
Global Warming Trial

Instructions for the Judge

As the bailiff opens the door to the class, walk to the front of the room, sit down, and say to the class:

Please be seated.

After the class sits down, please say the following:

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, we are gathered here today to decide on a most grave matter that may affect the entire world and future generations to come.

In 2003, an unprecedented heat wave struck France, leading to the deaths of thousands of elderly people. The citizens of Le Sandeaux were particularly hard hit, and now their mayor, Clair D. Air, has come to court seeking justice. Representing the people of her town, she is accusing the world's largest oil company of contributing significantly to the global warming that allegedly caused the deaths of many in Le Sandeaux.

Your task is to decide whether or not Alixico Oil Company should indeed be held responsible for this tragedy.

To help you with this task, you will take notes on the main points made by each person who speaks in the trial. Then, at the end, based on the evidence you have written, you will render a verdict of guilty or not guilty to the chairperson, who will ultimately deliver the final decision to me.

At this point, you will invite the attorneys to give their opening statements.

Prosecuting attorneys, you may now give your opening statement.

Wait for the prosecuting attorneys to give their opening statement.

Defense attorneys, you may now give your opening statement.

Wait for the defense attorneys to give their opening statement.

At this point, you will direct the attorneys to call witnesses. Because the attorneys will call several witnesses, much of what you say here will be repeated later in the trial.

Prosecuting attorneys, your first witness?

Wait for the bailiff to swear in the witness. After he or she has testified, ask the defense attorneys,

Would you like to cross-examine the witness?

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Global Warming Trial Instructions for the Judge (continued)

After the defense attorneys have cross-examined the witness, say

Defense attorneys, would you like to call your first witness to the stand?

Wait for the bailiff to swear in the witness. After he or she has testified, ask the prosecuting attorneys,

Would you like to cross-examine the witness?

After the witness has been questioned and the lawyer has said, “No further questions,” tell the witness,

You may step down.

At this point, you will repeat the process for all of the witnesses who are called to the stand. You will alternate between asking the prosecuting and the defense attorneys if they would like to call a witness to the stand. The dialogue will go something like this:

Prosecuting attorneys, you may now call your next witness to the stand.

[witness testifies]

Defense attorneys, would you like to examine the witness?

[witness answers questions]

You may step down.

Defense attorneys, you may now call your next witness to the stand.

[witness answers questions]

Prosecuting attorneys, would you like to cross-examine the witness?

[witness answers questions]

You may step down.

After all of the witnesses have testified, you will say,

Defense attorneys, you may now give your closing argument to the jury.

After they have done so, say,

Prosecuting attorneys, you may now give your closing argument to the jury.

After the trial is over, say,

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, the fate of Alixco Oil Company is now in your hands. Based on the

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Instructions for the Judge (continued)

evidence you have heard today, if you think Alixico is guilty of significantly contributing to the global warming that led to the deaths of elderly citizens in Le Sandeaux, then you must render a verdict of guilty and recommend a suitable punishment. If, however, you believe that there is a reasonable doubt regarding whether Alixico should be held responsible for these deaths, then you must render a verdict of not guilty. The lawyers, the clients, and I must now leave the room to provide an opportunity for the jury to deliberate. Court is in recess.

When the bailiff calls you back in again, say,

You may be seated.

Wait for everyone to sit down again, and then say,

Has the jury reached a verdict?

He or she will answer and give you a small slip of paper, which you read to yourself. Then say,

In the matter of Le Sandeaux versus Alixico Oil Company, what do you find?

After the chairperson has shared his or her verdict, say

Alixico Oil Company is cleared of all charges. Members of the jury, we thank you for your service. Court is adjourned.

OR

Alixico Oil Company has been found guilty of causing the deaths in Le Sandeaux and endangering lives across the planet. They have been sentenced to [read the sentence that the jury gave you]. Member of the jury, we thank you for your service. Court is adjourned.

Note: There are other functions you can perform if necessary.

- You may bang your gavel and call for “order in the court.”
- If a lawyer objects to something, you can tell her or him that the objection is “overruled” or “sustained.” If the objection is sustained, the other lawyers must stop what they are doing.
- In extreme cases, you can warn a witness or jury member that he or she is going to be held in contempt. After receiving a warning, if this person still continues the behavior, you can ask the bailiff to escort the person out of the room.