

THE TRIAL OF SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS

FOR THE MURDER OF MR. KRABS



Murder under the Sea!

The city of Bikini Bottom has been rocked with news of the death of Mr. Krabs, owner of the Krusty Krab restaurant. From the moment the under-water police discovered the gruesome scene, they suspected foul play. At first, they thought the killer might be Sheldon Plankton, owner of the Chum Bucket restaurant and long-time rival of Mr. Krabs. But no physical evidence could be tied to Plankton. As the investigation progressed, more and more of the evidence pointed to one of Mr. Krabs's employees, none other than SpongeBob SquarePants himself.

SpongeBob insists that he's innocent. The authorities don't buy Mr. SquarePants's claims, but he has found a team of defense lawyers who do. Some of the evidence does, in fact, seem to indicate that SpongeBob's story might actually be true. Whatever really happened, this is shaping up to be the trial of the underwater century!

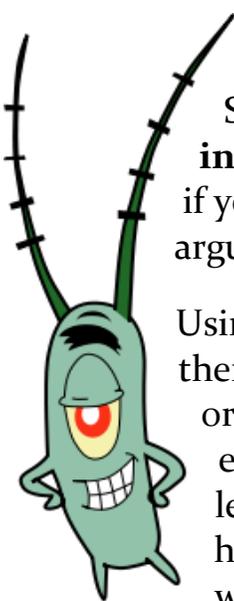


Instructions

The class will be divided into teams of lawyers, and each team will be assigned as either **the prosecution** (who want to prove SpongeBob is guilty) or **the defense** (who want to prove that he might be innocent).

Below is a list of **evidence** tied to the investigation. Some of the evidence helps the prosecution's case against Mr. SquarePants, while other pieces of evidence might help the defense's case. Your assignment is to come up with **three or four evidence-based arguments** that will help you prove your case.

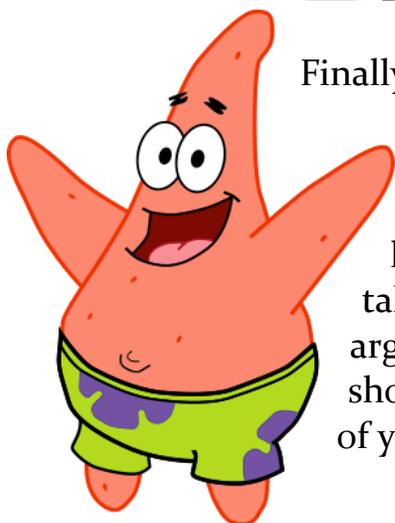
- The **prosecution** needs to prove *without a doubt* that SpongeBob murdered Mr. Krabs (use evidence to show how and why he did it and to prove that he's *definitely* guilty.)
- The **defense**, on the other hand, only has to prove that SpongeBob *might* be innocent (this means you have to use evidence to show that Mr. Krabs's death *could* have been caused by someone or something else.)



As a group, decide which pieces of evidence help your case. Discuss what each piece of evidence proves and how it might help logically prove that SpongeBob **must be guilty** (if you're the prosecution) or that he **might be innocent** (if you're the defense.) Most pieces of evidence don't prove much if you take them individually, but several facts used together can help you argue your case.

Using the evidence worksheet, group several pieces of evidence together and then explain what those pieces of evidence prove. Each of your arguments **for** or **against** SpongeBob could be based on anywhere from two items of evidence up to five or six items of evidence. Your explanation should be at least a couple full sentences long. In a moment, you'll look at an example of how you might do this if you were arguing in Plankton's defense (which you won't be because he's not the one on trial.)

Group Presentations



Finally, you need to present your evidence to the class. When you present, take turns so that someone reads off the pieces of evidence and someone else explains what point this evidence proves. Make sure everyone in your group presents something out loud in front of the class (don't want to leave anyone out.) Keep taking turns until you've presented all of your evidence and arguments. At the end of your presentation, someone in your group should present a **closing statement** that summarizes the main points of your arguments (what you have proved.)

After all groups have presented their ideas, the judge (a.k.a. your teacher) will decide which team made a better case and used the evidence most effectively.

(EXAMPLE) Plankton's Defense

Put together evidence to prove that Plankton *might* be innocent.

11. Plankton has a long history of trying to sabotage Mr. Krabs's restaurant and steal his secret recipes.
13. Three days after Mr. Krabs's death, Plankton began selling a crab burger recipe on his website, www.chumbucket.ocean. The recipe was very similar to Mr. Krabs's Krabby Patty recipe, but it wasn't exactly the same.
14. During a search of Plankton's home, investigators did NOT find the Krabby Patty recipe or any spatulas.
22. Plankton said that the recipe he started selling on his website was one that he created with the help of his computerized wife, Karen. He affirmed that he did not steal Mr. Krabs's Krabby Patty recipe and that he did not kill Mr. Krabs.

Evidence Items # 11 # 13 # 14 # 22 # _____ # _____

When you put these pieces of evidence together, what do they prove?

The recipe that Plankton started selling online was not exactly the same as Mr. Krabs's recipe. Why would he steal the Krabby Patty recipe just to change it? The fact that they couldn't find the recipe when they searched Plankton's home means they have **no proof** that he stole anything or killed anyone. It is possible that his story about creating the recipe is true.

Make sure you explain what your evidence proves. (It would be good to use phrases like "This proves that..." or "This shows that...")

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Crime Scene Evidence

1. Mr. Krabs was found dead inside of the Krusty Krab restaurant. His throat had been cut. The coroner concluded that the wound on Mr. Krabs's throat was caused by a metal spatula.
2. There was a spatula found next to the body. It was covered in Mr. Krabs's blood, but so was everything else around it. The spatula had several sets of fingerprints, including SpongeBob's, Squidward's, and Mr. Krabs's.
3. The coroner concluded that Mr. Krabs had bled to death, but the victim also had signs of blunt-force trauma to the back of his head.
4. The floor in the Krusty Krab restaurant was covered with Mr. Krabs's blood, but it was also very slick with cooking grease—several of the crime scene investigators slipped and fell during the investigation.
5. SpongeBob's footprints were found all over on the greasy floor around Mr. Krabs's body, along with the footprints of many other people. His footprints were NOT found in the blood puddle.
6. There was no sign of a break-in at the restaurant.
7. The Krusty Krab cash register was completely empty.
8. Mr. Krabs's safe was found open, and the recipe for his Krabby Patty was NOT found in it.
9. There was a tiny cut on Mr. Krabs's finger, but it was partially healed. Investigators concluded that this cut happened several weeks before Mr. Krabs's death.

Suspect Evidence

10. SpongeBob has worked at the Krusty Krab restaurant for years. In all that time, he has never received a raise.
11. Plankton has a long history of trying to sabotage Mr. Krabs's restaurant and steal his secret recipes.

12. Inside SpongeBob's home, investigators found a spatula with traces of Mr. Krabs's blood on it. The spatula handle had SpongeBob's fingerprints, as well as Mr. Krabs's.
13. Three days after Mr. Krabs's death, Plankton began selling a crab burger recipe on his website, www.chumbucket.ocean. The recipe was very similar to Mr. Krabs's Krabby Patty recipe, but it wasn't exactly the same.
14. During a search of Plankton's home, investigators did NOT find the Krabby Patty recipe or any spatulas.
15. SpongeBob was the only person other than Mr. Krabs who had keys to the restaurant and knew the combination to the safe.
16. Two days after Mr. Krabs's death, Plankton went to the bank and paid the remainder of SpongeBob's pineapple house loan. Plankton says he did this out of the goodness of his heart.

Witness Testimony

17. Sandy testified that SpongeBob was desperately in need of money because the bank was going to repossess his pineapple house. She said SpongeBob had recently asked Mr. Krabs for a raise. Mr. Krabs denied him, stating that the business wasn't doing very well and there wasn't enough money to give anyone a raise. SpongeBob was pretty upset.
18. Patrick said that SpongeBob told him, "Mr. Krabs is a greedy pig. He's gonna wish he'd given me a raise!"
19. SpongeBob said that he went to the Krusty Krab restaurant the morning of Mr. Krabs's death in order to beg one last time for a raise. When Mr. Krabs denied him again, SpongeBob told him that he quit. Then he left and went home to his pineapple. He said he believed that Mr. Krabs would have a difficult time replacing him and that he'd regret losing his best employee.
20. Squidward saw SpongeBob enter the Krusty Krab restaurant two hours before Mr. Krabs was found dead. An hour later, he heard Mr. Krabs screaming loudly. After waiting a while, Squidward went into the restaurant to investigate, and that's when he found the dead body.
21. SpongeBob testified that two weeks before Mr. Krabs's death, Mr. Krabs accidentally cut his finger on a spatula. SpongeBob offered to take it home to get it clean, but then he forgot to bring it back to the restaurant.
22. Plankton said that the recipe he started selling on his website was one that he created with the help of his computerized wife, Karen. He affirmed that he did not steal Mr. Krabs's Krabby Patty recipe and that he did not kill Mr. Krabs.
23. Patrick said he went to the Krusty Krab four hours before Mr. Krabs was found dead. The restaurant was locked, so Patrick knocked on the door. Mr. Krabs came out looking very upset. He told Patrick that the Krusty Krab was closed and that he might never sell another Krabby Patty again.

Name/Names:

The Defense Team

Put together evidence to prove that SpongeBob *might* be innocent.

Evidence Items # _____ # _____ # _____ # _____ # _____ # _____

When you put these pieces of evidence together, what do they prove?

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Evidence Items # _____ # _____ # _____ # _____ # _____ # _____

When you put these pieces of evidence together, what do they prove?

Name/Names:

The Prosecution Team

Put together evidence to prove that SpongeBob is *definitely* guilty.

Evidence Items # _____ # _____ # _____ # _____ # _____ # _____

When you put these pieces of evidence together, what do they prove?

Evidence Items # _____ # _____ # _____ # _____ # _____ # _____

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TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS

Lesson Duration

This lesson is intended to take two 45-minute class periods. It could be possible to fit it all into one 60-minute class, but the presentations will be a little rushed.

Objectives

A lot of times when students are writing or speaking persuasively, they fail to use actual evidence to prove their point. This fun mini trial lesson is intended to give students some practice doing just that. In this two-day lesson, students will work in groups to:

- Argue persuasively using evidence
- Discriminate between evidence that helps them prove their point and evidence that either doesn't help or that actually *hurts* their case
- Organize evidence into a logical sequence to lead their audience to the desired conclusion
- Vocalize what a piece of evidence proves and how it helps them establish their argument

Common Core Standards (English Language Arts)

- **Reading Standard 1** – Cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- **Writing Standard 1** – Write arguments to support a substantive claim with clear reasons and relevant and sufficient evidence.
- **Writing Standard 9** – Write in response to literary or informational sources, drawing evidence from the text to support analysis and reflection as well as to describe what they have learned.
- **Speaking and Listening Standard 3** – Evaluate the speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.
- **Speaking and Listening Standard 4** – Present information, evidence, and reasoning in a clear and well-structured way appropriate to purpose and audience.

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS

Lesson Instructions

Preparation

- Create a class set or overhead transparencies of the **lesson overview** (first three pages of the packet.)
- Make a class set of the **23 items of evidence**.
- Make copies of **student worksheets**, “The Defense Team” and “The Prosecution Team.” You could either make enough copies for all students or just make one copy per group.

Day One

- At the beginning of class, **go through the introduction and instructions as a class**.
- When it’s time to get to work, **divide the students into groups**. I would suggest four groups (two prosecution teams and two defense teams), but any number or combination of groups would work.
- You might want to **read through the list of evidence as a class**. This takes a few extra minutes of class time, but it helps make sure everyone hears all of the evidence items. (What? Some students will choose not to read the material thoroughly if it’s left up to them? Unheard of, right?)
- While students work in their groups, you might want to keep the **Plankton example** displayed on an overhead projector.
- There are **a lot of possible correct answers** students could come up with on this. Remember that this is meant to be a pretty silly lesson, so let them have fun and get creative with it. But make sure they stay on task so that each group has a complete set of arguments to present.

Day Two

- Give students a few minutes to put **final touches** on their arguments, to **assign parts** for the presentation, and to decide which group member will present the **closing statement**.
- Plan on about **five to eight minutes** for each group to present their arguments. You could either have both prosecution groups go first followed by the defense groups or alternate between prosecution and defense teams.
- When students are presenting, make sure they **read each piece of evidence** they are using rather than just reading off the list of numbers. This way their fellow students will be able to follow their reasoning better.
- After all groups have presented, open a **class discussion** by asking students what they thought the strongest arguments were.
- OPTIONAL: If you want, you could open it up for a short class debate.
- Finally, you can act as the judge and decide whether you’d find SpongeBob guilty or not guilty. Be sure to take a few minutes at the end of class to **explain why the winning group’s arguments were more effective** in order to provide some closure to the lesson.
- I’ve included a **list of example answers** below. These are just some of the possibilities. Other combinations of evidence could be used.

(POSSIBLE ANSWERS) The Defense Team

List the evidence that will help you prove that SpongeBob *might* be innocent.

Evidence Items # 1 # 4 # 3 # 2 # _____ # _____

When you put these pieces of evidence together, what do they prove?

The floor was so slick with grease that anyone could have slipped and fallen.

It is possible that Mr. Krabs was walking around the restaurant holding a metal spatula when he slipped and fell, accidentally slitting his own throat.

This accidental fall would also explain the trauma to the back of his head.

Evidence Items # 12 # 21 # 9 # 2 # _____ # _____

When you put these pieces of evidence together, what do they prove?

The cut on Mr. Krabs's finger shows that SpongeBob might be telling the truth—that the spatula found in his home was NOT the murder weapon.

Also, the bloody spatula at the crime scene could just as likely be the murder weapon, so the spatula found in SpongeBob's home doesn't prove anything.

Evidence Items # 11 # 8 # 13 # _____ # _____ # _____

When you put these pieces of evidence together, what do they prove?

SpongeBob wasn't the only one with a motive to kill Mr. Krabs. Plankton is a much more likely suspect. The fact that the Krabby Patty was missing from the safe and that a similar recipe was sold on Plankton's website right after Mr. Krabs's death means Plankton is probably the killer, not SpongeBob.

Evidence Items # 5 # 10 # _____ # _____ # _____ # _____

When you put these pieces of evidence together, what do they prove?

SpongeBob works at the Krusty Krab restaurant every day, so the fact that his footprints were found in the grease doesn't really prove anything. If

SpongeBob was the killer, then his footprints would have been in the blood as well as in the grease.

(POSSIBLE ANSWERS) The Prosecution Team

List the evidence that will help you prove that SpongeBob is *definitely* guilty.

Evidence Items # 1 # 12 # _____ # _____ # _____ # _____

When you put these pieces of evidence together, what do they prove?

SpongeBob had at his house a spatula that matched the description of the murder weapon, and it had traces of Mr. Krabs's blood on it. This proves that SpongeBob could have caused the wound that killed Mr. Krabs.

Evidence Items # 6 # 10 # 15 # _____ # _____ # _____

When you put these pieces of evidence together, what do they prove?

The fact that there was no sign of a break-in proves that Mr. Krabs must have been killed either by someone who had a key to the restaurant or someone who Mr. Krabs trusted and would willingly let into the restaurant.
SpongeBob matches both of those descriptions.

Evidence Items # 17 # 18 # 7 # _____ # _____ # _____

When you put these pieces of evidence together, what do they prove?

This proves that SpongeBob had a motive to kill Mr. Krabs. SpongeBob needed money, and he was furious with Krabs for not giving him a raise. SpongeBob's comments to Patrick could be seen as a threat. He could have killed Mr. Krabs in anger and then stolen all the money from the cash box.

Evidence Items # 17 # 11 # 8 # 16 # 13 # _____

When you put these pieces of evidence together, what do they prove?

This proves that SpongeBob and Plankton might have conspired together. SpongeBob agreed to kill Krabs and steal the Krabby Patty recipe. In return, Plankton agreed to pay off SpongeBob's house payments. After SpongeBob delivered the stolen recipe, Plankton altered it so it wouldn't be suspicious
