



OREGON JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT
Court Language Access Services

Chunking

Exercise:

Divide (chunk) the following text into smaller units of meaning within each paragraph.

Trial

After many weeks or months of preparation, the prosecutor is ready for the most important part of his job: the trial. The trial is a structured process where the facts of a case are presented to a jury, and they decide if the defendant is guilty or not guilty of the charge offered. During trial, the prosecutor uses witnesses and evidence to prove to the jury that the defendant committed the crime(s). The defendant, represented by an attorney, also tells his side of the story using witnesses and evidence.

In a trial, the judge — the impartial person in charge of the trial — decides what evidence can be shown to the jury. A judge is similar to a referee in a game, they are not there to play for one side or the other but to make sure the entire process is played fairly.

Jury Selection

At trial, one of the first things a prosecutor and defense attorney must do is the selection of jurors for the case. Jurors are selected to listen to the facts of the case and to determine if the defendant committed the crime. Twelve jurors are selected randomly from the jury pool (also called the “venire”), a list of potential jurors compiled from voter registration records of people living in the Federal district.

When selecting the jury, the prosecutor and defense attorney may not discriminate against any group of people. For example, the judge will not allow them to select only men or only women. A jury should represent all types of people, races, and cultures. Both lawyers are allowed to ask questions about their potential biases and may excuse jurors from service. Each side is allowed to excuse certain potential jurors without providing a reason by using a limited number of “peremptory challenges.”

Source of the text: <https://www.justice.gov/usao/justice-101/trial>. From the United States Department of Justice, Offices of the United States Attorneys’ web page.

(This is an excellent resource to learn about the steps in any judicial process that includes a glossary and courtroom images)