

## Fairy Tale Mock Trials

- Grade Levels: K-12
- Academic Standards: Civics and Government 5.3B, 5.3C and 5.3G

This lesson was inspired by the annual Law Day Fairy Tale Mock Trials developed and conducted by the Monroe County Bar Association through its wonderful volunteers on the Law Day Fairy Tale Trials Committee. The committee scripts and performs a new trial each year.

For information on the trials, please contact:  
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Here is a partial list of the Fairy Tale Mock Trials the Monroe County Bar has done, with topics provided:

- *In Re: Snow White* (A foster care case)
- *Vader v. Boba Fett* (Contract dispute)
- *Commonwealth v. Goldilocks* (Prosecution for burglary)
- *Commonwealth v. B.B. Wolf* (Murder of the two pigs)
- *Commonwealth v. Certain Known Unnamed Pokemon Gang* (A case about older kids cheating little kids out of Pokemon cards)
- *Eminem v. Recording Academy* (A take off on the Florida Butterfly ballot)
- *Bumble v. Olivanders* (A product liability case based on the Harry Potter novels)

### Materials

You will need a copy of the fairy tale you wish to use and adapt it into a mock trial or some sort of summary of the story. Some instructors have simply created a summary based on what the students in the class have provided. Below is an example of how one lawyer visiting a third-grade class created a mock trial with the students from the Goldilocks story. The class completed the trial in a 45-minute period.



The attorney asked the students if they knew the story of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. They did! Among the highlights of the story, as recounted by the class, was that a hungry and tired Goldilocks entered the Bears' home and, after realizing no one was home, sampled porridge, broke a chair and fell asleep in a bed only to wake-up with three bears (Mama, Papa and Baby Bear) staring at her. The police were called, and she was arrested for trespass and held for trial.

The lawyer and the class discussed what happens at a criminal trial and how certain elements of the crime must be proven beyond a reasonable doubt for a guilty conviction to hold. In this case, the class decided the crime of trespass involved "going into someone's home without permission." The class was asked how the commonwealth would prove its case, and the class realized it needed witnesses.

Two witnesses that the class thought would help the prosecution were the neighbor from across the street who watched Goldilocks check out the house after the Bears had left for their walk, and the police officer who arrested Goldilocks and also took statements from the Bears.

The teacher handled the orchestration of the trial by assigning students those roles as prosecution witnesses, as well as assigning the role of the defendant, attorneys for both sides, bailiff, judge, stenographer, court reporter and jurors. The attorney had prepared cards noting each role and

handed them out to various students until every student had a role to play. Although the students were told that Goldilocks did not have to testify as the defendant, thanks to her Fifth Amendment rights, Goldilocks wanted to tell her side of the story and was joined by a classmate from Goldilocks' school who became the second defense witness.

Opening statements were very short: "We'll prove Goldilocks trespassed." "We'll show that Goldilocks did not trespass!" The Commonwealth began its case, and things looked pretty grim for Goldilocks as the witnesses responded to non-leading questions from the prosecution lawyers. They painted a picture of the unlawful entry into the home of the Bears. Defense cross-examination could not shake either witness.

However, when the defense began its case, the student witness explained how he had been sitting between Baby Bear and Goldilocks the other day in class when Baby Bear had passed a note over to Goldilocks inviting her to come to the Bears' house to see Baby Bear's beehive science project. Objections about hearsay evidence were considered (on a third-grade level), and cross-examination produced no change in the student's story.

When Goldilocks took the stand, she said she was sorry she had fallen asleep, that she was sorry she had broken the chair, and that she was sorry she had eaten some of the porridge. But as careless as she was that day, she said that she was no trespasser because she had been invited to the Bears' house by Baby Bear.

Goldilocks produced Baby Bear's note and, after arguments about its admissibility, read it to the jury as allowed by the judge. The note even said, "Come in and wait for me if no one is home. We often go for walks in our woods!" The cross-examination did not faze Goldilocks one bit. The defense rested, each side gave closing statements, and the judge sent the jury off to deliberate with instructions that they had to find all of the elements of the crime to convict.

The jury found Goldilocks not guilty of trespassing, but the judge did lecture her on being a better visitor in the future!