

## Jefferson Hope's Court Case Debate

"A Study in Scarlet" Part 2 by: Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

### **BACKGROUND:**

Jefferson Hope has been charged with first-degree murder of Enoch Drebber and Joseph Stangerson. Hope will go to court where, through a fair trial, he will either be proven innocent, and should not face punishment, or found guilty and face a prison sentence.

**TASK:** YOU have been selected to be a part of his trial and will either be part of the prosecuting team (proving Hope's guilt) or part of the defense team (proving Hope's innocence). You will be preparing and presenting your case to the opposing team and will be responsible for engaging in a structured, respectful debate. Audience members will serve as the jury and will decide which side presents the most convincing argument based on the group's preparation, presentation of evidence and ability to disprove the opposing team's position.

## **PROCEDURE**

### **I.) Before the Court Case Debate:**

1. With all members of your group, **brainstorm a list of reasons** as to why your client is innocent and should not face penalties, or is guilty and should be held accountable for his crimes. For each reason, you'll need a piece of direct text evidence to help support your argument. (Worksheet A)
2. With all members of your group, draft an **opening statement** that states your position in the case. Your job is to *acknowledge why the defendant is on trial*, and state your position (innocent or guilty?) that you'll prove through the debate. Usually, in opening statements, attorneys use strong words in describing the defendant and how/why he is innocent/guilty. Attempt to do this! (Worksheet B)
3. With all members of your group, brainstorm a list of **anticipated opposing arguments**. Think about what the other side may argue to prove Hope's innocence/guilt. Provide an explanation that explains how/why the opposing argument is weak. (Worksheet C)
4. **Decide and assign** the roles that each member of your group will play in your debate. Roles and responsibilities are as follows:

<b>Role</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>	<b>Group Member Assignment</b>
<b>Opening Statement Reader</b>	Reads opening statement to the court.	
<b>Evidence Presenters</b>	Responsible for presenting the team's 3 strongest pieces of reasons/evidence to support their position.	
<b>Rebuttal Leaders</b>	Responsible for targeting weak areas of opposing team's argument and refuting their claims by presenting new pieces of evidence (using Anticipated Arguments worksheet).	

## II.) During the Court Case Debate

1. Both Opening Statement Readers, from each team, will read their group's opening statements.
2. The prosecuting team's Evidence Presenter(s) will read their group's reasons/evidence, while the Rebuttal Leaders (and rest of group) are taking notes of their arguments and identifying ways to rebuttal their claims.
3. The defense team's Evidence Presenter(s) will read their group's reasons/evidence, while the Rebuttal Leaders (and rest of group) are taking notes of their arguments and identifying ways to rebuttal their claims.
4. Both Rebuttal Leaders engage in discussion to refute the opposing team's claims. Rebuttal Leaders may receive help from the rest of their team, but the Rebuttal Leaders are the only ones who are allowed to present evidence.

### Debate Rules

- While anybody is presenting, the opposing side needs to stay silent. **Any thoughts/comments/ideas that you wish to share, write down. DO NOT verbalize them as another person/team is presenting.**
- Any argument that is not presented with text evidence, or irrelevant text evidence will result in a demerit as determined by the judge.
- Any interruptions or rude behavior from either team will be given a demerit, as determined by the judge.
- Any argument made to the judge will result in a demerit.
- At the end of the debate, the jury (audience) will vote on the most convincing argument.

Worksheet A: Reasons & Evidence

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Complete this worksheet with your group to prepare your reasons and evidence that will support your position. Use your book to find evidence from the text. You will present these reasons and evidence during your debate. A strong argument will have five reasons.

**Position:** As the (prosecuting/defense) \_\_\_\_\_ team, we will argue that Jefferson Hope is (innocent/guilty) \_\_\_\_\_ and (should/should not) \_\_\_\_\_ be held accountable for his crimes.

Reason	Evidence from the Text



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Worksheet C: Anticipated Opposing Arguments

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Together with your team, identify reasons that the opposing team may use to prove their case against yours. You need to be able to explain HOW/WHY that reason is WEAK and should not be considered by the jury.

Anticipated Opposing Reason	Why is this a WEAK reason and should not be considered in the jury's decision?

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Worksheet D: Debate Notes

Directions: Use the space below to record any thoughts/ideas/notes during the debate.

