

Virtual Supreme Court Oral Argument Grading Rubric

Format:

Petitioners - 10 Minutes

Respondents - 15 Minutes

Petitioners Rebuttal - 5 Minutes

Oral Argument Scoring Sheet (100 total points)

I. Appearance (5 points)

- A. Both advocates wear courtroom attire
- B. Students sitting behind desk, or standing behind podium or lectern
- C. Neutral background

II. Delivery (20 points)

- A. Maintain eye contact
- B. Avoid reading off of prepared remarks as much as possible
- C. Uses notes effectively (i.e., to accurately quote important principles/doctrine from cases and/or historical materials)
- D. Uses advocacy tone (strongly advocating their side without being overly aggressive or combative)
- E. Use proper grammar and pronunciation
- F. Teammates roughly split time in half

III. Main Argument (25 points)

- A. Begins with overview of issues and summary of facts
- B. Precisely identifies primary legal principles
- C. Cites authorities, cases, and legal history

IV. Answering Questions From Judges (25 points)

- A. Immediately stop speaking when judge asks questions
- B. Carefully listen to entire question before responding
- C. Demonstrate ability to think on your feet
- D. Try not to fight hypothetical questions
- E. If the judge asks a yes or no question, your answer should begin with “yes” or “no,” and then explain why your position should prevail
- F. After question is answered, smoothly transition back to prepared remarks

V. Response/Rebuttal (25 points)

- A. Address arguments presented by opposing counsel
- B. Explain why opposing counsel’s positions should not be accepted
- C. Where appropriate, identify if position of opposing counsel during oral argument deviated from position in their brief