

## **COURTROOM JOURNALIST CONTEST Guidelines**

Articles must report on what the courtroom journalists observed during their respective team's trial.

Articles are created and completed during the course of the **first trial during Qualifying Rounds ONLY**.

During the first trial, journalists are bound by Rules IV: Section E.4 which states no electronic device may be used in the courtroom. At the conclusion of that trial and teams have been dismissed, journalists may use laptops, or other devices to complete the article for submission.

The journalist may only observe and report on the trial in which their team is competing.

The trial site coordinator, with permission from the presiding judge, may allow the journalist to sit in the jury box away from the scoring panelists.

Once the trial begins, the journalist may not move about the courtroom. They may not communicate, either verbally or non-verbally, with any member of the Mock Trial teams or any visitors, coach or third party during the trial.

Journalists must supply their own equipment and note-taking supplies.

### **SUBMISSION PROCESS:**

At the conclusion of the trial, the courtroom journalist must move to a location other than the courtroom to type their article. The trial site coordinator may designate an area or a public area.

Typically, they will have 55 to 60 minutes to complete their work and submit it to [mocktrial@okbar.org](mailto:mocktrial@okbar.org) via email.

Articles must be sent as attachments to the email, not in the body of the email itself, and must be in Word or .pdf format.

In the body of the email, the journalist will provide a word count for the article using the word count function of their word processing program. Any false statement with respect to the word count will automatically disqualify the entry.

The journalist may not have dictionaries and thesauruses in the courtroom, but may have and use them in completing their articles.

The journalist may use any publicly-available source of information (e.g. webpages not behind a paywall) in completing their articles.

The journalist will maintain a digital copy of their article submission piece until, at least, the end of the Mock Trial Finals in March.

**ARTICLE SPECIFICATIONS:**

Articles should be in the voice of a reporter covering the trial.

Each contestant shall place their name and team code only on the top left corner of the page.

The article must be in 12-point, Times New Roman font with one-inch margins and must be double spaced.

No article may exceed 850 words, excluding the journalist's name and team code.

**JUDGING:**

Articles are evaluated and scored anonymously with the highest ranking article announced at the State Final competition in March.

All submitted articles will become the property of the Oklahoma Bar Association and may be reproduced with recognition to the courtroom Journalist.