

The Trial of George Milton

The era is the 1930's, when there are no forensics teams and no surveillance footage, but murder is still a crime. Who is really guilty? George Milton is on trial, but he refuses to take the stand or answer any questions. No one saw him do anything to Lennie Small. It is up to the jury, the lawyers and the witnesses to find out if George is guilty of murder in the first degree, or perhaps something else? The media is covering the proceedings and delivering news of the trial to a hungry audience. There is no detail too small to report to the people huddled around their radios or hanging out at newspapers stands across California!

Journalists (6):

If you are a **journalist**, imagine that you are writing a newspaper article telling all there is to know about the trial. No matter what, the first paragraph has to contain the following information: who, what, where, when, why and how? Who is on trial for doing what, where, when and how. You must also report on the testimony of the proceedings: who said and did what in court (where)? When did they say it happened? How did it happen? How did the jury react? The newspaper article requires you to cover all the aspects of the trial. You can concentrate on witness testimony, the evidence and the verdict. Your articles need proper paragraphs and quotations from at least **three** sources.

Witnesses (6):

If you are a **witness**, you are a character from the book (Candy, Curley, Slim, Carlson, Crooks, and the girl with the red dress from Weed). You have to give a written statement, based on fact from the book and a lot of imagination. Your statements require you to write at least one paragraph on each of the following:

- Introduce yourself and your background
- How did you come to be at the ranch?
- What do you know of Lennie and his death?
- Did Lennie deserve to be killed?

Defense Team (4):

If you are a **defense attorney**, you have to know the facts of the case. You also need to decide how to present it. What is your main defense argument? What questions and follow-up questions will you ask the witnesses? Do you want to interview some of the witnesses or some of the jurors? You can present evidence (i.e.: props) and make objections. For the written component, each defense lawyer will submit either his/her opening or closing speeches. Each speech requires a salutation, persuasive opening paragraph, three supporting arguments, and a persuasive conclusion that summarizes the supporting evidence.

Prosecution Team (4):

If you are a **prosecutor**, you have to know the facts of the case. You also need to decide how to present it. What is your main argument? What questions and follow-up questions will you ask the witnesses? Do you want to interview some of the witnesses or some of the jurors? You are allowed to submit evidence (i.e.: props) and make objections. For the written component, each lawyer will submit either his/her opening or closing speeches. Each speech requires a salutation, persuasive opening paragraph, three supporting arguments, and a persuasive conclusion that summarizes the supporting evidence.

Jurors (12):

If you are one of the twelve **jurors**, you have a very important role. You are one of the following: a poor migrant worker (4), a rich farmer (3), a religious man (3) or a woman (2). Women at this time are just starting to get into juries, but it is still a male-dominated society. The jury has to come to a majority decision, with the lower threshold being an 8-4 split. You have to listen very carefully to what is being said by the witnesses, lawyers and judge. You are allowed to ask for clarification on things that are said or shown. You elect a jury foreman who reads the verdict. You have to take notes during the trial. At the end, each juror will submit their vote/opinion on George's guilt or innocence based on what was said at trial, and in the voice of the character you portray (e.g.: poor migrant worker, rich farmer, religious man, woman). Your write-up will be a summary of your opinion and must include an introduction, three points detailing why you think George is/is not guilty, and a conclusion about morality and justice.

The Write-Up

All written documents must:

1. Be typed, double-spaced and a maximum of two pages
2. Conform to proper essay format of five short paragraphs
3. Address, in the final paragraph, how justice is best served

Your thesis statement will depend on your role:

- Journalists: First paragraph, 5Ws and "how"
- Witnesses: Your impression of George as you knew him
- Defense Team/Prosecution Team: Main argument
- Jurors: Your opinion

The due date for the write up is _____. **The trial is set for _____.**

Good luck and have fun!

Agenda for the Trial of George Milton

Duration: 50 Minutes

1. Jury is seated, judge and defendant are seated
2. Judge calls on the prosecution team to say their opening statement: **Maximum of 4 minutes**
3. Judge calls on the defense team to say their opening statement: **Maximum of 4 minutes**
4. Prosecution calls their first witness
5. Defense cross-examines witness
6. Prosecution calls its witnesses in-turn, defense cross-examines them
7. Once the prosecution has called its last witness, the defense team can call any outstanding witnesses
8. Prosecution's closing statements: **Maximum of 4 minutes**. This is where the prosecutors summarize what was heard in court and how it supports their case and refutes the defense's case
9. Defense's closing statements: **Maximum of 4 minutes**. This is where the defense attorneys summarize what was heard in court and how it supports their case and refutes the prosecution's case
10. Jury deliberation: if the witness testimony takes more than 23 minutes, the jury will have a maximum of **7 minutes for deliberation**
 - a. During that time, the journalists should approach the witnesses and attorneys and talk with them about the case
11. Jury Foreman tells the judge that they have a verdict
12. Judge convenes the court
13. Jury reads verdict
14. Court is adjourned