

## 5. Is the Supreme Court Supreme? | Worksheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Crisis! Fair? Or Unfair?

Government Type: \_\_\_\_\_

Civilization Name: \_\_\_\_\_

What is the rule the government makes?

\_\_\_\_\_

What does the court do in response (for Direct Democracy, what does the mob decide?)

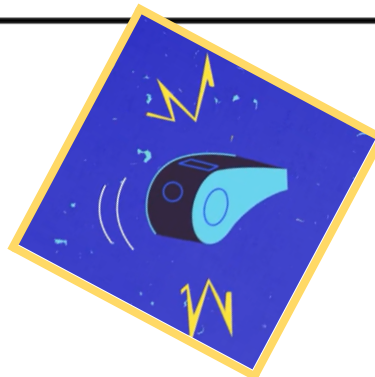
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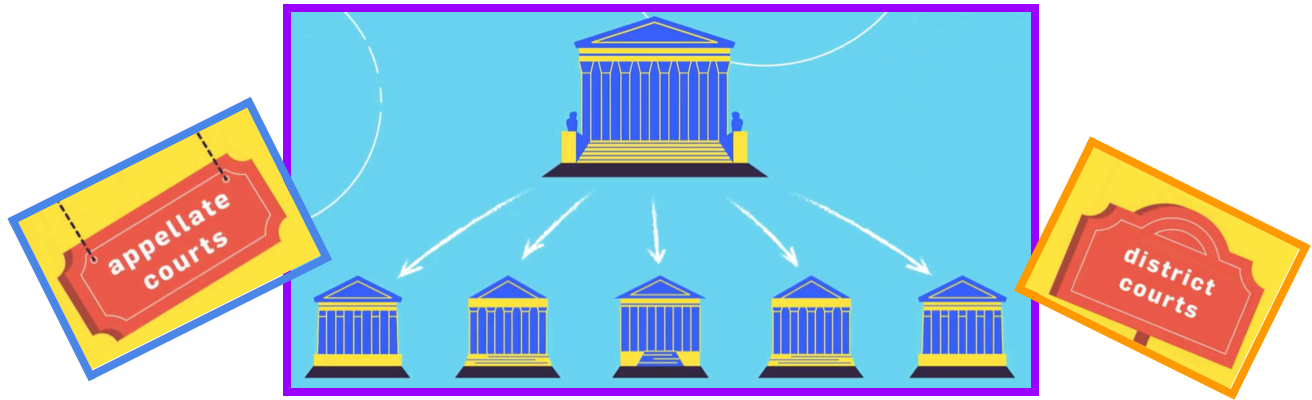
What unfair thing happens to the people/person? (what is the injustice)

\_\_\_\_\_

What limits help the courts deliver justice without interference from powerful people? (for Direct Democracy: what limits would prevent the mob from making emotional decisions?)

- ☐ **Independent judges** (the ruler cannot fire them)
- ☐ **Evidence required** (you must prove someone is guilty)
- ☐ **Fair trial** (a chance to defend yourself)
- ☐ **Jury of regular citizens**
- ☐ **Same punishment for everyone** (leaders don't get special treatment)
- ☐ **Written constitution/rulebook** that even leaders must follow
- ☐ **A separate lawmaking group** (representatives make laws; judges interpret them)





## Comprehension Questions

1. Article III of the Constitution explains the \_\_\_\_\_ branch.
2. What is the main job of this branch?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What is the highest court in the United States called? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What do the “lower federal courts” do?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Why did the Founders want judges to be “above politics”?  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. How long can federal judges serve, and why does that matter?  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What does it mean when the Supreme Court declares a law “unconstitutional”?  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What is the main concern about the Supreme Court today?  
\_\_\_\_\_



## Answer Key | Is the Supreme Court Supreme?

### Box 1: Fair? Or Unfair?

Answers will vary by group. Grade for understanding. (Use this to check student responses against the intended model.)

#### Dictatorship

**Rule the government makes:** "Spreading dangerous ideas is illegal" / "Criticizing the dictator is dangerous."

**Court response:** The dictator controls the trial (chooses judge/jury/verdict); the court finds them guilty automatically.

**Injustice:** No real trial; people are punished for criticism; courts are not fair.

**Limits that help:** ☒ Independent judges ☒ Evidence required ☒ Fair trial ☒ Written constitution/rulebook (any 2–3)

#### Absolute Monarchy

**Rule the government makes:** "Anyone who causes trouble will be punished."

**Court response:** The king tells the court to find the person guilty because the king is always right.

**Injustice:** Peaceful disagreement becomes a crime; the court cannot be fair; the king controls the outcome.

**Limits that help:** ☒ Independent judges ☒ Fair trial ☒ Evidence required ☒ Written constitution/rulebook (any 2–3)

#### Oligarchy

**Rule the government makes:** "Everyone must follow the law equally."

**Court response:** Regular person punished for stealing; leader is declared innocent for the same crime.

**Injustice:** Two sets of rules; powerful people get special treatment; law is not applied equally.

**Limits that help:** ☒ Same punishment for everyone ☒ Independent judges ☒ Evidence required ☒ Written constitution/rulebook (any 2–3)

#### Theocracy

**Rule the government makes:** "Only the leader's religion is legal."

**Court response:** Courts punish people for believing/speaking/praying differently; court supports the religious leader's rule.

**Injustice:** People are jailed for beliefs; no freedom of religion; court is controlled by religious power.

**Limits that help:** ☒ Written constitution/rulebook ☒ Fair trial ☒ Evidence required ☒ Independent judges (any 2–3)

#### Communist Government

**Rule the government makes:** "Dangerous lies are illegal."

**Court response:** Reporter arrested for sharing true information; court sides with the government because judges follow the ruling party.

**Injustice:** Truth can be punished; courts become tools of the government; people cannot challenge leaders fairly.

**Limits that help:** ☒ Independent judges ☒ Evidence required ☒ Fair trial ☒ Written constitution/rulebook (any 2–3)

### **Direct Democracy**

**Rule:** “If someone is dangerous, the people may vote to remove them for 10 years.”

**Mob decision (instead of courts):** The crowd votes quickly to remove the speaker because they are angry; there is no court to appeal to.

**Injustice:** Mob rule; emotional punishment; someone can lose rights for disagreement; no fair hearing.

**Limits that help (mob-focused):**

☒ Evidence required ☒ Fair trial ☒ Written constitution/rulebook ☒ A separate lawmaking group (representatives)

*(Optional teacher note: A time delay or second vote can also prevent emotional decisions.)*

## Comprehension Questions | Answers

1. Article III of the Constitution explains the \_\_\_\_\_ branch.  
**Judicial**
2. What is the main job of this branch?  
**To settle disputes in courts by interpreting laws and the Constitution.**
3. What is the highest court in the United States called?  
**The Supreme Court**
4. What do the “lower federal courts” do?  
**They hear most cases first and handle trials and appeals before a case might reach the Supreme Court.**
5. Why did the Founders want judges to be “above politics”?  
**So judges would make fair decisions based on the law, not popularity, trends, or political pressure.**
6. How long can federal judges serve, and why does that matter?  
**They can serve for life (if they don’t commit serious wrongdoing), which helps them stay independent and not fear being fired for unpopular decisions.**
7. What does it mean when the Supreme Court declares a law “unconstitutional”?  
**It means the law goes against the Constitution, so it cannot be enforced.**
8. What is the main concern about the Supreme Court today?  
**Some people think the Court has become too powerful and sometimes acts like it is making or rewriting laws instead of only interpreting them.**