



## 2024 Courtroom Journalist Contest Journalist Information

The event will take place May 2-4 in Wilmington, Delaware. If you have any questions or comments, email the courtroom artist committee at [courtroomjournalism@nationalmocktrial.org](mailto:courtroomjournalism@nationalmocktrial.org).

- Journalist Pre-event:**
  - Review complete rules in the [NHSMTC Rulebook](#).
  - Communicate with your team lead regarding communication plans for the event – you will need to know your team/state code.
  - Review the Journalist Contest scoring criteria.
- Courtroom Journalist Orientation - May 2 from 3:00 pm to 4:00 pm:**
  - All journalists must attend.
  - Chase Center.
- Practice Reporting – May 3 - Round 1 at 9:00 am & Round 2 at 1:45 pm:**
  - Practice writing at your state’s trials.
  - Round pairings will be posted before trials.
- Official Reporting - Round 3 on May 4 at 8:30 am:**
  - This is the official round to write your official article during your state’s trial.
  - The round pairing will be posted before trial.
  - During introductions, introduce yourself as the courtroom journalist with your name and team/state code only. Do not identify your state or school.
  - Once you are in the courtroom, you may not have any communication with anyone.
  - The article must report on your state’s round 3 trial. You must draft your article completely independently without the help of any source or person.
  - After Round 3, the journalist must type their final articles to submit. Submissions must be a 12-point Times New Roman, with one-inch margins, double-spaced, and an 850-word limit.
  - Completed submissions must be emailed to [courtroomjournalism@nationalmocktrial.org](mailto:courtroomjournalism@nationalmocktrial.org) by **3:00 pm on May 4th**. All submissions must be submitted as a WORD document or as a PDF file. Do not put the article in the body of the email. Label your article with your name and team code only in the top left corner. Only articles submitted by the deadline will be entered in the contest.

## Each courtroom article entry will be judged based on the following criteria:

**Enticing Lead Paragraph with Basic Elements of the Case** - Did the reporter develop an enticing lead paragraph with the necessary elements of the case? (Who, what, where, when, why, and how.)

**Newsworthy Facts**—Did the reporter write about the most newsworthy facts that occurred during the trial, not merely reiterate the case packet?

**Story Structure**—Did the reporter properly structure the story, using the most critical elements early in the article (inverted pyramid)?

**Vivid Reporting** - Did the reporter make the article vivid by using well-chosen direct quotes from testimony and descriptions of the courtroom scene, participants, or their behavior? And did the reporter write as if this was an actual trial, not a high school competition?

**Mechanics** - Uses correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

**Holistic Assessment:** Review the article in its entirety. Check for overall accuracy, storytelling, and compliance with the rules/requirements.

**Legal Procedures and Judicial Process** - Demonstrates a sufficient understanding of legal procedures and the judicial process.

**Fair and Accurate** - Presents a fair and accurate account of events without any apparent editorial slant.

**Headline** - Has an accurate headline that does not editorialize?

**Dateline** - Has the proper dateline?