

LAWMENTO

Free Resource Series

Moot Court Preparation Checklist

**From Registration to the Final Round —
Everything You Need**

6 Phases | 100+ Checklist Items | Scoring Rubric | Common Mistakes

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How to Use This Checklist

This checklist is organised into 6 phases that mirror the complete moot court journey — from registration to post-competition review. Work through each phase in order, ticking off items as you complete them. Items marked with ! are critical — skipping them has cost teams rounds.

THE 6 PHASES AT A GLANCE

Phase 1 — Registration & Team Formation (6+ weeks before)

Phase 2 — Understanding the Problem (5–6 weeks before)

Phase 3 — Research & Argument Building (3–5 weeks before)

Phase 4 — Memorial / Written Submission (2–3 weeks before)

Phase 5 — Oral Rounds Preparation (1–2 weeks before)

Phase 6 — Competition Day & Post-Moot (Day of & after)

PHASE 01 Registration & Team Formation

6+ weeks before the competition

Registration & Formalities

- Read the moot problem, rules, and court rules document in full
Print a copy. Annotate every rule. Ignorance of rules has caused disqualifications.
- ! Note all deadlines (registration, memorials, preliminary rounds) in a shared calendar**
- ! Register the team before the deadline — confirm all team member details are accurate**
- Pay registration fees and obtain confirmation receipt
- Identify the moot court organiser's point of contact for queries
- Download and study the official score sheet / judging rubric
- Check if the competition allows observers — arrange support team if needed

Team Formation & Roles

- Finalise speaker assignments — Speaker 1 (Petitioner/Appellant) and Speaker 2 (Respondent)
- Assign primary researcher(s) for each issue in the problem
- Designate a memorial writer / coordinator
- Set up a shared drive/folder for all team documents, research, and drafts

- Schedule weekly team sync meetings and lock in practice round dates
- Establish a rule: everyone reads every part of the problem and research — no silos

TEAM TIP

Assign roles, but insist every team member understands the full case — judges can and do ask any speaker about any issue.

Choose your speakers based on confidence, composure under pressure, and quick thinking — not just legal knowledge.

PHASE 02 Understanding the Problem

5–6 weeks before

Reading & Parsing the Problem

- Read the problem at least 3 times — once fast, once slow, once with a legal lens
- Identify all parties, their roles, and their legal relationship
- List every fact explicitly stated — and every ambiguity (intended gaps are opportunities)
- Identify the jurisdiction and applicable court (Supreme Court, High Court, arbitration tribunal, etc.)
- List every legal issue the problem raises — primary and secondary
- Check if the problem has a 'Compromis' (in international law moots) or a petition structure
- !** **Identify which facts favour your side and which must be distinguished or neutralised**

Issue Framing

- Draft 3–5 precise, arguable issues for each side
- Frame each issue as a question that has a clear legal answer — not a factual question
- Rank issues by importance — lead with your strongest argument, close with your second strongest
- Anticipate what issues the opposing side will lead with and prepare counters
- Check if any issue involves constitutional questions — these often carry more marks

FRAMING TIP

A well-framed issue is half the argument. 'Whether the petitioner has locus standi under Article 32 of the Constitution of India' is far stronger than 'The petitioner should be allowed to file this petition.'

Frame issues in a way that implies the answer you want.

PHASE 03 Research & Argument Building

3–5 weeks before

Legal Research

- Research primary sources: Constitution, relevant statutes, rules of court
- Find landmark judgements directly on point for each issue — SC/HC preferred
Use SCC Online, Manupatra, AIR, or SCCOnline for Indian law; WestLaw/LexisNexis for international.
- Find at least 3 supporting judgements per issue — depth impresses judges
- Research opposing arguments and find judgements that support the other side
Know these cases better than your opponents do.
- Research academic commentary — law review articles, Halsbury's, Wheaton, Brownlie (for intl law)
- ! Check if any cited case has been overruled, distinguished, or affirmed by a later bench**
- Create a master research document: Issue > Legal Principle > Supporting Cases > Counter-Cases

Argument Construction

- Build each argument using the IRAC structure: Issue → Rule → Application → Conclusion
- Ensure every argument is legally grounded — no 'moral' or purely policy arguments without legal backing
- Prepare 2–3 lines for each argument that can be delivered as a crisp oral submission
- Prepare a rebuttal bank: list of likely opposing arguments with your pre-planned counters
- ! Identify any arguments that are weak — decide whether to drop them or shore them up**
- Stress-test each argument: 'What is the best counter to this?' and prepare an answer
- Draft a logical flow for the oral argument: Opening > Issue 1 > Issue 2 > Prayer for Relief

RESEARCH TIP

Never cite a case you have not read in full. Judges will ask about the ratio, the bench strength, and whether it was affirmed.

A 5-judge Constitutional Bench judgement carries more weight than a 2-judge Division Bench — always note bench strength in your argument.
Use recent judgements (post-2015) wherever possible — they reflect current judicial thinking.

PHASE 04 Memorial / Written Submission

2–3 weeks before submission deadline

Memorial Structure

- Cover Page: Competition name, case title, team code, side (petitioner/respondent)
- ! Table of Contents with accurate page numbers**
- Index of Authorities: all cases, statutes, articles cited — alphabetically or by type
- Statement of Jurisdiction: why this court has jurisdiction (cite the specific provision)
- Statement of Facts: objective, concise — do not argue here, just state
- Issues Presented: list numbered issues in question form
- Summary of Arguments: 1–2 paragraphs per issue — the snapshot of your case
- Arguments Advanced: detailed legal reasoning with citations for each issue
- Prayer for Relief: specific, precise — list exactly what you are asking the court to do

Memorial Drafting & Formatting

- ! Follow the prescribed formatting rules exactly: font, size, margins, spacing, page limit**
- Use footnotes (not endnotes) for all citations — check the preferred citation format
- Cite cases in the correct format: Party v. Party, (Year) Vol. Reporter Page (Court)
- Every argument must flow from the previous — no logical gaps
- Avoid passive voice and weak phrases like 'it is submitted that' as filler — use it purposefully
- Proofread for grammar, punctuation, and citation accuracy — at least 2 team members review
- Run a plagiarism check if required by the rules
- ! Convert to PDF before submission — verify the PDF looks correct page by page**
- ! Submit before the deadline — never on the last day if possible**

MEMORIAL TIP

Judges read the memorial before your oral round. A well-written memorial sets a strong first impression and often influences how judges frame their questions.

The Summary of Arguments is the most read section — make it razor-sharp.

Avoid stuffing the memorial with every case you found. Cite 5 well-argued cases over 20 superficially mentioned ones.

PHASE 05 Oral Rounds Preparation

1–2 weeks before the competition

Structuring Your Oral Argument

- Write a full script for your opening — memorise it cold
- Do NOT write a word-for-word script for your arguments — use structured bullet notes instead
Over-scripted speakers freeze when interrupted by judges.
- Prepare a one-page 'roadmap' of your argument to hand to judges at the start (if rules allow)
- Know exactly what you will argue and for how long — time yourself ruthlessly
- Prepare your opening line: 'May it please the Court...' — practise until it is effortless
- Prepare your prayer for relief delivery — end on a strong, clear note

Practice Rounds

- ! Conduct at least 5 full practice rounds before the competition**
- Invite professors, seniors, or practitioners as mock judges — not only classmates
- Practice with interruptions — randomly interrupt speakers mid-sentence to simulate judges
- Time each speaker in every practice round — log times and adjust
- Practice answering hostile questions: 'But doesn't your argument mean that X is also permissible?'
- Practise answering: 'What is your best case on this point?' — and have a crisp answer ready
- ! Practise conceding gracefully when a judge is clearly right — stubbornness loses marks**
- Record at least 2 practice sessions and watch them back for filler words, posture, and eye contact

Case Mastery

<input type="checkbox"/>	Every speaker must be able to cite the full name, year, court, and ratio of every case in the memorial
<input type="checkbox"/>	Know bench strength of all major cases you rely on
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prepare a 1-line 'elevator pitch' for every case you cite: 'In X v. Y, the Supreme Court held that...'
<input type="checkbox"/>	Know every case the opposing side is likely to cite — and your answer to each
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prepare 10 likely judge questions per issue with model answers
<input type="checkbox"/>	Practice answering questions you don't know the answer to gracefully: 'My Lord, I would need to research that specific point, but the principle that applies here is...'

Delivery & Courtroom Etiquette

<input type="checkbox"/>	Address judges correctly: 'My Lord / My Lady' (SC), 'Your Lordship / Ladyship' (HC), 'Your Honour' (lower courts / arbitration)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Stand upright, make eye contact with the bench — do not read from notes
<input type="checkbox"/>	Speak clearly, slowly, and at a measured pace — nervousness speeds speakers up
!	Never interrupt a judge. If they interrupt you, stop immediately and listen
<input type="checkbox"/>	Never argue with a judge — acknowledge and redirect: 'My Lord, I appreciate that observation. The distinction I would draw is...'
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do not use informal language, slang, or colloquialisms under any circumstances
<input type="checkbox"/>	Practise the bow/acknowledgement at entry and exit
<input type="checkbox"/>	Know how to ask for time: 'My Lord, may I have a moment to check my notes on that citation?'

ORAL ARGUMENT TIP

The best mooters don't recite arguments — they have a conversation with the bench.

Your job is to help the judge decide in your favour. Treat every question as an opportunity, not a threat.

The moment you show that a question has rattled you, you lose credibility. Practise staying calm under fire.

PHASE 06 Competition Day & Post-Moot

Day of competition and after

The Night Before

! Lay out formal attire (black coat, white shirt/blouse, bands, gown if required) — iron everything

<input type="checkbox"/>	Pack: printed memorial copies, notes/bullet cards, pen, water, ID/registration card
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do one final light run-through of your opening and prayer — do NOT try to add new arguments
!	Sleep for at least 7 hours — fatigue kills quick thinking and sharpness
<input type="checkbox"/>	Set multiple alarms. Arrive at least 30 minutes before your round time

Competition Day — Before Your Round

<input type="checkbox"/>	Confirm draw/schedule and courtroom number with organisers
<input type="checkbox"/>	Visit the courtroom early — observe the layout, mic placement, and bench configuration
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do a 10-minute quiet warm-up: breathe deeply, review your opening, loosen your voice
<input type="checkbox"/>	Brief your team: confirm who argues what, order of speakers, time split
!	Switch phone to silent — no exceptions

During Your Round

<input type="checkbox"/>	Enter and bow to the bench — wait to be acknowledged before beginning
<input type="checkbox"/>	Introduce yourself: 'May it please the Court, I am [Name], appearing on behalf of the [Petitioner/Respondent]. My colleague [Name] will argue [Issues X].'
<input type="checkbox"/>	Deliver your roadmap clearly and seek permission to proceed
<input type="checkbox"/>	Watch the clock — signal to your partner if time is running short
<input type="checkbox"/>	If a judge asks a question mid-argument: stop, listen fully, then answer before resuming
<input type="checkbox"/>	End with a clear prayer for relief — never trail off
<input type="checkbox"/>	Thank the bench and bow before leaving

Post-Round & Post-Competition

<input type="checkbox"/>	Immediately after each round: note questions asked, judges' reactions, arguments that landed well
<input type="checkbox"/>	Debrief as a team within 30 minutes of each round — adjust for next round if in the same day
<input type="checkbox"/>	Collect feedback from judges if they offer it — treat all feedback as gold
<input type="checkbox"/>	Win or lose: attend the closing ceremony and thank organisers, judges, and opponents
<input type="checkbox"/>	After the competition: hold a full post-mortem session with your team and mentors
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify 3 things that went well and 3 things to improve for the next moot
<input type="checkbox"/>	Update your CV and LinkedIn with the moot court participation and any recognition

What Judges Are Scoring — Quick Rubric

While rubrics vary across competitions, most moots assess oral performance across these key criteria:

Criterion	Marks	What Judges Look For
Knowledge of Law	25–30%	Accuracy of legal principles, citation quality, depth of research
Argumentation & Logic	20–25%	Structure, coherence, strength of reasoning, use of IRAC
Response to Questions	20–25%	Handling of bench questions, ability to think on feet, concession style
Presentation & Delivery	15–20%	Clarity, pace, eye contact, courtroom etiquette, confidence
Use of Time	5–10%	Covering all issues, not rushing, not going over time
Memorial (if scored)	15–20%	Legal writing quality, citation accuracy, formatting compliance

Most Common Moot Court Mistakes

PREPARE FOR THIS	AVOID THIS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read every case you cite — in full Practise with hostile mock judges Know your prayer for relief by heart Concede bad points gracefully Submit memorials early Research the opposing side's arguments Know bench strength of key cases Keep eye contact with the bench Prepare for the first question: judges often open with your weakest point Bring printed copies of key cases to the round 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cite cases you have only read the headnote of Memorise a full script — you will freeze when interrupted Argue with judges or show frustration Overload your memorial with excessive citations Speak too fast under pressure Ignore formatting rules in the memorial Skip practice rounds citing lack of time Use informal language or abbreviations Arrive unprepared for basic jurisdiction questions Forget to acknowledge the bench when entering/exiting

Master Timeline

Timeline	Phase	Key Milestone
6+ weeks out	1 — Registration	Team formed, registered, rules read, calendar set
5–6 weeks out	2 — Problem Analysis	Issues framed, facts mapped, side positions locked
3–5 weeks out	3 — Research	Research complete, argument tree built, rebuttal bank ready
2–3 weeks out	4 — Memorial	Memorial drafted, reviewed, formatted, submitted
1–2 weeks out	5 — Oral Prep	5+ practice rounds, judge questions bank, delivery polished
Night before	5 — Final Prep	Attire ready, notes packed, light review, early sleep
Competition day	6 — Rounds	Arrive early, warm up, perform, debrief between rounds
Post competition	6 — Review	Collect feedback, post-mortem, update CV

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