

YOUTH IN GOVERNMENT REGIONAL CONFERENCE

YOUTH SUPREME COURT GUIDELINES

Thank you for your interest in participating in the Youth Supreme Court portion of the Idaho YMCA Youth in Government program! This will outline the program and give tips for co-counsel teams participating in a regional conference.

At the Youth in Government regional conferences, delegates from schools throughout the region may send "co-counsel" teams to participate in the Youth Supreme Court. At the regional conferences, these co-counsel teams will compete for selection to attend the Youth in Government State Conference in Boise the following April.

1. Several weeks before the regional conference, you will receive notification from your school advisor or by visiting the Idaho YMCA Youth in Government webpage at <http://www.ymcatvidaho.org/youth-in-government/> that the regional conferences moot court case memo and appeals case documentation required for the co-counsel teams are available. In the appeals case provided you will review a fictional case scenario that sets out the facts of a court case that has already been decided by a trial court. The case is now on appeal. The party who lost in the trial court is called "the Appellant" and the other party is called "the Respondent". The co-counsel teams will act as attorneys representing the Appellant or the Respondent on appeal to a mock supreme court. In addition to the fact scenario, you may also receive a copy of a statute or court opinion that sets out law that is applicable to the scenario.
2. Co-counsel teams may be called upon at the regional conference to argue for *either party* in the case. Therefore, the teams must be prepared to argue both sides of the case even if you prefer one side or think it has a stronger argument to be made in its favor. You will not be judged on the strength of your "client's" case, but on the quality of your presentations.
3. At the regional conference, there will be a mock supreme court made up of one or more "judges" to hear your arguments and decide which teams will advance to the State Conference. You will be assigned to argue for either the appellant or the respondent at that time. You will not be allowed to listen to other teams' arguments until after you have presented your own argument.
4. Each team will probably be allowed about 10 minutes for their argument, but that time may be shortened depending on the number of teams who are participating and the amount of time allotted at the conference for the Youth Supreme Court. The arguments will proceed as follows: First, the appellant team will present its opening argument, then the respondent team will argue, and then the appellant team may present a "rebuttal" argument. Thus, the appellant team will argue twice (taking no

more than a total of 10 minutes) and the respondent team will argue only once. The appellant's rebuttal argument should be limited to replying to the points made by the respondent team. Each team member must present part of the argument. However, the appellant team's rebuttal argument should be made by only one team member.

5. In preparing your arguments, you should become very familiar with the facts presented in the scenario and consider which facts support each party's position in the case. You may not make up additional facts. If you also received a copy of a statute or court decision (or citations to statutes or court decisions that you can look up on-line), you should read them carefully to determine how the law will support or undermine each party's position in the appeal.
6. You should write down or make an outline of the strongest argument you can develop for each party, focusing on both the facts and the law that favor your "client". Your argument should point how why your client (whether the appellant or the respondent) should win the appeal. That is, your argument should explain why, on the facts presented and applying the law, it is just and fair for your client to prevail. The two students on each co-counsel team should divide up the argument, so each can present some of the points and you will not just be repeating each other's arguments. Before the regional conference, you should decide which of your team members will go first.
7. It is a good idea to practice your argument out loud until you become comfortable with the presentation. You may refer to an outline or list of points that you want to make, but it is best if you do not simply read your argument. You may want to begin your argument by saying, "May it please the court". You may want to conclude your argument by telling the court what you are asking it to do--either to affirm the decision of the trial court in the case or reverse the trial court. For additional oral argument tips, please refer to the "Oral Argument" section on the last 2 pages of the Youth in Government Student Handbook, which is available at <http://www.ymcatvidaho.org/youth-in-government/>.
8. The judges may ask questions, during your argument, so try to think of the types of questions that might be asked and be prepared with an answer. If you are interrupted with a question, answer the question and then return to your prepared argument.
9. After all teams have argued, the judges will confer and decide which teams made the best presentation and will therefore be selected to go to the State Conference. Those results will not be announced to you by the judges but will be announced later during the regional conference.

Good luck with your presentations!