

How to Write an Opening Statement in Seven Steps

1. **Create an outline.** Working off an outline will keep the opening statement organized and inclusive of all the important themes of the case. Use a legal pad or a notebook to outline the opening statement. Write down the major points that need to be addressed, and then fill in each point with more detail and specific information.
2. **Appeal to the jury's emotions.** The jury is made up of real people who live real lives. Create the opening statement to sound like a story. If the case is something that the jury can relate to, they will remember and relate to the information shared by the attorney. A compelling opening statement will provide the opportunity to tell a story and get the jury members personally involved.
3. **Propose a theory.** The jury will need to know what the attorney is going to prove. Give them your side of the story. Explain what happened, what is going to be proven, and why no other explanation could possibly be credible.
4. **Present evidence and witnesses.** Give a brief introduction of what the jury can expect in terms of witnesses, testimony and evidence. Explain how those witnesses and the evidence will support your theory of the case.
5. **Keep a relaxed style.** An opening statement should be conversational and authoritative. Do not be argumentative or combative at this point. Maintain a professional demeanor that will help the jury trust you and what you say.
6. **Conclude with a major point.** The last thing you say should be memorable and important. Use a punch line repetitively, repeat the theme, and tell the jury what you expect from them.
7. **Practice the opening statement.** Run through the opening statement in front of colleagues or a mirror. Make adjustments to style and presentation.