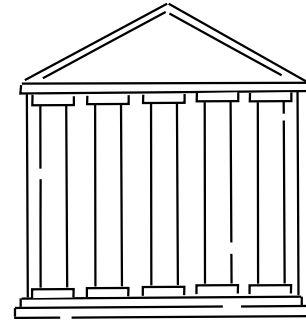


# When Witnesses and Victims Go to Court



## Be prepared:

- Get to Court 30 minutes early and find your courtroom.
- When the courtroom opens, go in and tell the clerk or officer you are present. They may ask you to wait in the hallway until it's time for you to testify.
- Most courtrooms do not allow children.



## You will raise your right hand and swear to tell the truth.

- The judge or lawyers will ask you questions. Wait until they finish the question before you start to answer.
  - Tell the truth and don't exaggerate.
  - Give complete answers.
  - Speak slowly and speak loud enough so the people in court can hear you.
  - Be yourself and just say what happened. (Do not try to memorize what you are going to say.)
  - Always look at the person who is asking you questions.
  - Say "Yes" or "No" out loud. A court reporter will write down everything you say. So, you must use words. It's not enough to nod or shake your head.
- If one of the lawyers objects, do not answer until the judge says you can.
  - Only answer the question asked. If they want more information, they will ask you more questions.
  - If you do not understand a question, say, "I don't understand".
  - If you do not know an answer, say, "I don't know".
  - If they ask you "Have you talked to anyone about the case?" you must mention your conversations with the D.A., defense lawyer, investigators and/or victim advocates.

## When you are in court:

- Dress neatly. Do not wear shorts, tank tops or hats. Do not chew gum.
- Do not talk to jurors, the judge or the defendant.
- Be calm and polite to everyone. Stay calm. Avoid gestures and facial expressions.
- If friends or relatives come to court with you, ask them to follow these rules, too.

