

Student Instructions for a Legislative Hearing

1. Prior to the hearing, all students should assess the selected proposal.
2. Before the hearing, student legislators may contact local legislators or other outside resource people to help them understand their role as well as current laws on the topic.
3. Prior to the hearing, student witnesses may contact local groups or local chapters of national organizations that would have an interest in this topic. You should obtain any background information that will help you in presenting that group's position on the topic, including a proposed bill that contains their views.
4. Student witnesses may wish to discuss similarities in positions with other student witnesses. You might wish to explore the possibilities of supporting a common bill proposal.
5. The committee chairperson calls the legislative hearing to order, announces the purpose of the hearing, and announces the order in which the witnesses will testify.
6. Each witness is called and permitted a set amount of time to present an opening statement, followed by questions from members of the committee.
7. The chairperson is the first to question the witness, followed by each of the other members of the committee. However, a committee member may interrupt to ask a question or make a comment at any time during the proceedings.
8. Use these suggested time limits: two to five minutes for a witness' opening statement; and five to ten minutes for questions from the chairperson and other committee members.
9. After the witnesses have been heard, legislators on the committee review testimony, discuss the proposal, and make recommendations on what their next step(s) will be.