

**Steering Committee Guidance to Schools and Presiders re Cross Examination Answers
June 23, 2022**

The Steering Committee may, from time to time, issue guidance to the Santa Clara County Mock Trial community, including guidance to the participating schools, scoring attorneys, and presiding judges, on issues pertaining to the county tournament. The Steering Committee hereby issues the following guidance to schools and presiders re Cross Examination Answers.

Witnesses may answer cross examination questions with a single, complete sentence. That single, complete sentence may include a short explanation or retort (e.g., “Yes, but . . .”). If a witness attempts to answer a cross examination question with more than a single, complete sentence, the Presiding Judge may sustain a non-responsive objection and may, upon motion, strike the part of the answer that exceeds a single, complete sentence. The Presiding Judge may, upon request, instruct the witness to comply with the single, complete sentence rule. This is a general rule and there may be circumstances where a Presiding Judge may allow a longer answer.

The Steering Committee believes this guidance strikes the proper balance between allowing witnesses to shine during cross examination for scoring purposes without allowing the witnesses to unreasonably run time.

This guidance may be cited during a mock trial round. However, it cannot form the basis of a rule violation or complaint. The Steering Committee hopes that all schools will discuss, adopt, and follow this guidance.