

Galileo v. the Catholic Church: A Mock Trial

Essential Questions	Project Description
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Why were changes taking place in the areas of science and medicine?2. What influence did the Catholic church have on new scientific discoveries?3. How did new ideas in science lead to new ideas about government?4. Was Galileo a heretic?	Students will prepare for and participate in a mock trial based on the dispute between Galileo and the Catholic Church during the time of the Scientific Revolution. Each student will research and complete a written historical assignment related to his or her side and play that role in the trial. Witnesses will write affidavits that will be the basis of testimony and questioning. Lawyers will write speeches and questions to establish the case arguments for their respective sides.
Standards	Learning Outcomes
7-2.2: Explain how the scientific revolution challenged authority and influenced Enlightenment philosophers, including the importance of the use of reason, the challenges to the Catholic Church, and the contributions of Galileo and Sir Isaac Newton.	Students will be able to analyze primary sources and use them to create a historical narrative (affidavit or speech) that helps recreate the trial of Galileo.
Resources	
Trial of Galileo resource folder	

Project Steps

Step #1: Watch [this parody video](#) to provide some context for the mock trial. Provide some direct instruction on how historians use evidence to build historical arguments.

Step #2: Students should read through the [Trial of Galileo document](#) in its entirety to gain an understanding of the context of the conflict with the church and the events surrounding the trial in 1633.

Step #3: Receive your role in the trial.

Prosecution	2 lawyers	Witnesses: Cardinal Bellarmine, Pope Urban VIII
Defense	2 lawyers	Witnesses: Galileo, Johannes Kepler, Giovanni Ciampoli, Benedetto Castelli

Step #4: Have students read through the entire Trial of Galileo document AGAIN; this time, marking up the text for evidence that supports their side of the case.

Step #3: Complete the [case argument graphic organizer](#) to lay out the evidence you selected as the basis for your arguments (sub claims).

Step #4:

- Witnesses: write your [affidavit rough draft](#) (use the [template](#) and [example](#) as a reference).
- Lawyers: write your [opening statement](#) rough draft (use the [template](#) and [example](#) as a reference).
- Lawyers: write your [closing speech](#) rough draft (use the [template](#) and example as a reference).

Step #5: Use witness affidavits to [write direct and cross examination questions](#) using this [example](#).

Step #6: Make final preparations, practice and decide on a costume.

Step #7: Present the case of Galileo v. the Catholic Church