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**COURTROOM OBJECTIONS:  
A GUIDE OF 65+ LEGAL  
OBJECTIONS FOR LITIGATORS**

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Objections are a trial attorney's most powerful tool, shaping the evidence a judge or jury hears, controlling witness testimony, and ensuring a fair trial. Yet, many attorneys, particularly those just beginning their litigation careers, hesitate or miss opportunities to make effective objections. The ability to object confidently and strategically can be the difference between winning or losing a case.

Objections are not limited to trials alone. They play a crucial role in preliminary hearings, evidentiary or pre-trial hearings, and fact-finding hearings across civil, criminal, and family court proceedings. In every one of these settings, the courtroom is fast-moving and unpredictable. An attorney must think quickly and assert objections at the right moments.

So, what is an objection? At its core, an objection is a formal protest made by an attorney against the introduction of certain testimony, exhibits, or arguments presented by opposing counsel. It serves as both a sword and a shield. As a shield, objections protect the jury from hearing improper evidence that could unfairly influence their decision-making. As a sword, objections challenge the validity of the opposing party's case, forcing them to play by the rules of evidence and legal procedure.

The importance of objections cannot be overstated. They ensure a fair and just proceeding, preventing misleading, speculative, or prejudicial evidence from influencing the outcome of a case. They also serve another critical purpose—preserving the trial record. If an attorney fails to object to improper evidence at the moment it is introduced, they lose the ability to challenge that issue on appeal. A missed objection may mean a lost opportunity for justice. The skill of making timely, well-founded objections is one that every litigator must develop, for it is a fundamental component of trial advocacy.

When preparing for trial, an evidentiary hearing, or any other court proceeding, an attorney must anticipate what objections might arise. The best trial attorneys do not enter the courtroom blindly, hoping they will recognize objections in real-time. Instead, they study the evidence meticulously, analyzing every piece with a fine-tooth comb. They ask themselves what objections must be made, what legal grounds support those objections, and how to articulate them concisely and persuasively. They also prepare for the inevitable objections from opposing counsel, strategizing in advance how to counter them effectively. While no attorney can predict every possible objection, those who prepare thoroughly position themselves to respond with confidence when the moment arises.

When it comes to trials, evidentiary hearings, fact finding hearings, etc. here is a list of the most common legal objections that you can use during any court proceedings.

## 1. Ambiguous Question

An ambiguous question is one that is unclear, vague, or open to multiple interpretations, making it difficult for the witness to answer accurately. This type of question can confuse both the witness and the jury, potentially leading to misleading or unreliable testimony. An objection to an ambiguous question asks the attorney to rephrase for clarity.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "Did you see him there?"

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. The question is ambiguous. 'There' is not clearly defined."

## 2. Answer Non-Responsive to the Question

A non-responsive answer occurs when a witness provides information that does not directly address the question asked. This often happens when a witness evades the question, goes off on a tangent, or provides unsolicited explanations. Attorneys may object to keep testimony focused and relevant.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "Did you see the defendant leave the building?"

**Witness:** "Well, I was walking my dog and had just come back from the store—"

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. The witness is non-responsive. Please instruct them to answer the question directly."

## 3. Appeal to Emotion (to the Jury)

An appeal to emotion is when an attorney attempts to sway the jury through sympathy, fear, or anger, rather than focusing on facts and evidence. This is considered improper as it encourages the jury to make decisions based on emotion rather than legal reasoning.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "You can imagine how devastating it must have been for the victim's family, and how this crime has torn their lives apart. Surely, you don't want to let this person get away with it."

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. This is an improper appeal to emotion."

## 4. Argumentative

An argumentative objection is made when an attorney's question becomes more of an argument than a request for information. This typically happens when the attorney is not seeking clarification or facts but rather attempting to make a point or argue with the witness.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "So, you expect the jury to believe that you didn't see anything? How is that even possible?"

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. The question is argumentative."

## 5. Ask and Answer

This objection is raised when the same question has already been asked and answered, and the attorney is repeating it unnecessarily. It's used to prevent redundancy and ensure the trial proceeds efficiently.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "Did you see the defendant leave the building?"

**Witness:** "Yes, I saw him leave."

**Attorney:** "And did you see him leave the building?"

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. This question has already been answered."

## 6. Assumes Facts Not in Evidence

This objection is raised when a question assumes facts that have not been established during the trial. It's used to ensure that the attorney only asks questions based on facts that have been presented in evidence.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "When you saw the defendant walk into the store, was he carrying the weapon?"

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. The fact that the defendant was carrying a weapon has not been established."

## 7. Attack on Opposing Counsel

This objection is raised when one attorney personally attacks the opposing counsel, rather than focusing on the case's facts. It is inappropriate and unprofessional in a courtroom setting.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "Well, of course, we all know that defense counsel is just trying to confuse you with their nonsense."

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. Counsel's statement is an improper attack on opposing counsel."

## 8. Authentication of Evidence

This objection is made when the attorney presents evidence but has not adequately proven that the evidence is genuine or authentic. The attorney must establish that the item or document is what it is purported to be before introducing it as evidence.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "I would like to introduce this letter as evidence."

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. There has been no proper authentication of this letter."

## 9. Badgering/Harassing the Witness

This objection is made when an attorney becomes overly aggressive or intimidating toward a witness, often by asking repeated, unnecessary, or combative questions. It's used to protect the witness from harassment and ensure that the questioning remains respectful.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "You didn't see the defendant at all, did you? You're lying, aren't you?"

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. Counsel is badgering the witness."

## 10. Best Evidence Rule Violation

This objection is raised when a copy of a document is introduced as evidence, but the original document is available and should be presented instead, per the "Best Evidence Rule." This rule requires the original document to be used when the contents of the document are the key issue in the case.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "I have a copy of the contract, Your Honor, and I would like to enter it as evidence."

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. This violates the Best Evidence Rule, as the original contract is available."

## 11. Beyond the Scope of Cross-Examination

This objection occurs when a question asked during cross-examination introduces topics or issues that were not raised during the direct examination of the witness. The purpose of cross-examination is to challenge the credibility and testimony presented during direct examination. Introducing new issues may unfairly surprise the witness or the opposing party.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney on Cross:** "What color was the defendant's jacket when you saw him?"

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. This question goes beyond the scope of direct examination. The witness was not questioned about the jacket during direct."

## 12. Beyond the Scope of Direct Examination

This objection arises when a question asked during direct examination introduces topics that were not previously addressed by the attorney. Direct examination should focus on issues that were outlined before the witness took the stand, and questions introducing new topics can be improper unless the opposing party consents.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney on Direct:** "Can you describe what happened when you met the defendant at the coffee shop?"

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. This question is beyond the scope of direct examination. The witness did not discuss meeting the defendant at the coffee shop in their direct testimony."

### 13. Bolstering the Witness Testimony

This objection is made when one party attempts to reinforce or support a witness's credibility before it has been challenged. Bolstering refers to offering additional testimony or evidence that overly emphasizes the witness's reliability without giving the opposing party the opportunity to challenge it.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "This witness has a stellar reputation for honesty, and I want to remind the jury of their long history of truthful testimony."

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. The attorney is bolstering the witness's testimony without challenge."

### 14. Calls for Speculation

An objection to a question that asks the witness to guess or offer an opinion based on insufficient facts or knowledge. Witnesses should testify only to facts they directly know, not speculate on things beyond their personal experience.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "Do you think the defendant knew what was going to happen next?"

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. The question calls for speculation."

### 15. Compound Question

This objection occurs when a question asks about multiple facts or issues at once, making it difficult for the witness to answer clearly. Compound questions are typically improper because they confuse the issues and may result in an incomplete or evasive response.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "Did you see the defendant at the scene, and was he carrying anything?"

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. This is a compound question."

### 16. Confusing or Misleading Question

This objection is made when a question is phrased in a way that could confuse or mislead the jury or the witness. A confusing or misleading question may distort the facts, resulting in inaccurate or unfair testimony.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "When did you stop beating your wife?"

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. The question is confusing and misleading because it implies guilt without evidence."

## 17. Cumulative Evidence

This objection is raised when evidence or testimony is being introduced that is overly repetitive and does not add any new value to the case. Cumulative evidence can be excluded to avoid wasting time and repeating the same points unnecessarily.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "We have already heard from three witnesses who saw the defendant leave the building."

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. This evidence is cumulative. It repeats what has already been established."

## 18. Evidence Excluded by Pretrial Order

This objection is used when a party attempts to introduce evidence that was specifically excluded in a pretrial ruling. Such evidence may have been deemed inadmissible based on rules of law or other legal grounds before the trial began.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "I would like to enter this document into evidence, even though the judge ruled it inadmissible at pretrial."

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. This evidence was excluded by pretrial order."

## 19. Failure to Disclose/Discovery Violation

An objection made when one party introduces evidence that was not properly disclosed to the opposing party during pretrial discovery. Discovery rules require the sharing of evidence and witness lists ahead of trial, and failure to do so may result in unfair surprise.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "I have a new document that I would like to introduce, even though it wasn't disclosed in discovery."

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. This evidence was not disclosed in discovery, and the opposing party has had no chance to review it."

## 20. Form of a Question

This objection is used when a question is improperly structured, such as when it is leading (on direct examination), vague, or not framed to elicit a clear and concise answer. This can include improper phrasing or failure to lay a proper foundation before asking certain questions.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "You didn't actually see the defendant at the scene, did you?"

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. The question is leading."

## 21. Hearsay

Hearsay is an out-of-court statement offered to prove the truth of the matter asserted. This is generally inadmissible because the speaker cannot be cross-examined, which undermines the reliability of the statement. It's a rule designed to ensure that only statements made under oath and subject to cross-examination are considered.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "Jane told me that she saw the defendant leave the scene of the crime."

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. That's hearsay—Jane's statement is being offered for the truth of the matter asserted."

## 22. Hearsay Within Hearsay

Hearsay within hearsay occurs when a statement that is itself hearsay contains another out-of-court statement offered to prove the truth of the matter asserted. Both layers of hearsay must meet the exceptions for admissibility to be allowed.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "Mike told me that Jane said she saw the defendant leave the scene."

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. This is hearsay within hearsay. Both statements are being offered for their truth."

## 23. Improper Character Evidence

Improper character evidence occurs when past actions or traits are introduced to prove that a person acted in a particular way on a specific occasion. Generally, character evidence is inadmissible unless it is directly relevant to a disputed issue in the case (e.g., in cases of self-defense or defamation).

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "The defendant was arrested for assault years ago, so he's the kind of person who would commit this crime."

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. This is improper character evidence and not relevant to the current case."

## 24. Improper Expert Testimony

This objection occurs when an expert witness testifies about matters that are outside of their area of expertise. Expert testimony is allowed only if it is relevant to the case and the witness has appropriate qualifications.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "Dr. Smith, can you tell us if the defendant's actions were justified legally?"

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. Dr. Smith is not a legal expert and cannot offer legal conclusions."

## 25. Improper Foundation to Introduce a Piece of Evidence

This objection arises when evidence is presented without the necessary foundational testimony to establish its authenticity or relevance. Before introducing evidence, the party must lay the proper foundation to demonstrate that the evidence is what it claims to be.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "Your Honor, we present this document as evidence."

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. No foundation has been laid for this document."

## 26. Improper Legal Conclusion

This objection occurs when a witness offers a legal conclusion rather than factual testimony. Only judges can provide legal rulings on questions of law, while witnesses should only testify to the facts they know.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "Do you think the defendant was acting in self-defense?"

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. This is an improper legal conclusion. The witness is not qualified to make that determination."

## 27. Improper or Mishandling of Evidence

This objection arises when evidence has been mishandled, altered, or the chain of custody has been broken. Proper handling and documentation of evidence is crucial for its admissibility in court.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "Your Honor, we submit this piece of evidence."

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. There has been improper handling of this evidence, and the chain of custody is compromised."

## 28. Improper Rehabilitation Question

This objection is made when an attorney improperly restores the credibility of a witness who has been impeached (challenged) by introducing testimony that does not follow the proper rules for rehabilitating the witness. Rehabilitation is generally allowed only after impeachment, and it should be limited to addressing the specific issues raised.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney (on redirect):** "But don't you trust this witness in general?"

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. This is an improper rehabilitation question, as it is not directly related to the impeachment."

## 29. Improper Use of a Hypothetical

This objection arises when a hypothetical question is posed that is speculative or not based on the evidence presented. Hypotheticals are only permissible when they are grounded in facts established during the trial.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "If the defendant had been standing next to the victim, would you say they were capable of committing the crime?"

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. This hypothetical is speculative and has no basis in the evidence."

## 30. Improper Use of Judicial Notice

This objection is raised when the court takes judicial notice of a fact that is disputable, not commonly known, or not recognized as a fact that can be judicially noticed. Judicial notice allows the court to accept certain facts without proof, but only if those facts are well-established and not subject to reasonable dispute.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "Your Honor, I request that the court take judicial notice of the fact that it is always sunny in California."

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. The requested fact is not appropriate for judicial notice and is subject to dispute."

## 31. Inability to Observe, Remember, and Communicate

This objection is raised when a witness lacks the ability to accurately perceive, recall, or effectively communicate their testimony. A witness must have firsthand knowledge and be mentally and physically capable of providing reliable testimony.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "Did you see the defendant's face clearly that night?"

**Witness:** "I wasn't wearing my glasses, and it was very dark, so I don't really know."

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. The witness has demonstrated an inability to observe and recall the event reliably."

## 32. Incompetent Witness

A witness is deemed incompetent if they are legally unqualified to testify due to factors such as age, mental incapacity, or inability to understand the obligation to tell the truth.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "Let's hear from the five-year-old who witnessed the event."

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. This witness is not competent to testify due to their young age and inability to understand the oath."

### 33. Insufficient Foundation to Qualify an Expert

This objection is made when a proposed expert witness has not been properly qualified with evidence of their education, experience, or expertise in the relevant field. Experts must be established as qualified before providing opinions.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "Dr. Brown, can you testify about the structural integrity of the building?"

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. Insufficient foundation has been laid to qualify Dr. Brown as an expert in structural engineering."

### 34. Lack of Chain of Custody

This objection arises when there is no clear documentation proving how evidence was collected, stored, or handled before being presented in court. A break in the chain of custody can cast doubt on the integrity and authenticity of the evidence.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "We submit this blood sample into evidence."

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. There is no proof of the chain of custody, so the sample's authenticity is in question."

### 35. Lack of Expert Qualification

This objection occurs when an expert witness lacks the necessary education, experience, or professional credentials to testify on a particular subject.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "Mr. Jones, an accountant, will testify about the psychological effects of trauma."

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. The witness lacks the proper qualifications to testify as an expert in psychology."

### 36. Lack of Foundation to Introduce a Piece of Evidence

This objection is raised when an attorney attempts to introduce evidence without first establishing its relevance, authenticity, or connection to the case.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "We submit this letter as Exhibit A."

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. Lack of foundation—the attorney has not established who wrote this letter or its relevance."

### 37. Lack of Personal Knowledge

A witness must have firsthand knowledge of the events they are testifying about. This objection is used when a witness testifies about something they did not personally observe.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "Did the defendant intend to commit the crime?"

**Witness:** "I wasn't there, but I heard from someone that he did."

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. The witness lacks personal knowledge."

### 38. Lack of Probative Value

This objection is raised when evidence is presented that does not significantly help prove or disprove a material fact in the case. If the evidence is irrelevant or more prejudicial than probative, it may be excluded.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "Your Honor, I'd like to present evidence that the defendant got a parking ticket last year."

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. This evidence lacks probative value and is irrelevant to the case."

### 39. Lawyer Testifying for the Witness

This objection is made when an attorney improperly suggests an answer to the witness rather than allowing them to testify freely. Attorneys should ask questions, not provide testimony.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "You saw the defendant running away, didn't you?"

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. Counsel is testifying for the witness."

### 40. Leading Question

A leading question suggests the desired answer within the question itself. While leading questions are allowed during cross-examination, they are not permitted during direct examination unless necessary (e.g., for a hostile witness).

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney on Direct:** "You saw the defendant pull out a gun, didn't you?"

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. That is a leading question."

### 41. Mischaracterization of Testimony

This objection is raised when an attorney inaccurately summarizes, exaggerates, or distorts what a witness has said, either intentionally or unintentionally. This can mislead the jury and create a false impression of the witness's statement.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "So, to confirm, you said you saw the defendant attack the victim."

**Witness:** "No, I only said I saw the defendant near the victim, but I didn't see any attack."

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. Counsel is mischaracterizing the witness's testimony."

#### **42. Misstatement of Evidence (By the Attorney During Closing Arguments)**

An objection raised when an attorney inaccurately presents the facts of the case during closing arguments. This can mislead the jury and misrepresent what was actually admitted as evidence.

**✓ Example:**

**Attorney (during closing):** "The DNA evidence directly links the defendant to the crime scene."

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. That's a misstatement of evidence. There was no DNA evidence presented in this trial."

#### **43. Misstatement of Law (By the Attorney During Closing Arguments)**

This objection is raised when an attorney misrepresents the law during closing arguments, potentially misleading the jury about legal standards they must apply. Only the judge has the authority to instruct the jury on the law.

**✓ Example:**

**Attorney (during closing):** "If the defendant didn't testify, you can assume he's guilty."

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. That is a misstatement of law. The jury cannot draw negative inferences from a defendant's silence."

#### **44. More Prejudicial Than Probative Evidence**

This objection is made when evidence is likely to create unfair bias or emotional reactions rather than proving or disproving a fact. Courts balance whether the probative value (usefulness) of the evidence outweighs its prejudicial effect.

**✓ Example:**

**Attorney:** "We'd like to introduce graphic photos of the victim's injuries to show the brutality of the crime."

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. The evidence is more prejudicial than probative."

#### **45. Narrative / Question Calling for Narrative Answers**

This objection is raised when a question invites the witness to give a long, open-ended, or speculative response instead of answering concisely. Narrative answers can confuse the jury and introduce irrelevant information.

**✓ Example:**

**Attorney:** "Tell us everything that happened from the moment you woke up until you saw the defendant."

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. The question calls for a narrative."

## 46. New Scientific Technique Not Qualified

This objection arises when a scientific method or expert testimony is based on a technique that has not been widely accepted or validated within the scientific community. Courts require expert opinions to be based on established, reliable methods.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "Our expert will introduce a new method of detecting deception based on eye movement."

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. This scientific technique has not been validated."

## 47. Not Allowing the Witness to Answer Questions

This objection is used when opposing counsel repeatedly interrupts a witness, preventing them from fully answering a question. The witness must be allowed to give complete responses.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "So, what happened next?"

**Opposing Counsel (interrupting):** "Objection!"

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. Opposing counsel is not allowing the witness to answer."

## 48. Objection to a Form of a Question

This objection is raised when a question is improperly structured in a way that makes it difficult for the witness to answer clearly. Issues may include vagueness, compound questioning, misleading phrasing, or improper assumptions.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "You saw the defendant, and then he immediately ran away, correct?"

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. The form of the question is improper."

## 49. Personal Opinion and Beliefs

This objection is made when a witness provides their personal opinion instead of factual testimony. Witnesses should testify only about what they directly observed or experienced, not their beliefs about the case.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "Do you believe the defendant is guilty?"

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. The witness's personal opinion is not relevant."

## 50. Personal Opinions and Beliefs (By Attorney or Witness)

This objection is made when an attorney or witness improperly offers personal beliefs instead of evidence-based testimony. Arguments in court must be based on facts, not personal opinions.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "In my personal opinion, this law is unfair and shouldn't apply here."

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. Counsel is offering a personal opinion rather than arguing based on the law."

## 51. Possible Tampering with Evidence

This objection is raised when there is concern that evidence may have been altered, manipulated, or otherwise compromised before being presented in court. Evidence must be properly authenticated and shown to be unaltered from its original state.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "Your Honor, we submit this document as Exhibit A."

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. There is a concern that this evidence may have been tampered with, and its authenticity is in question."

## 52. Privilege

This objection is raised when a question asks a witness to disclose information protected by legal privilege, such as attorney-client, doctor-patient, or spousal privilege. Privileged communications are generally inadmissible unless waived by the privilege holder.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "Tell us what your attorney advised you to do in this case."

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. The question seeks privileged attorney-client communication."

## 53. Questions Asking a Witness if Other Witnesses Were Lying

This objection is made when an attorney asks a witness to comment on the credibility or honesty of another witness. A witness should testify to what they personally observed, not pass judgment on others.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "So, are you saying the other witness was lying when they testified?"

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. The question improperly asks the witness to comment on another witness's credibility."

## 54. Questions Beyond Re-cross Examination

This objection is raised when an attorney, during re-cross examination, asks questions that exceed the topics covered in the previous re-direct examination. Re-cross should be limited to matters raised in re-direct.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "Let's go back to the night of the crime—"

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. This question goes beyond the scope of re-cross examination."

## 55. Questions Beyond Re-direct Examination

This objection arises when an attorney, during re-direct, introduces topics that were not addressed during cross-examination. The purpose of re-direct is to clarify points raised during cross, not to introduce new topics.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "Let's talk about your background—where did you grow up?"

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. This question goes beyond the scope of re-direct examination."

## 56. Question of Impeachment of a Collateral Matter

This objection occurs when an attorney tries to discredit a witness by questioning them about an issue that is unrelated to the case. Impeachment must be relevant to the witness's credibility in the context of the case.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "Isn't it true that you cheated on your high school exams?"

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. This impeachment attempt is on a collateral matter and is irrelevant."

## 57. Speculative Expert Testimony

An objection raised when an expert gives an opinion that is not based on reliable scientific methods or is purely speculative. Experts must rely on established methodologies and facts to form their opinions.

✓ **Example:**

**Expert Witness:** "I can't say for sure, but I think the defendant might have been acting out of stress."

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. The expert's testimony is speculative and lacks scientific basis."

## 58. Statement Referring to Inadmissible Evidence

This objection is made when an attorney references evidence that has already been ruled inadmissible by the court. Attorneys cannot attempt to introduce barred evidence through questioning or argument.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "Even though the judge excluded the police report, let's talk about what it said."

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. This statement refers to inadmissible evidence."

## 59. Statement Unsupported by the Evidence

An objection raised when an attorney makes a claim or argument that has no factual basis in the evidence presented at trial. Attorneys must base their statements on the evidence in the record.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "There was a video showing the defendant at the scene."

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. No such video was presented as evidence in this trial."

## 60. The Golden Rule Argument

This objection is raised when an attorney improperly asks jurors to put themselves in the victim's or another party's position. Such arguments are improper because they encourage jurors to make decisions based on personal emotions rather than the law and evidence.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney (during closing):** "Imagine if this happened to you or your loved one—how would you feel?"

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. This is a Golden Rule argument and is improper."

## 61. Unfair Prejudice

This objection is raised when evidence is more likely to create bias or provoke an emotional reaction than it is to help determine a material fact in the case. Courts weigh whether the evidence's prejudicial effect outweighs its probative value.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "We'd like to introduce these graphic crime scene photos into evidence."

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. This evidence is unfairly prejudicial and is likely to bias the jury."

## 62. Unfair Surprise

This objection is made when a party introduces evidence or testimony without properly disclosing it to the opposing party before trial, violating discovery rules. Courts aim to prevent "trial by ambush."

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "We have a new witness we'd like to call."

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. This is an unfair surprise. The witness was not disclosed before trial."

## 63. Unintelligible Question

This objection is raised when a question is so poorly worded, garbled, or confusing that it is difficult for the witness to understand and answer properly.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "So, when you were going over there, did you or didn't you see what you might have seen if you were looking?"

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. The question is unintelligible."

## 64. Vague

This objection is used when a question is overly broad, unclear, or lacks specificity, making it difficult for the witness to provide an accurate response.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "Tell us about what happened that day."

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. The question is vague and lacks specificity."

## 65. Violation of the Rule of Completeness

This objection occurs when only part of a document or statement is introduced in a way that creates a misleading or incomplete impression. The opposing party may request the full context be provided.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "The defendant wrote, 'I hate my job.'"

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. Violation of the Rule of Completeness. The full statement says, 'I hate my job, but I would never hurt anyone over it.'"

## 66. Vouching for a Witness's Credibility

An attorney improperly vouches for a witness's credibility when they personally assert that the witness is telling the truth rather than allowing the jury to decide.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "I know this witness is honest and would never lie."

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. Counsel is improperly vouching for the witness's credibility."

## 67. Witness Narration

This objection is made when a witness provides excessive, unsolicited details instead of answering the specific question asked. Witnesses should respond concisely and only to the question posed.

✓ **Example:**

**Attorney:** "Did you see the accident?"

**Witness:** "Well, first I woke up, had breakfast, then I went outside, and I saw my neighbor—"

**Objection:** "Objection, Your Honor. The witness is narrating instead of answering the question directly."

It is common for attorneys, particularly new ones, to second-guess themselves in the courtroom. A moment arises, a witness says something questionable, opposing counsel asks a leading question, and an attorney thinks, *Should I object?* Hesitation creeps in, and before they decide, the moment has passed. Understanding courtroom objections thoroughly eliminates this uncertainty. It provides an attorney with the knowledge and confidence to recognize improper testimony or evidence immediately and act without delay.

Mastering objections is not about memorizing a list of legal jargon; it is about developing an instinct for when to object and how to do so persuasively. One of the most effective ways to improve is through active practice. Saying objections aloud in front of a mirror, in mock trials, or with colleagues builds the muscle memory needed to deliver them fluently in court. Watching real trials, listening to courtroom podcasts, and reading trial transcripts provide valuable insights into how experienced litigators use objections to their advantage. Reviewing past cases, identifying missed opportunities for objections, and preparing counterarguments to common objections further refine an attorney's skills. The best litigators do not just know the objections—they anticipate them, prepare for them, and wield them with precision.

Objections are more than just words spoken in a courtroom; they are a strategic tool that can shape the course of a case. Whether you are a new attorney learning the ropes or a seasoned litigator refining your technique, the path to mastering objections lies in preparation, practice, and experience. The courtroom is no place for hesitation. Attorneys who understand how and when to object hold the power to guide the trial in their favor.

While state courts may have specific procedural rules, most follow a structure that mirrors federal evidentiary rules. It is always important to stay informed of any jurisdictional updates and modifications. Laws evolve, and so should an attorney's approach to trial advocacy.

Becoming a master of objections does not happen overnight. It is a skill honed through repetition, careful study, and real-world application. But for those who dedicate themselves to the craft, objections become second nature—a seamless and essential part of courtroom strategy. A litigator who wields objections effectively does not just participate in a trial; they control it.



RockStar Legal Mentorship Program

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