rebuttal, or irregularities;

- Trial attorney is presenting their opening statement, closing argument, or irregularities;
- Testifying witness, direct examining trial attorney, and cross-examining trial attorney during a witness examination;
- Clerk is providing time warnings;
- Bailiff is communicating with the judge, calling the court to order, or swearing in witnesses.

All active team members, substitute team members, coaches, teacher sponsors, attorney scorers, and monitors must have their video off and microphone muted when not presenting or addressing the court. During the debrief following the conclusion of the trial, all team members, teachers, coaches, attorney scorers, and judge should enable their video.

- 7) **All active team members and team substitutes must have the case, official exhibits, and team rulebook readily available, but may only refer to them when allowed. If an attorney wishes to have a witness identify or answer questions regarding an exhibit or witness statement, the attorney should direct the witness to look at the particular exhibit or witness statement, citing page number or line number where applicable.**
- 8) **Positioning During Trial - The pretrial attorney, trial attorney, and bailiff may elect to stand or remain seated while making their presentations;** however, they should avoid moving from one position to another during their presentation, as that may be distracting and require a camera adjustment. **Witnesses and the clerk should remain seated throughout the trial.**
- 9) **If a participant experiences a technical difficulty while awaiting the start of the trial and cannot participate, a team member should inform the bailiff there will be a substitution; in turn, the bailiff will notify the judge and attorney scorers of the substitution at the beginning of the trial. If a technical difficulty occurs with one of the participants after the trial has begun, the substitute must notify the judge before substituting in.** (Suggested phrasing: “Your Honor, I would like to inform the court that I am [insert name] and I am substituting in for [insert name] who is unable to compete due to technical difficulties.)
- 10) The Zoom chat feature must not be used during the trial for communications between team members or between team members and coaches, including the private chat feature, except for the following:
 - Communication between trial attorneys (and the defendant).
 - Communication between the clerk and unofficial timer for time checks.
- 11) **Team members should dress and act as if they are in a real courtroom.** Participants with their video on should be mindful that even if they are not currently speaking, their countenance and reactions onscreen can be observed and can be a basis for evaluating performance.
- 12) **Scrimmage If You Can - Teams are encouraged to scrimmage prior to the actual competition.** This allows the opportunity to practice case presentation as well as apply the virtual competition rules and procedures.

Zoom Tips for 2021 San Diego Mock Trial Competition

- **Internet** – A wired connection is better than a wi-fi connection. If you can, plug your device directly into your router. If you are using a wi-fi connection, be as close to your router as possible.
- **Bandwidth** – Be aware of household or workspace usage. Try to have exclusive use of the internet in your home or location, if possible, during the trials to ensure the best connection. Also, close any unnecessary tabs during the trials to reduce bandwidth use.
- **Device** – You may use a computer, laptop, or tablet for the competition. A desktop computer or laptop are recommended because some features may be limited on a tablet. Use of the Zoom app is encouraged. If you are using the Zoom app, be sure to download the most recent Zoom app with updated features on the device you will use during the competition.
- **Microphone** – You can use your computer microphone/speaker, an external microphone/speaker, earpiece, headset, etc. To minimize background noise, a headset or earpiece is a general best practice. For the computer microphone/speaker or an external microphone/speaker, be as close to the microphone as possible. Prior to the competition, test the microphone with someone to make sure you are heard loud and clear on their side. Practice muting and unmuting your microphone.
- **Testing Audio** – Testing audio is recommended before joining a Zoom trial. When connecting to a Zoom event, a pop-up window will appear inviting you to test your speakers. If you do not hear the ringtone, use the drop-down menu, or click No to switch speakers until you hear the ringtone. Click Yes to continue to the microphone test. If you do not hear an audio replay, use the drop-down menu or click No to switch microphones until you hear the replay. Click Yes when you hear the replay.
- **Push to Talk** – Zoom has a handy Push to Talk feature which shortens the process to unmute yourself when you want to speak during trial. If you are muted, simply press and hold the spacebar down to temporarily unmute yourself when you want to be heard. You will be unmuted only while you are holding the spacebar down. When you release the spacebar you will return to mute status.
- **Backgrounds** – DO NOT use virtual backgrounds during the trial. Virtual backgrounds (and profile pictures) are not allowed because they take up a lot of bandwidth. All participants should have a blank background (light neutral colors such as white, beige, or grey) if possible, without any distracting or moving objects behind or around them.
- **Lighting** – Have a light in front of you. You want to make sure you have light (window or lamp) in front of you and not behind you.
- **Speaker or Gallery View** – There are two options available. This only impacts your view. In Speaker View, the person speaking takes up your full screen view. (Speaker View may be the best option when the judge is making introductory remarks, during pretrial arguments, opening statements and closing arguments.) In a Gallery View, you will view all participants in a grid layout. (Gallery View may be the best option during direct and cross and re-direct examination of witnesses.) In addition to the two views, Zoom also gives you the option to Hide Non-Video Participants. If you select this feature, when you are on Gallery View you will only see participants whose video cameras are on and your screen will not be filled with black boxes representing the non-active participants like coaches, teachers, and substitutes.
- **Chat Feature** – Open the chat feature on the Zoom menu bar. To send a private message, scroll through the names on the list to select the person you want to send a private message to, then type the message and send. You can select in advance the name you might want to send a message to and have it ready. (Reminder – only communication between trial attorneys [and defendant] and between the clerk and unofficial timer is allowed during trial. Teams may communicate with coaches during the 60-second rule only using other methods.)