



Guide to Presenting Your Forensic Evidence

One way to present the findings of your investigation is to stage a courtroom trial, in which each member of your team plays a role in presenting the evidence as investigators would present evidence to a jury.

Someone who was not a member of your investigative team will play the roles of the judge and the defense attorney, who will cross-examine each witness.

From within your team, you should assign someone to play each of the roles listed below.

Roles:

Prosecuting attorney

Investigator in charge of processing the crime scene

Lipstick chemical analysis expert

Lip print expert

Hair analysis expert

Blood type expert

Prosecuting attorney

- 1) Presents an opening statement to the jury which should include the following facts:

Who is on trial – the suspect's name, relation to the victim, proposed motive, and proposed accomplices if any (e.g. "The defendant in this case is Molly Doyle, who was a former college roommate of Ms. Dorothy Spencer. While at college together, Ms. Doyle lost a diamond bracelet to Ms. Spencer in a bet over who would score higher on their Physics final exam. Ms. Doyle has coveted the bracelet since that time.")

What the suspect allegedly did – description of the crime committed and the investigators' theory of how it took place (e.g. "The prosecution will show that the defendant, Molly Doyle, broke into the home of Ms. Georgia Spencer and stole her diamond bracelet. Ms. Doyle took advantage of a time when she knew Ms. Spencer would be away from home to break in using a lock pick on the front door and remove the bracelet from Ms. Spencer's jewelry drawer.")

Summary of the evidence – what evidence was found at the crime scene and how it is linked to the suspect (e.g. “The prosecution will show that the defendant’s fingerprints were found at the scene of the crime.”)

- 2) Calls witnesses to the stand and asks questions of the witnesses to prompt them to describe the evidence they either collected or analyzed. (E.g. The prosecuting attorney would call the person in charge of the crime scene to the stand and ask them to describe each piece of evidence that will be presented. -- “Detective, can you describe for us the lip print found at the crime scene, it’s exact location, and how it was collected?”)
- 3) Presents the bagged evidence, photographs, and copies of lab analysis results to the jury to corroborate the testimony of the witnesses. (E.g. As the prosecuting attorney asks the person in charge of the crime scene to describe the lip print, he/she would hand a plastic bag to the jury containing the actual partial print. “Detective, is this the lip print you found at the crime scene?”)
- 4) Makes a summary statement, briefly repeating the main points of evidence.

Investigator in charge of processing the crime scene:

- 1) When called to the witness stand, answer questions posed by both the prosecuting and defense attorneys.
- 2) Be prepared to answer questions from the defense about other suspects that might have been investigated and to describe why they were eliminated.
- 3) Be prepared to describe in detail the evidence that was collected, where it was collected, how it was collected and who had access to the evidence. Be able to describe in detail the crime scene itself and the placement of various objects.

Lipstick chemical analysis expert:

- 1) When called to the witness stand, answer questions posed by both the prosecuting and defense attorneys.
- 2) Be prepared to answer questions from the defense about the validity of your test results. Be able to explain any possible sources of error and describe how you controlled for that error.
- 3) Be prepared to describe in detail how you made the decision about whether the lipstick found at the scene and the lipstick owned by the suspect were chemically identical.

Lip print expert

- 1) When called to the witness stand, answer questions posed by both the prosecuting and defense attorneys.
- 2) Be prepared to answer questions from the defense about the validity of your test results. Be able to explain any possible sources of error and describe how you controlled for that error.
- 3) Be prepared to describe in detail how you made the decision about whether the lip print found at the scene matched the suspect's lip print.

Hair analysis expert

- 1) When called to the witness stand, answer questions posed by both the prosecuting and defense attorneys.
- 2) Be prepared to answer questions from the defense about the validity of your test results. Be able to explain any possible sources of error and describe how you controlled for that error.
- 3) Be prepared to describe in detail how you made the decision about whether the hairs found at the scene matched the hairs from the suspect and/or the suspect's pets.
- 4) Be prepared to answer questions posed by the defense regarding the overall accuracy/usefulness of hair evidence.

Blood type expert

- 1) When called to the witness stand, answer questions posed by both the prosecuting and defense attorneys.
- 2) Be prepared to answer questions from the defense about the validity of your test results. Be able to explain any possible sources of error and describe how you controlled for that error.
- 3) Be prepared to answer questions posed by the attorneys regarding the likelihood that individuals chosen at random from the population would have the same blood type.