

# HMDC Elementary Model Congress Class (Fall 2024)

Activity: Witness Profiles (Simulation)

## How to Use the Witness Profiles

Welcome to our mock trial preparation! This document explains how each group should use the Witness Profiles for their assigned witness. Remember, all information in the profiles is considered public, so we're free to read any of the pages. However, let's focus primarily on our own group's work.

### Step 1: Review the Information

- Let's take a few minutes to read through our assigned witness profile.
- We can also look at other profiles if we think it might help us understand the case better.

### Step 2: Select the Witness

- As a group, we'll discuss who might be the best person to play our witness.
- We should consider who feels comfortable speaking in front of others and who might best capture the character of the witness.

### Step 3: Prepare the Witness

- Now, we'll work together to help our chosen witness get ready.
- Let's come up with practice questions that the lawyers might ask.
- We can then help our witness think about how to answer these questions.

#### An Important Reminder About the Law

It's important to remember that it is not legal or ethical to tell a witness exactly what to say. Instead, we can:

- Give general advice about how to answer questions clearly and honestly.
- Practice as much as we want with different questions and answers.
- Help our witness understand their character and the facts they know.

### Step 4: Visits from the Attorneys

- During preparation time, some of the attorneys may come to our breakout room to discuss things.
- This is a normal part of the process and can help us better prepare our witness.

### Step 5: After Preparation

- Once the witness interviews are over, we'll move on to the trial itself.
- Those of us who aren't playing the witness will become part of the jury or might have other roles in the courtroom.

Remember, this is supposed to be a fun learning experience for all of us. Let's work together, to have fun, and do our best to understand how a real trial works!

## **HMDC Elementary Model Congress Class (Fall 2024)**

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### **Detective Michael Brown (Prosecution Witness)**

#### **Who is Detective Brown?**

Detective Michael Brown is a police officer. He's been a policeman for 15 years. He's good at noticing small things and staying calm when things get tough. He's solved many big cases before. Detective Brown is married and has two teenage kids of his own.

#### **What Detective Brown Says Happened**

Detective Brown led the search to find out who messed with the city's water. On July 15th, lots of people called about brown water coming from their taps. Everyone was scared. Detective Brown and his team focused on some teenagers who were seen near the water plant the night before.

When they talked to the teenagers, one of them said they did it. But the boy's parents weren't there, and the detective didn't tell the boy he could be quiet if he wanted to. This is important because it means the boy's words might not count in court.

Detective Brown found empty bottles of food coloring and other stuff near the water plant. These matched what was in the water. They also found camera pictures showing people who looked like the teenagers going into the plant area.

The detective says that when they talked to the teenagers, they seemed sorry but also thought it was just a joke at first. They didn't understand how big of a problem they caused.

#### **How to Get Ready to Be Detective Brown**

- Practice telling what happened in order, like a story.
- Try to stay calm, even if someone asks hard questions.
- Be ready to explain why the teenager's words might not count in court.
- Think about how to explain the clues you found in a way that's easy to understand.
- Remember to talk about how serious this was for the whole city.

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### **Dr. Emily Chen (Prosecution Witness)**

#### **Who is Dr. Chen?**

Dr. Emily Chen is the head doctor at City Hospital. She's had this job for 8 years. People respect her because she knows a lot about emergency medicine and keeping people healthy. Dr. Chen is in her early 50s and has lived in the city for over 20 years. She cares a lot about helping people in the community stay healthy.

#### **What Dr. Chen Says Happened**

Dr. Chen says that after the water turned brown, many more people came to the hospital than usual. Most people were very worried and scared. Some people felt a little sick with tummy aches or itchy skin. The hospital was three times busier than normal. Many people, especially kids and older folks, needed to stay at the hospital to get fluids and be watched.

All the doctors and nurses had to work extra hours to help everyone. The hospital had to delay some other planned surgeries and bring in more staff to help. Dr. Chen says that even though no one got very sick, they were worried that something worse could happen.

In the weeks after the brown water, more people came to the hospital feeling stressed. Dr. Chen is worried that people might not trust the water for a long time, which could cause more health problems.

#### **How to Get Ready to Be Dr. Chen**

- Practice explaining doctor words in a way that's easy for everyone to understand.
- Be ready to talk about how people could have gotten sick, even if they didn't.
- Think about how to explain why everyone was so worried without sounding too scary.
- Be ready to talk about how the hospital had to change everything to help so many worried people.
- Remember to mention how this might affect people's health for a long time.

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### **Mark Rodriguez (Prosecution Witness)**

#### **Who is Mark Rodriguez?**

Mark Rodriguez is in charge of the city's water system. He's had this job for 10 years. He's in his late 40s and has worked with water his whole career. Mark is good at explaining complicated things in a way that's easy to understand. He cares a lot about keeping the city's water safe and clean. This brown water problem upset him because it messed with the system he works hard to protect.

#### **What Mark Rodriguez Says Happened**

Mr. Rodriguez explains how the brown water affected the city. The stuff the teenagers put in the water wasn't very poisonous, but it could have been really bad if they used different things or more of it. The brown water was in about 60% of the city's pipes.

It took a lot of work to clean the water system. They had to flush out all the pipes and test the water many times. They also had to set up places around the city where people could get clean water. Over 100 people worked day and night for three days to fix the problem. It cost more than \$500,000 to clean everything up.

Mr. Rodriguez says that if the teenagers had used something more dangerous, it could have been much worse. The water plant isn't set up to catch the kind of stuff the teenagers used, which shows how easy it was to mess with the water.

Because of this problem, the city now has to spend \$2 million more to make the water system safer. They're adding new locks, cameras, and alarms to stop this from happening again.

#### **How to Get Ready to Be Mark Rodriguez**

- Practice explaining how the water system works in a way that's easy to understand.
- Be ready to talk about how much work it took to clean up the water.
- Think about using pictures or diagrams to help explain things.
- Be prepared to explain why this prank could have been much more dangerous.
- Remember to talk about how much money this cost the city and why they need to spend more to make things safer.

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### **John Smith (Prosecution Witness)**

#### **Who is John Smith?**

John Smith is a security guard at the water treatment plant. He's been doing this job for 5 years. He's in his early 30s and used to be in the military. John takes his job seriously but is also friendly, especially with young people. He often helps out with youth sports in the community. John feels bad about what happened because he wishes he had done more to stop it.

#### **What John Smith Says Happened**

Mr. Smith saw the teenagers near the water plant on the evening of July 14th. It was around 8:30 PM. He noticed a group of boys, about 15 to 17 years old, hanging out near a broken gate. He went over and told them to leave because they weren't supposed to be there. The boys seemed nervous but not mean.

He remembers the boys had buckets and were mixing some smelly stuff. At the time, he didn't think it was very dangerous. Mr. Smith told the boys to leave but didn't make sure they actually went away. Now he wishes he had done more.

Mr. Smith also talks about problems with security at the water plant. He says the broken gate had been reported many times but hadn't been fixed. He mentions that local teens often played sports or hung out near the plant because it was easy to get in. The workers often had trouble keeping people away from areas they shouldn't be in.

Looking back, Mr. Smith thinks he should have been more worried about what the boys were doing, especially because they had chemicals and were acting nervous. He says that after this happened, they changed all the security rules at the plant to make it safer.

#### **How to Get Ready to Be John Smith**

- Practice telling what happened in order, like you're telling a story.
- Be ready to explain why you didn't do more to make the boys leave.
- Think about how to describe what the boys looked like and what they were doing without sounding mean.
- Be prepared to talk about the security problems at the plant and why teens could easily get in.
- Remember to mention how this made the plant change its security rules.

## **HMDC Elementary Model Congress Class (Fall 2024)**

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### **Dr. Alex Patel (Defense Witness)**

#### **Who is Dr. Alex Patel?**

Dr. Alex Patel is a scientist who knows a lot about water quality. They're in their late 40s and have been studying water for over 20 years. Dr. Patel has written many important papers about water safety. They're known for looking at facts and data to understand problems. Dr. Patel doesn't live in the city but was asked to come and study the brown water problem. They've talked in court about water problems before and are good at explaining science to people who aren't scientists.

#### **What Dr. Alex Patel Says Happened**

Dr. Patel studied the brown water to see how dangerous it really was. Their team took water samples from different parts of the city over several days after the incident. They found that even though the water looked and smelled bad, it wasn't actually very dangerous to people's health.

The tests showed that the amount of bad stuff in the water was much lower than what would make people sick. Dr. Patel says the main things in the water were food coloring and common household chemicals. These might taste bad but aren't poisonous in small amounts. They calculated that someone would need to drink hundreds of gallons of the brown water to get sick.

Dr. Patel also found that the city's normal water cleaning system could remove the brown color and smell within 1-2 days without any extra help. They think that all the extra cleaning and testing the city did was probably not necessary for safety, but they understand why the city did it to make people feel better.

Dr. Patel believes that people were more scared than they needed to be. They suggest that teaching people more about water quality could help prevent such big scares in the future.

#### **How to Get Ready to Be Dr. Alex Patel**

- Practice explaining science ideas in simple words that everyone can understand.
- Be ready to talk about the difference between water that looks bad and water that is actually dangerous.
- Think about using everyday examples to help explain how much of something it takes to make people sick.
- Be prepared to explain why you think people were more scared than they needed to be, but in a nice way.
- Remember to talk about how teaching people about water quality could help in the future.

## **HMDC Elementary Model Congress Class (Fall 2024)**

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### **Dr. Sarah Johnson (Defense Witness)**

#### **Who is Dr. Sarah Johnson?**

Dr. Sarah Johnson is a psychologist who knows a lot about how teenagers think and behave. She's been doing this job for over 15 years. Dr. Johnson is in her early 40s and helps many teens in her own office. She also helps the local schools understand teen behavior. Dr. Johnson has written books about how teens grow up and often talks to parents about understanding their kids. She doesn't know the teenagers in this case personally, but she knows a lot about teens like them.

#### **What Dr. Sarah Johnson Says Happened**

Dr. Johnson talks about how teenage brains are different from adult brains. She explains that the part of the brain that helps people make good decisions and understand consequences isn't fully grown in teenagers. This part of the brain doesn't finish growing until people are in their mid-20s.

She says this is why teenagers sometimes do risky things or make bad choices, even if they're usually good kids. Dr. Johnson mentions studies that show teens are more likely to do impulsive things, especially when they're with their friends. She explains that teens often think more about what feels good right now instead of what might happen later.

Dr. Johnson says this doesn't mean the teens shouldn't be responsible for what they did. But it helps explain why they might have done something so foolish without thinking about how bad it could be. She talks about how the part of the brain that deals with feelings and rewards grows faster than the part that helps with planning and self-control. This can make it hard for teens to make good choices.

She also mentions that many teens think bad things won't happen to them. This can make them think they're safer doing risky things than they really are. Dr. Johnson explains how wanting to fit in with friends can make teens do things they wouldn't normally do.

#### **How to Get Ready to Be Dr. Sarah Johnson**

- Practice explaining brain science in simple words that are easy to understand.
- Be ready to give examples of how teen brains work differently from adult brains.
- Think about using pictures to show how the brain grows and changes.
- Be prepared to explain this information without making it sound like the teens shouldn't be responsible at all.
- Remember to talk about why teens might do risky things when they're with their friends.

## **HMDC Elementary Model Congress Class (Fall 2024)**

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### **Coach Robert Thompson (Defense Witness)**

#### **Who is Coach Robert Thompson?**

Coach Robert Thompson is a popular teacher at the local high school. He's been teaching gym and coaching sports teams for over 20 years. Coach Thompson is in his mid-50s. He's known for being tough but fair, and for helping students become good athletes and good people. He's been a mentor to many young people in the town, including the teenagers accused in this case. Both students and parents respect Coach Thompson, and people listen to what he has to say.

#### **What Coach Robert Thompson Says Happened**

Coach Thompson talks about what kind of people the accused teenagers are. He's known the boys for several years from school sports, mainly basketball and track. He says the boys have always shown good sportsmanship, worked well in teams, and been leaders both in sports and at school.

He gives examples of times when the boys did really good things. One of them organized a fundraiser to help a teammate whose family didn't have much money. Another boy often stays after practice to help younger kids get better at sports. Coach Thompson says these actions show that the boys are responsible and care about others.

Coach Thompson says that what the boys are accused of doing doesn't seem like something they would normally do. He mentions that all of the accused boys get good grades and have never been in big trouble at school. He says other students like them, and teachers respect them because they have good attitudes and like to help others.

He also talks about how the boys help out in the community through school programs. They've helped clean up the town, worked at animal shelters, and helped at homes for older people. Coach Thompson believes this shows they care about their community and understand the importance of being good citizens.

While Coach Thompson knows that what the boys are accused of is very serious, he believes it's not like their usual behavior. He thinks the boys are able to learn from their mistakes and become better people.

#### **How to Get Ready to Be Coach Robert Thompson**

- Practice giving specific examples of times when the boys showed good character.
- Be ready to talk about how this incident is different from how the boys usually behave.
- Think about how to say good things about the boys while still showing you understand how serious the situation is.
- Be prepared to describe how the boys usually make decisions in other tough situations.
- Remember to talk about how even good kids can sometimes make mistakes when they're with their friends.



## **HMDC Elementary Model Congress Class (Fall 2024)**

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### **Lisa Martinez (Defense Witness)**

#### **Who is Lisa Martinez?**

Lisa Martinez works at the water treatment plant. She's been there for 12 years. Lisa is good at her job and cares about keeping things safe. She started at the bottom and worked her way up to an important job. Lisa is part of a group that speaks up when things aren't right at work. She lives in the town and has two teenage kids. This makes her care a lot about clean water and keeping young people safe.

#### **What Lisa Martinez Says Happened**

Lisa talks about safety at the water plant. She says there were problems with keeping people out who shouldn't be there. The gate was broken, and she and her coworkers told the bosses about it many times. But it didn't get fixed because there wasn't enough money.

Lisa saw teenagers hanging out near the plant a lot. This happened about twice a week when she worked in the evenings. She says it was too easy for people to get into places they shouldn't.

She also talks about cameras at the plant. There were cameras in some places, but not everywhere. This meant some areas weren't watched all the time. Sometimes, there weren't enough workers to watch all parts of the plant.

Lisa explains that dangerous stuff was locked up tight. But other things used to clean the water were easier to get to. She thinks this might be how the teenagers got what they needed for their prank.

Lisa believes this big problem has made people realize they need to make the plant safer. She says that after this happened, they started making big changes to keep the plant more secure.

#### **How to Get Ready to Be Lisa Martinez**

- Practice talking about the safety problems at the plant in a clear way.
- Be ready to give examples of times when you or others said the plant needed to be safer.
- Think about how to explain the problems without making it sound like it's all the bosses' fault.
- Be prepared to describe how easy it was for people to get into the plant.
- Remember to talk about what has changed at the plant since this happened.

Remember, after you pick someone to be the witness, the rest of the group will become jury members or lawyers. Once you're done preparing, don't talk about the case anymore with the person who's going to be the witness. This helps keep the trial fair.