

The Closing Argument event challenges participants to review a criminal case and deliver a compelling closing argument. Competitors will take on the role of either the Prosecuting or Defense Attorney, articulating their case to a simulated courtroom.

## Entry Requirements

- Competitors in this event compete individually, not as a team.
- Chapters can only register 3 teams to compete.

## Materials

Only the below materials are permitted in the competition.

- **Photo Identification** Reference [the rulebook \(https://tpsa.info/rulebook\)](https://tpsa.info/rulebook) for details
- **3" x 5" notecard** Notes taken during prep (prior to competition).

## Procedures and Timeline

- **Prior to Competition** The regional case will be released at least one (1) month prior to the start of regional competition and the state case will be made available the day following the conclusion of the last regional conference.
  1. Review the criminal case prior to competition.
  2. Prepare an closing argument as either the Prosecuting Attorney or the Defense Attorney.
  3. Make notes on a single 3"x5" notecard. Nothing else can be brought into the competition.
- **Check In (10 min Time Limit)** Competitors must check in to their event at their designated **check-in time**. Competitors that arrive **ten (10) minutes** after their designated check-in time will be marked as no-shows and not be allowed to compete out of respect for the time commitment made by our judges and volunteers.
- **Pre-Event Briefing (5 min Time Limit)** After check-in, competitors will be guided to the designated event area. Once there, the moderator will provide a comprehensive briefing, detailing the event's instructions, rules, and procedures. This briefing ensures that each competitor is well-informed and prepared for the subsequent stages of the competition.
- **Presentation (5 min Time Limit)**
  1. Competitor will be directed to the area where he/she will present the case.
  2. Competitor will have no more than five (5) minutes to present the case to the Judge(s).
- **Evaluation and Scoring (5 min Time Limit)** After the completion of the event, judges will convene to assess each competitor's/team's performance based on a standardized rubric. This stage is conducted without the presence of the competitors. Judges will evaluate the criteria outlined in the rubric to ensure a fair and objective scoring process. Once all assessments are finalized, scores will be recorded for each competitor/team.

## Judge Qualifications

- Knowledge of information contained in closing arguments and a working knowledge of legal procedures. Ideally the judge is a criminal attorney who has delivered closing arguments in a court setting.
- Prior access to the case for review so they know what the case is about.

Criteria	Unattempted	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Proficient	Exemplary	Points
<b>Delivery</b>						
<b>Dress Code</b>	<p>0</p> <p>Does not fulfill the dress code requirements.</p>		<p>10</p> <p>Fulfills the dress code requirements.</p>			<b>Opts</b>
<b>Voice</b> Pitch, tempo, inflection, quality	<p>0</p> <p>There is no variety in pitch, tempo, or voice inflection.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>There is little variety in pitch, tempo, voice inflection.</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Could be heard most of the time. The competitors attempted to use some variety in vocal quality, but not always successfully. The quality seemed inconsistent at times.</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Spoke loudly and clearly enough to be understood. The competitors varied voice inflection (rate, pitch) volume to enhance the speech. Inflection complemented the verbal message. Pauses were attempted.</p>	<p>9</p> <p>The voice was clear. The competitors varied rate &amp; volume to enhance the speech. Rate and Volume heightened interest and complemented the verbal message. Appropriate pausing was employed.</p>	<b>Opts</b>
<b>Stage Presence</b> poise, posture, eye contact, and enthusiasm	<p>0</p> <p>No attempt was made to use body movement or gestures to enhance the message. No interest or enthusiasm for the topic came through in the presentation.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Posture, body language, and facial expressions indicated a lack of enthusiasm for the topic. Movements were distracting.</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Stiff or unnatural use of nonverbal behaviors. Body language reflects some discomfort interacting with the audience. Limited use of gestures to reinforce verbal messages. Facial expressions and body language are used to try to generate enthusiasm but seem somewhat forced.</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Maintained adequate posture and non-distracting movement during the speech. Some gestures were used. Facial expressions and body language sometimes generated an interest and enthusiasm for the topic.</p>	<p>9</p> <p>Movements &amp; gestures were purposeful and enhanced the delivery of the speech and did not distract. Body language reflects the comfort of interacting with the audience. Facial expressions and body language consistently generated a strong interest and enthusiasm for the topic.</p>	<b>Opts</b>
<b>Diction</b> Pronunciation and grammar	<p>0</p> <p>There are many distracting errors in pronunciation and/or articulation. monotone or inappropriate variation of vocal characteristics. Inconsistent with verbal message</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Delivery quality minimal. Regular verbal fillers (ex: "ahs," "uh/ums," or "you-knows") present. Delivery problems can cause disruption to messages.</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Delivery adequate. Enunciation and pronunciation are suitable. Noticeable verbal fillers (ex: "ahs," "uh/ums," or "you knows") present. The Delivery seemed inconsistent at times.</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Delivery helps to enhance the message. Clear enunciation and pronunciation. Minimal vocal fillers (ex: "ahs," "uh/ums," or "you knows"). Delivery complemented the verbal message</p>	<p>9</p> <p>Delivery emphasizes and enhances the message. Clear enunciation and pronunciation. No vocal fillers (ex: "ahs," "uh/ums," or "you-knows"). Delivery heightened interest and complemented the verbal message.</p>	<b>Opts</b>
<b>Content</b>						
<b>Recap of Evidence</b> Effectively revisit the evidence presented during the trial to bolster the main argument.	<p>0</p> <p>Did not make an effort to recap the evidence.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Failed to revisit or poorly represent the evidence, leading to confusion or missed points.</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Reviewed some key pieces of evidence but might have missed connecting them to the main argument.</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Effectively revisited most of the evidence and connected it to an overarching argument.</p>	<p>9</p> <p>Seamlessly revisited and interwove the evidence into the argument, strengthening the case's foundation.</p>	<b>Opts</b>
<b>Logically Organized</b> Structure the closing statement in a clear, sequential manner that effectively presents all required content.	<p>0</p> <p>Did not make any discernible effort to organize the statement logically.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Sequencing of ideas was unclear or ineffective, causing confusion.</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Presented ideas with a basic sequence; however, some connections between content might be missing or unclear.</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Displayed clear sequencing of ideas that mostly incorporated all required content.</p>	<p>9</p> <p>Demonstrated a coherent and logical structure that seamlessly wove together all required content.</p>	<b>Opts</b>

Criteria	Unattempted	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Proficient	Exemplary	Points
<b>Emotional Appeal</b> Engage the jury emotionally, underscoring the moral or human dimension of the case.	<b>0</b> Did not attempt any form of emotional appeal.	<b>3</b> Lacked emotional engagement or presented it in a way that felt insincere or inappropriate.	<b>5</b> Presented a basic emotional appeal that might lack depth or connection to the case.	<b>7</b> Effectively engaged with the jury's emotions, drawing a clear connection between feelings and facts.	<b>9</b> Masterfully tapped into the jury's emotions, creating a compelling and heartfelt appeal that resonates deeply.	<b>0pts</b>
<b>Fact Presentation</b> Accurately and clearly present the facts supporting their argument.	<b>0</b> Did not attempt to present relevant facts.	<b>3</b> Presented facts inaccurately or missed key details, causing potential misunderstandings.	<b>5</b> Presented most facts with clarity, but might have missed minor details or lacked depth.	<b>7</b> Provided a thorough presentation of facts with minor errors or omissions.	<b>9</b> Expertly presented all relevant facts with depth, clarity, and precision.	<b>0pts</b>
<b>Legal Relevance</b> Correctly relate facts to pertinent laws and to reference legal statutes, cases, or principles.	<b>0</b> Did not attempt to connect facts with relevant laws or provide legal references.	<b>3</b> Failed to relate facts to relevant laws or provided improper legal references.	<b>5</b> Mostly related facts to relevant laws and provided some accurate legal references.	<b>7</b> Effectively related facts to pertinent laws with mostly accurate references.	<b>9</b> Expertly intertwined facts and laws with precise and relevant legal references.	<b>0pts</b>
<b>Ethical Considerations</b> Adheres to ethical standards, truthfulness, and avoidance of misrepresentation or exaggeration.	<b>0</b> Did not exhibit discernible efforts towards ethical considerations.	<b>3</b> Displayed clear ethical breaches or made significant misrepresentations.	<b>5</b> Generally adhered to ethical considerations but had minor lapses or potential misrepresentations.	<b>7</b> Maintained ethical standards and was truthful, with minor areas for improvement.	<b>9</b> Exemplified the highest standards of ethics and truthfulness, avoiding all forms of misrepresentation.	<b>0pts</b>
<b>Final Plea</b> Makes a clear and compelling final plea to the jury for the desired decision or outcome.	<b>0</b> Did not make a discernible final plea.	<b>3</b> The final plea was weak, unclear, or lacked conviction.	<b>5</b> Made a clear plea but might have lacked strong emphasis or emotional depth.	<b>7</b> Articulated a compelling plea with strong conviction, asking the jury for the desired outcome.	<b>9</b> Delivered an unforgettable plea that left a lasting impact on the jury, rallying them towards the desired decision.	<b>0pts</b>

Total Score: 0 /100 pts