

LESSON PLAN 8

DEBRIEFING AFTER THE MOCK TRIAL

(One Class Period or Less)

OBJECTIVES:

As a result of the activities described in the lesson plan, the students will be able to:

- Analyze the strong and weak points of each case presented in the trial.
- Identify the person or persons whose performance in the trial made a difference in the case.
- Critique the trial from the standpoint of its success in achieving justice.

ACTIVITIES:

1. **Observers:** Any student who was designated as an observer for the trial should have completed an Observation Sheet. After the trial is completed, the observers make reports of their observations to the class.
2. **Teams:** After hearing the reports of the observers, or in lieu of observer reports, prosecution and defense teams should re-form as small groups to discuss these questions:
What were the strong points in our presentation?
What were our weak points? How could they have been avoided?
Were our attorneys prepared correctly?
Did we make good objections?
Was the trial conducted in a fair manner?
Did we achieve our goal? Why or why not?
Even if we achieved our goal, could we have accomplished it in a different manner?
3. **Large-Group Discussion:** After the small groups have completed this discussion, summaries of their responses to these questions should be given to the whole class, with any appropriate additional discussion led by the teacher or an attorney, if one was present at the trial. An attorney (or judge) can be especially effective in debriefing a mock trial by comparing what went on to what usually occurs in real courts.
4. **Written Assignment:** In class or as homework, have students write a brief essay telling whether or not the trial was a sensible way to achieve justice in this particular case, and whether justice was in fact, achieved.