

The Characters:

Instead of organizing the jurors in numeric order, the characters are listed here in the order they decide to vote in favor of the defendant. This progressive look at the cast is important for the final outcome of the play, as one juror after another changes their mind about the verdict.

Juror #8 Votes “not guilty” during the jury’s first vote. Described as “thoughtful” and “gentle,” Juror #8 is usually portrayed as the most heroic member of the jury. Devoted to justice and is right away sympathetic toward the 19-year-old defendant. Juror #8 spends the rest of the play urging the others to practice patience and to contemplate the details of the case and thinks that they owe it to the defendant to at least talk about the verdict for a while. A guilty verdict will result in the electric chair; therefore, Juror #8 wants to discuss the relevance of the witness testimony. Juror 8 is convinced that there is reasonable doubt and eventually succeeds in persuading the other jurors to acquit the defendant.

Juror #9 a “mild gentle old woman...long defeated by life and...waiting to die.” Despite this bleak description, she is the first to agree with Juror #8, deciding that there is not enough evidence to sentence the young man to death and becomes more and more sure as the play proceeds. During Act One, Juror #9 is the first to openly recognize Juror #10’s racist attitude, stating that, “What this man says is very dangerous.”

Juror #5 This young woman is nervous, naïve and frightened about expressing her opinion, especially in front of the elder members of the group. She takes her obligations in this case very seriously. She is similar to the defendant, living in proximity to where he grew up, that will later help other jurors form an opinion of “not guilty.”

Juror #11 As a refugee from Europe, Juror #11 has witnessed great injustices. That is why she/he is intent on administering justice as a jury member. He/she sometimes feels self-conscious about his/her foreign accent but overcomes shyness and is willing to take on a more active part in the decision-making process. He/she conveys a deep appreciation for democracy and America’s legal system.

Juror #2 is easily persuaded by the opinions of others and cannot explain the roots of his convictions. In the very beginning, he goes along with the general opinion, but soon Juror #8 wins his sympathy and he begins contributing more, despite his shyness. He is in the group of the first six jurors to vote “not guilty.”

Juror #6 -Described as an “honest but dull-witted man,” Juror #6 is a house painter by trade. He is slow to see the good in others but eventually agrees with Juror #8. He defies the adversity and pursues the facts, in search of a more complete and objective picture. Juror #6 is the one who calls for another ballot and is also one of the first six pro-acquittal ones.

Juror #7 - A slick, superior, and sometimes obnoxious salesperson, Juror #7 admits during Act One that she would have done anything to miss jury duty and is trying to get out of it as fast as possible. Represents the many real-life individuals who loathe the idea of being on a jury. She is also quick to add his piece of mind to the conversation. She seems to want to condemn the defendant because of the youth’s previous criminal record, stating that she would have beaten the boy as a child just like the defendant’s father did. She is a bully and of course a coward.

Juror #12 - He is an arrogant and impatient advertising executive. Juror #12 is anxious for the trial to be over so that he also can get back to his career and his social life. However, after Juror #5 tells the group about his knowledge of knife-fights, Juror #12 is the first one to waver in his conviction, eventually changing his mind to “not guilty.”

Foreman (Juror #1) - Non-confrontational, Juror #1 serves as the foreman of the jury. He/she is serious about his/her authoritative role and wants to be as fair as possible. Despite being described as “not overly bright,” he/she helps calm down the tensions and moves the conversation onward with professional urgency. He sides with the “guilty” side until, just like Juror #12, he changes his mind after learning about the details of knife-fighting from Juror #5.

Juror #10 - The most abhorrent member of the group, Juror #10 is openly bitter and prejudiced. He is quick to stand up and physically approach Juror #8. During Act Three, he unleashes his bigotry to the others in a speech that disturbs the rest of the jury. Most of the jurors, disgusted by #10’s racism, turn their backs on him.

Juror #4 - A logical, well-spoken stock-broker, Juror #4 urges his fellow jurors to avoid emotional arguments and engage in rational discussion. He does not change his vote until a witness’s testimony is discredited (due to the witness’s poor vision).

Juror #3 A strong-minded, loud-mouthed, prejudiced man. Three is the final holdout in claiming the accused is guilty at the end of the play. His strong belief in the guilt of the youth seems to stem from his personal situation, his prejudices, and the painful rift between himself and his son (which causes him to judge all youth negatively). In many ways, he is the antagonist to the constantly calm Juror #8.

An Ending That Raises More Questions

Reginald Rose's drama "Twelve Angry Men" ends with the jury agreeing that there is enough reasonable doubt to warrant an acquittal. The defendant is deemed "not guilty" by a jury of his peers. However, the playwright never reveals the truth behind the case.

Did they save an innocent man from the electric chair? Did a guilty man go free? The audience is left to decide for themselves.

An iconic courtroom drama by Reginald Rose, did not begin on the stage as is often the case. Instead, the popular play was adapted from the author's 1954 live teleplay that debuted on CBS and was soon made into a movie. The script is filled with some of the best dramatic dialogue written, and Rose's cast of characters is some of the most memorable in modern history.

In the beginning, the jury has just finished listening to six days of trial proceedings inside a New York City courtroom. A 19-year-old man is on trial for the murder of his father. The defendant has a criminal record and a lot of circumstantial evidence piled up against him. The defendant, if found guilty, would receive a mandatory death penalty.

Before any formal discussion, the jury casts a vote. Eleven of the jurors vote "guilty." Only one juror votes "not guilty." That juror, who is known in the script as Juror #8, is the protagonist of the play. As tempers flare and the arguments begin, the audience learns about each member of the jury. Yet, none of them has a name; they are simply known by their juror numbers. And slowly but surely, Juror #8 guides the others toward a verdict of "not guilty."