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978-0-521-68513-9 - The Art of Argument: A Guide to Mooting

Christopher Kee

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The Art of Argument

A Guide to Mooting

There is no greater skill for a law student than constructing a logical and compelling argument. *The Art of Argument: A Guide to Mooting* guides the reader through the process of developing, presenting and defending a convincing argument in an international moot-ing competition – a setting where students from around the world come together to argue a hypothetical case and hone their skills as advocates.

The book explains the secrets of success in mooting, in a simple, step-by-step style. It describes:

- what to do when you first get the moot problem
- how to begin researching the subject matter
- how to build an argument
- how to present written and oral submissions
- the value of practice moots
- how to handle yourself at the competition.

This book is primarily aimed at students who are preparing to participate in an international moot-ing competition. However, other students will find the techniques applicable in all areas of their study and exam preparation, and coaches of moot teams will find it an invaluable source of hints, tips and useful advice.

Christopher Kee is a lecturer in law at Deakin University, with a private practice in the field of arbitration. He has an extraordinary record of success as a participant and coach in domestic and international moot teams.

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Contents

<i>Preface</i>	<i>page xi</i>
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	<i>xv</i>

Part 1: Making the most of a moot

1	Introduction	3
	What is mooting?	3
	Why join a moot team?	4
	Job opportunities	4
	Team work	4
	Intensive training	5
	International travel	5
	New perspectives	5
	How to use this book	6
2	You’ve made the team – what next?	7
	Before you begin	7
	Timing and commitment	7
	What about money?	8
	The moot problem	10
	Read the problem	10
	Read the rules of the competition	10
	Asking for help	11
	Setting deadlines	12
3	Being part of a team	13
	The keys to a successful team	13
	Attitude	13
	Identify strengths and weaknesses in the team	13

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-68513-9 - The Art of Argument: A Guide to Mooting

Christopher Kee

Frontmatter

[More information](#)**vi Contents**

Dealing with a crisis of confidence	14
Maintaining trust	15
Do you need to be friends?	16
4 Building an argument	18
The basic steps	18
Step 1 – Read the facts and decide instinctively who should win	18
Step 2 – Identify who you are representing	19
Step 3 – Compile a list of arguments	20
Step 4 – Imagine you represent the other side	20
Step 5 – Repeat steps 3 and 4 at least five times	21
5 Written documents	23
Memoranda and memorials	23
The tips and tricks of writing	24
Knowing your purpose and your audience	24
Setting up your document	26
Referencing	29
Writing style	34
Presenting information to the team scribes	35
Structuring your document	36
Basic rules of writing	39
Editing	44
The second document	46
Preparing a genuine response	46
The outline of submissions	49
The casebook	50
6 Oral submissions	52
How to structure an oral submission	54
Making a start	54
Dealing with the expectations of moot masters	55
Creating a persuasive case	56
Handling questions	60
Responding to a submission	69
Presenting an oral submission	71
Preparation	72
Physical appearance	72

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-68513-9 - The Art of Argument: A Guide to Mooting

Christopher Kee

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

	Contents	vii
Time keeping		73
Opening formalities		74
Using case materials		77
Voice and delivery		79
Body language		82
Speaking from notes		83
Building rapport with the moot master		87
Know how the moot is to be run		89
Dealing with mistakes		92
Continue the team work		92
7 Practice moots		94
When to start doing practice moots		94
Who can be a practice moot master?		95
Variety is key		95
Using experienced moot masters		96
Making the most of practice moots		97
Record the moot		98
Inter-varsity practice moots		98
8 The competition itself		100
Getting there		100
During the competition		102
What to do when you are not mooting		104
9 After it's all over		106
Make the most of your opportunities		106
Help subsequent teams		107
Part 2: References and resources		
Competition specific/mooting skills		111
Legal writing and research		112
International commercial arbitration		113
International Court of Justice		115
International commercial law		115
Intellectual property		119
International law (general)		121
Humanitarian law/armed intervention		122
Environmental law		123
Maritime law		124

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-68513-9 - The Art of Argument: A Guide to Mooting
Christopher Kee
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

viii Contents

Part 3: International moots

Willem C Vis International Commercial Arbitration Moot	129
Willem C Vis International Commercial Arbitration Moot (East)	132
Philip C Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition	134
Annual International Inter-university Intellectual Property Moot at Oxford	136
International Maritime Moot	139
The Telders International Law Moot Court Competition	141
Jean Pictet Competition	142
ELSA Moot Court Competition EMC2	144
Manfred Lachs Space Law Moot Court Competition	144
<i>Index</i>	146

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-68513-9 - The Art of Argument: A Guide to Mooting

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Preface

Every book has a purpose and this one is no different. This book is primarily aimed at students who are interested in participating in an international moot competition. However, many of the strategies outlined in the book apply also to domestic moots, as well as to general preparation for exams and assignments. Many coaches of moot teams will find the tips suggested in this book to be extremely helpful in achieving success for their team.

The book is based on the fundamental premise that mooting, and in particular mooting at international competitions, should be fun. The fact that you are participating in a competition is simply the framework that will enable you to have fun. Winning the competition should not be your ultimate goal. Winning is certainly a worthy goal and achievement. However, the knowledge and experience you acquire along the way, and the lifelong friends you will make, are ultimately worth more than your name on a trophy.

In 1999 I was part of the Deakin University team that participated in and won the oral hearings of the Willem C Vis International Arbitration Moot held in Vienna, Austria. I have also coached teams to success in other moot competitions. At the inaugural Madhav Rao Scindia International Moot Court Competition, hosted by the University of Delhi, my students won three of the four prizes on offer, including winning the moot itself. In addition, my students have won numerous individual awards. So when you read this book be assured that it is written from experience. I understand intimately the process you are about to embark upon. I have been through the emotional highs and lows, and I know how to win.

This book is written in a style that is designed to speak to you. It is both informal and informative. It is not a stuffy legal text that

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-68513-9 - The Art of Argument: A Guide to Mooting

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)**xii Preface**

spouts rules of law that you must obey. On the contrary, this book encourages you to be creative, and to think about issues in new ways. It is a “how to” book that concentrates on practical aspects of mooting to assist you through the process; its focus is not the law that may sometimes weigh heavily on your shoulders.

I want to share my secrets of success because I do not believe they should be secrets. Mooting is a very worthwhile educative tool. Through the process of mooting you learn how to construct analytical arguments, to present your point logically and soundly, and to consider and address the queries and concerns of your opponent and the moot master. For a law student there is no greater skill than constructing a logical and compelling argument. High-level international moot competitions are probably the closest you will get to a real legal case, while you are still a student. By this I mean a case that you are responsible for: a case where you are the advocate, and where your client’s future depends on your ability to argue.

International moots serve an even greater purpose. By their very nature, international moot competitions are examples of disputes that are solved in a peaceful and non-violent manner. At a time in history we may come to remember for its acts of horrific violence and its “war on terror”, it is comforting to know that some disputes can still be resolved amicably and reasonably. With all this in mind, I wish you good luck as you embark upon your journey. I know that you will find this book useful, and I ask that you never forget the most important piece of advice I can give you – have fun!

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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