

# The Wedding Debacle

## A Mock Civil Court Case (Civil Procedure Simulation)

**Recommended Grade Level:** 11–12

**Subject Areas:** Civics / Government, Law, Speech & Debate, Ethics

**Time Required:** 1–2 class periods (extendable to 3 with full trial)

---

### TEACHER OVERVIEW

#### Purpose of the Simulation

This mock civil case introduces students to **civil procedure**, **breach of contract**, and **damages** using a realistic and emotionally engaging dispute. Students assume courtroom roles and evaluate whether a refund alone is sufficient compensation under civil law.

#### Important Teaching Note:

Failure to “win” the case is not failure. Civil litigation often involves uncertainty, incomplete remedies, and reasonable disagreement.

---

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Distinguish civil cases from criminal cases
- Identify the elements of a civil lawsuit
- Apply the **preponderance of the evidence** standard
- Differentiate compensatory, punitive, and court-cost damages
- Analyze witness testimony and documentary evidence
- Participate in structured legal argument and deliberation

# CASE SUMMARY

## Case Title

**Sarah v. Klein Bridal**

## Court

State Civil Court (Teacher may designate Small Claims or Trial Court)

## Nature of the Case

Breach of contract and alleged negligence involving a custom wedding dress.

---

# PARTIES

## Plaintiff: Sarah

- Ordered a **custom wedding dress** one year in advance
- Attended multiple fittings
- Dress arrived **three days before the wedding**
- Dress allegedly **did not fit properly** and could not be altered in time

## Defendant: Klein Bridal

- Bridal boutique specializing in custom wedding dresses
  - Acknowledges delayed delivery
  - Claims misfit resulted from a **manufacturing error**
  - Offered a **\$2,000 refund** as resolution
- 

# PLAINTIFF'S CLAIM

Sarah is suing for **\$10,000 total**, consisting of:

- \$5,000 – Emotional distress and inconvenience
- \$2,000 – Court costs
- \$3,000 – Punitive damages

Sarah argues the refund alone does not compensate for the harm caused.

## DEFENDANT'S POSITION

Klein Bridal argues:

- The error was **unintentional**
  - Industry-standard procedures were followed
  - A full refund is reasonable compensation
  - Punitive damages are inappropriate without willful misconduct
- 

## KEY LEGAL QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

1. Was there a **breach of contract**?
  2. Was Klein Bridal **negligent**, or was the issue unavoidable?
  3. Are emotional distress damages appropriate in contract cases?
  4. Do the facts justify punitive damages?
  5. Is a refund sufficient under civil law?
- 

## WITNESSES

### Plaintiff Witnesses

- **Sarah (Plaintiff)** – expectations, stress, last-minute consequences
- **Bridesmaids / Wedding Decorator** – impact on wedding plans

### Defense Witnesses

- **Klein Bridal Representative** – business practices and response
  - **Dress Fitter** – fitting procedures and measurement accuracy
- 

## EVIDENCE PROVIDED

- Email correspondence (timeline)
- Dress fitting records
- Manufacturing documentation
- Wedding photos and videos
- Receipts for replacement dress and alterations
- Legal invoices
- Expert testimony on industry standards (optional)

# EMAIL EVIDENCE TIMELINE

## **Email 1 – Sarah to Klein Bridal**

**Date:** July 1, 20XX (6 months before wedding)

**Subject:** Inquiry Regarding Custom Wedding Dress

Dear Klein Bridal Team,

I recently got engaged and am interested in having a custom wedding dress made. Your reputation for exquisite dresses has caught my attention.

Could we schedule a meeting to discuss design, timeline, and pricing?

Best regards,

Sarah

---

## **Email 2 – Klein Bridal to Sarah**

**Date:** July 15, 20XX

**Subject:** Consultation Appointment Confirmation

Dear Sarah,

Thank you for considering Klein Bridal. We have scheduled your consultation for [Date and Time]. Please bring any design inspiration.

We look forward to working with you.

Best regards,

Klein Bridal Team

---

## **Email 3 – Sarah to Klein Bridal**

**Date:** June 1, 20XX (1 month before wedding)

**Subject:** Dress Delivery and Final Fitting

I am reaching out to confirm the delivery date for my dress as the wedding approaches. Please let me know if everything is on track.

Thank you,

Sarah

#### **Email 4 – Klein Bridal to Sarah**

**Date:** July 1, 20XX (2 weeks before wedding)

**Subject:** Dress Delivery Update

We are pleased to inform you that your dress is scheduled for delivery on [Date]. Thank you for your patience.

Klein Bridal Team

---

#### **Email 5 – Sarah to Klein Bridal**

**Date:** July 25, 20XX (3 days before wedding)

**Subject:** Urgent: Issue with Custom Dress

I have received my dress and it does not fit properly. With the wedding three days away, this has caused extreme distress.

Please respond immediately.

Sarah

---

#### **Email 6 – Klein Bridal to Sarah**

**Date:** July 25, 20XX

**Subject:** Apology and Proposed Resolution

We sincerely apologize for the inconvenience.

We are offering a full refund of \$2,000 for the dress.

Please let us know if you accept this resolution.

Klein Bridal Team

## **Email 7 – Sarah to Klein Bridal**

**Date:** August 1, 20XX (after wedding)

**Subject:** Legal Action Consideration

While I appreciate the refund offer, the impact on my wedding was significant. I am exploring legal options to seek fair compensation.

Sincerely,  
Sarah

---

## **FITTING SESSIONS RECORD**

- **February 1:** Initial measurements and design discussion
  - **March 1:** Preliminary design review and sizing confirmation
  - **April 1:** Fabric selection and final sizing adjustments
  - **May 1:** Dress in progress; delivery timeline discussed
- 

## **MANUFACTURING TIMELINE (DEFENSE EVIDENCE)**

- Design confirmation and material procurement
- Pattern creation and cutting
- Initial assembly
- Prototype fitting
- Final assembly and embellishments
- Quality assurance (June 15)
- Delivery scheduled for July 1

Klein Bridal claims no defects were identified during quality control.

# DEPOSITION SUMMARIES

## Deposition: Sarah (Plaintiff)

Sarah testifies that:

- She relied on Klein Bridal's assurances
  - The dress did not match her measurements
  - She was forced to purchase a replacement dress
  - The experience caused emotional distress and financial loss
- 

## Deposition: Klein Bridal Representative

The representative testifies that:

- The standard process was followed
  - The error was unintentional
  - A refund was offered promptly
  - The company acted in good faith
- 

## Deposition: Dress Fitter

The fitter testifies that:

- Measurements were taken carefully
- No concerns were raised during fittings
- The misfit was unexpected
- Klein Bridal attempted to resolve the issue

## KEY VOCABULARY (FOR STUDENTS)

- **Plaintiff:** Party bringing the lawsuit
  - **Defendant:** Party being sued
  - **Breach of Contract:** Failure to fulfill a promise
  - **Negligence:** Failure to use reasonable care
  - **Damages:** Monetary compensation
  - **Compensatory Damages:** Money to make the plaintiff whole
  - **Punitive Damages:** Money to punish extreme misconduct
  - **Court Costs:** Legal expenses
  - **Burden of Proof:** Responsibility to prove claims
  - **Preponderance of the Evidence:** More likely than not
  - **Deposition:** Sworn testimony before trial
  - **Settlement:** Resolution without trial
- 

## SUGGESTED CLASSROOM USE

- Assign student roles
- Review evidence and vocabulary
- Conduct opening statements
- Question witnesses
- Allow jury deliberation or judicial ruling
- Reflect on fairness vs legality