Recent Supreme Court Cases

(VUS.15a)

Directions

Split into four groups. For each “main idea,” research your group’s case. Summarize the circumstances and legal issues of the case, explaining how it relates to the main idea. Then tell whether you agree or disagree with the Supreme Court’s decision and explain why. (You will be sharing this information with the whole class). Finally, no matter what group you belong to, fill in all of the blanks under main idea #5.

Main Idea #1

The United States Supreme Court protects the **individual rights** enumerated in the Constitution of the United States.

* Group 1: *Engel v. Vitale, 1962*
* Group 2: *Gideon v. Wainwright, 1963*
* Group 3: *Miranda v. Arizona, 1966*
* Group 4: *Tinker v. Des Moines, 1969*

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| Case Name | |
| Summary | Agree or Disagree? Why? |
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Main Idea #2

The United States Supreme Court has used the 14th Amendment to uphold the **equal protection of all Americans** under the Constitution.

* Group 1: *Brown v. Board of Education, 1954*
* Group 2: *Heart of Atlanta Motel v. U.S., 1964*
* Group 3: *Loving v. Virginia, 1967*
* Group 4: *Obergefell v. Hodges*, 2015

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| Case Name | |
| Summary | Agree or Disagree? Why? |
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Main Idea #3

The United States Supreme Court identifies a **constitutional basis for a right to privacy** that is protected from government interference.

* Group 1: *Mapp v. Ohio*, 1961
* Group 2: *Griswold v. Connecticut*, 1965
* Group 3: *Roe v. Wade*, 1973
* Group 4: *Riley v. California*, 2014

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| Case Name | |
| Summary | Agree or Disagree? Why? |
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Main Idea #4

The United States Supreme Court **invalidates legislative acts and executive actions** that the justices agree exceed the authority granted to government officials by the Constitution of the United States.

* Group 1: *New York Times v. U.S.,* 1971
* Group 2: *U.S. v. Nixon*, 1974
* Group 3: *District of Columbia v. Heller*, 2008
* Group 4: *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, 2010

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| Case Name | |
| Summary | Agree or Disagree? Why? |
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Diversity on the Supreme Court

Main Idea #5

The membership of the United States Supreme Court has become more diverse over time to include women and minorities.

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| Thurgood Marshall  Appointed in 1967 | Sandra Day O’Connor  Appointed in 1981 |
| Thurgood-marshall-2.jpg | Sandra Day O'Connor.jpg |
| Thurgood Marshall was the first \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to serve on the Supreme Court. Before his time on the Court, Marshall had established himself as a defender of civil rights through his work as an attorney for the N\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ A\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for the A\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of C\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ P\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. As a lawyer, he successfully argued for the integration of public schools in the landmark case of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ v. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (1954). | Sandra Day O’Connor was the first \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to serve on the Supreme Court. She was a moderate who sometimes sided with liberals, sometimes with conservatives, and often provided the “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_” vote when the Court was divided 5 to 4. |
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| Clarence Thomas  Appointed in 1991 | Ruth Bader Ginsburg  Appointed in 1993 |
| Clarence Thomas official SCOTUS portrait.jpg | Ruth Bader Ginsburg official SCOTUS portrait.jpg |
| Clarence Thomas is the second \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to serve on the Supreme Court. He is a member of the Court’s conservative block, authoring opinions that have interpreted the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in a strict and literal way. He has been noted for never \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ during oral arguments before the court. | Ruth Bader Ginsburg is the second \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to serve on the Supreme Court. She is a member of the Court’s liberal wing, authoring opinions that have upheld women’s right to obtain an \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to terminate unwanted pregnancies. Because of her strongly worded written opinions, she is sometimes known in popular media as “The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ R.B.G.” |
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| Sonya Sotomayor  Appointed in 2009 | Elena Kagan  Appointed in 2010 |
| https://api.oyez.org/sites/default/files/images/justices/large/sonia_sotomayor.jpg | Elena Kagan Official SCOTUS Portrait (2013).jpg |
| Sonia Sotomayor is the third \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to serve on the Supreme Court. Born in the U.S. territory of Puerto Rico, she is also the first \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ on the Court. | Elena Kagan is the fourth \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to serve on the Supreme Court. She is the most recent appointee to the Court, being nominated by President \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in 2010. |

The Supreme Court Today



The U.S. Supreme Court under Chief Justice John Roberts, 2010-present