

# Mock Criminal Trial Role-Play

## Activity Type

Reading, writing, listening and speaking activity

## Focus

Crime, law and punishment

## Aim

To role-play a mock criminal trial in order to practice vocabulary related to crime, law and punishment.

## Preparation

Make one copy of the worksheet for each student.

## Level

Upper-intermediate (B2)

## Time

40 minutes

## Introduction

In this criminal trial role-play activity, students take part in a mock criminal trial in order to practice vocabulary related to crime, law and punishment.

## Procedure

Give each student a copy of the role-play worksheet. Read through the introduction and roles with the students. Have the students choose which role they would like to play. You can also assign roles for the students if you wish.

Once the roles have been assigned, go through the guidelines with the class, so everyone understands the reason for the trial, the roles they will play, and the basic facts:

1. The victim had vegetables stolen from his garden.
2. The suspect was home alone around the time of the crime.
3. The witness saw someone fitting the suspect's appearance climbing over the victim's fence although they are not certain.
4. The judge is open-minded and is willing to listen to both sides.
5. Half the jury sympathise with the victim and the other half sympathise with the suspect.

Next, read through the procedure as a class and have the students prepare for the role-play. When everyone is ready, start the trial.

1. Students make notes on what they are going to say during the trial. Students also work with whoever has a complementary role to prepare for the trial, e.g. the defense team and suspect meet so that they are communicating the same message. Jury members will set up the classroom to resemble a law court.
2. The judge opens the trial by summarising the crime and basic facts of the case.
3. The judge calls the prosecutor to the stand to present their case. The prosecuting team then cross-examines the victim, suspect and witness. The victim, suspect and witness must answer three questions each from the prosecuting team.
4. The judge then calls up the defense lawyer to present their case. The defense team then cross-examines the victim, suspect and witness. The victim, suspect and witness must answer three questions each from the defense team.
5. The prosecutor and defense lawyer then give their final arguments based on the answers to their questions.
6. The judge then asks the jury to deliberate and decide on a verdict. The jury has up to ten minutes to deliberate.
7. The judge then asks the jury for their verdict. If there is a guilty verdict, the judge must give a sentence. The judge then closes the trial.

Note: This resource can be edited using a PDF editor.

**As a class, you are going to plan and conduct a mock criminal trial to determine if a suspect is innocent or guilty. Decide who will be assigned to the roles below.**

**Roles:**

**Suspect:** You have been accused of stealing vegetables from your neighbour's garden. You must consult with your defense lawyer to prepare for the trial.

**Witness:** You live next door to the victim and think you saw and heard what happened. You will testify in court.

**Victim:** You must consult with the prosecutor to prepare for the trial.

**Judge:** You will manage the trial and call up the prosecutor, defense lawyer and witness to speak. You will ask the jury for their final judgment. You will also have to sentence the suspect if they are found guilty.

**Prosecuting team:** (1 to 3 people) You will give advice to the victim and help them prepare for the trial. You will also argue their side in the trial. This will also involve asking both the victim, witness and the suspect questions.

**Defense team:** (1 to 3 people) You will give advice to the suspect and help them prepare for the trial. You will also argue their side in the trial. This will also involve asking both the victim, witness and the suspect questions.

**Jury:** (2 to 12 people) As a group, you must listen to and then discuss the evidence presented in the trial and make a collective decision to reach a verdict. You can also recommend a sentence to the judge if the verdict is guilty.

**Guidelines:**

1. The victim had vegetables stolen from his garden.
2. The suspect was home alone around the time of the crime.
3. The witness saw someone fitting the suspect's appearance climbing over the victim's fence although they are not certain.
4. The judge is open-minded and is willing to listen to both sides.
5. Half the jury sympathise with the victim and the other half sympathise with the suspect.

**Procedure:**

1. Make notes on what you are going to say during the trial. Work with whoever has a complementary role to prepare for the trial, e.g. the defense team and suspect meet so that they are communicating the same message. Jury members will set up the classroom to resemble a law court.
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