

Dursley v. Hagrid

This fictional civil trial stems from a well-known incident from the first book in the Harry Potter series. In *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, a popular character, Hagrid, uses magic to give a pig's tail to Dudley Dursley, Harry's cousin and nemesis. Mr. and Mrs. Dursley think Hagrid is responsible for paying the cost of removing the tail but Hagrid disagrees. Students will role-play the trial and discuss the importance of fairness and impartiality in the courts. Also, important concepts about courtroom procedures, evidence and witnesses will be discussed during this activity.

PRE-TOUR ACTIVITIES:

- Many students are already familiar with the storyline mentioned above. It is not necessary for students to have read any Harry Potter books to participate in this activity, however a short review of the case background can be helpful.
- Explain the difference between a civil trial and a criminal trial using the attached glossary.
- Telling the truth is always a good thing – especially in court. Talk with your students about the importance of asking a witness to take an oath to tell the truth. What would happen if someone told a lie on the witness stand?
- Judges and members of the jury are required to make their decisions based on law, not their personal feelings. Talk about the importance of not letting your personal opinion or beliefs get in the way of resolving conflict in a court of law.
- Prepare your students by telling them that some of them will have an opportunity for a speaking part during this activity. There are nine speaking parts in total, some more involved than others. If you have a desire to pre-select those students, please do so. Otherwise, the guide will provide instruction and ask the students to self-select for speaking parts. Students not playing a specific role in the trial will serve on the jury and decide the outcome of the case.

