

Tips for being an Effective Witness

1. **Dress neatly.** Neatness in your appearance and proper attire is important.
2. **Stay calm.** Be fair and frank. Don't be too anxious to please or too eager to fight.
3. **Be courteous** to the judge, the prosecutor and the defense attorney.
4. **Listen carefully.** If you do not understand a question, say so. Do not let anyone put words into your mouth. If you make a mistake, or a slight contradiction, admit it and correct it. Wait until the entire question is asked before answering.
5. **Do not guess.** If you don't know or can't remember, say so.
6. **Take your time.** Think before you speak.
7. **Stop your answer,** if one of the lawyers calls "Objection" or if the court interrupts and wait until the court gives its ruling.
8. **Speak clearly and loudly** enough for the judge, attorneys, court stenographer and jury to hear you. Don't chew gum. Keep your hands away from your mouth and face.
9. **Answer the questions directly.** Don't volunteer information that is not asked of you. Just answer the question and stop.
10. **Never nod** your head to indicate "yes" or "no."
11. **Do not try to memorize your testimony.** Just think about what happened and answer the questions.
12. The most important rule is to **Tell the Truth.**