

Do You Speak Legalese? Practical Courtroom Phrases

Commands

1. State your full name and spell the last name for the record.
2. Please introduce yourself to the jury.
3. Tell the members of the jury what he was wearing, if you remember.
4. Please stand up, raise your right hand and face the clerk.
5. Let the record reflect that the witness has identified the defendant.
6. Don't belabor the point, counselor.
7. Please resume your seat.
8. As jurors, you are not to be swayed by sympathy.
9. Don't volunteer explanations of your answers.
10. Keep your own counsel, don't talk about the case.
11. The witness will resume the stand.

Requests for Information

12. Do you understand the charges I just read to you?
13. Do you swear to tell the truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?
14. What, if anything, did the defendant say to you?
15. Going back to the night of....?
16. Are you now, or have you ever been, under psychiatric care?
17. On the day in question, were you questioned by law enforcement?
18. Would it refresh your recollection?
19. Are you under the influence of any drugs, medication or alcohol?
20. Did your attorney explain to you the sentencing guidelines?

21. Did the defendant, at any time, point his weapon at you?
22. Are you entering this plea freely and voluntarily?
23. Has anybody threatened or coerced you?
24. Is the defense ready to proceed?
25. How do you plea to the charges?
26. Are you disputing the results of the breathalyzer?
27. Are you a convicted felon?
28. Do you recall making that statement?
29. Do you want the jury polled?
30. Does <the picture, the writing, etc.> reasonably and accurately depict <the building, the file, etc.>?
31. Did you advise <him/her> of <his/her> rights?
32. Have you filed a notice of ...?
33. Would it be fair to say that... prior to that time?

Requests for Permission

34. May I approach the witness?
35. Move to strike, there's no question before the witness.
36. Could I have a brief voir dire?
37. I would ask that the court instruct the witness to....
38. May we see you at sidebar, your Honor?
39. Let me rephrase that question.
40. We presented a motion to suppress.
41. At this time, we move for a Judgment of Acquittal.

42. We move for a mistrial.
43. May I beg the court's indulgence for a moment?
44. May it please the court...
45. Your Honor, may the jury be instructed to disregard that...
46. Let me call your attention to....
47. Let me direct your attention to....
48. At this time, I would like to read...
49. I would like to advise the court that...
50. May I publish these <items> to the jury?

Statements

51. At this time the witness is excused.
52. Objection, Your Honor, counsel is badgering the witness.
53. I withdraw my objection.
54. I am holding you in contempt of court.
55. The jury will disregard the previous statement.
56. If you are indigent, The Court can appoint an attorney to represent you.
57. Counsel is leading the witness, Your Honor.
58. At this time, I am denying your motion without prejudice.
59. At this time, the government <people, state> rests.
60. Criminal cause for pleading, United States versus <...>.
61. I use the struck jury method of picking a jury.
62. The evidence is overwhelming.
63. The defendant has no history of drug or alcohol abuse.