

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*, Hagrid uses magic to give Harry's cousin and nemesis, Dudley Dursley, a pig's tail. Mr. and Mrs. Dursley think Hagrid should be responsible for paying the cost of the operation to remove the tail, but Hagrid disagrees. Students will role-play the trial and discuss the importance of fairness and impartiality in the courts. Important concepts about courtroom procedures, evidence, and witnesses will also be discussed during this activity.

PRE-TOUR ACTIVITIES:

- While 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 glossary on page 20.
- 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 the law and evidence presented, not their personal feelings. Talk about the importance of not letting your personal opinions 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. Students not playing a specific role in the trial will serve on the jury and decide the outcome of the case.

Your guide may ask the teacher or chaperone with the group to assist in identifying students to play a role. The trial is scripted and geared towards students in the 4th or 5th grade. Selected students should enjoy reading out loud and be comfortable participating in role-playing activities. Please inform your guide if you have pre-selected students to participate.