

Some Suggestions to Help You Be an Effective Witness

- You are sworn to tell the truth. **TELL IT.**
 - Don't try to figure out whether your answer will help or hurt "your side." Just respond truthfully to the best of your ability without exaggerating.
- Be serious and dress accordingly.
 - Act confidently in the courtroom, but save your smile for another time and place.
 - Avoid talking about the case anywhere you can be overheard.
 - It's important to be dressed neatly, not necessarily fashionably.
- Prepare yourself, but **DON'T MEMORIZE.**
 - Before you testify, try to recall the scene, the objects there, the distances and just what happened so that you can respond accurately when questioned.
- Listen carefully. **THINK, THEN ANSWER.**
 - Be sure you understand the question.
 - Ask to have it repeated if necessary.
 - Then, answer only what was asked in a clear and truthful manner.
- Speak clearly. **DON'T NOD or SHAKE YOUR HEAD.**
 - Be certain the judge, the jury and the court reporter can hear you.
 - Leave your gum at home.
- Answer only what you've been asked.
 - Don't volunteer information, but explain if necessary. Use as few words as possible to answer fully. If you can, use a simple "YES" or "NO."
- Provide facts, not your opinion.
 - The judge and the jury are interested only in the facts as you know them, not what someone told you.
 - Unless you are asked for your opinion, don't give it.
- Always be courteous. **DON'T LOSE YOUR TEMPER.**
 - Even if the lawyer questioning you appears to be rude, don't get mad! Your courtesy will win the respect of the judge and the jury. Also, your testimony may suffer if you get mad. And, **never, never argue!**
- If the judge interrupts, **STOP IMMEDIATELY!**
 - Also, stop if either attorney objects. The judge will tell you whether to answer and when to begin.
- Don't ask the judge for advice.
 - If the defense attorney's question is improper, the prosecuting attorney will take it up with the judge and you will be told whether or not to answer. If there is no objection, answer what you were asked.