

Courtroom Journalist Contest 2023 Criteria

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

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

2 - Newsworthy Facts - Did the reporter write about the most newsworthy facts that occurred during the trial and not merely reiterate the case packet?

3 - Story Structure - Did the reporter properly structure the story with the most important elements early in the article (inverted pyramid)?

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

5 - Mechanics - Did the reporter use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation?

6 - Pretrial - Did the reporter include appropriate coverage of the pretrial motion?

7 - Legal Procedures and Judicial Process - Did the reporter demonstrate a sufficient understanding of legal procedures and the judicial process?

8 - Fair and Accurate - Did the reporter present a fair and accurate account of events without any apparent editorial slant?

9 - Headline - Did the reporter have an accurate headline that does not editorialize?

10 - Dateline - Did the reporter have the proper dateline?

11 - Holistic Assessment - Review the article in its entirety. Review for its overall accuracy, storytelling, and did the reporter follow the rules/requirements.