



**LESSON PLAN: Landmark Supreme Court
Decisions: History and Effect**

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Subject Area: American History

**Keywords: U.S. History, Supreme Court,
Government, Constitutional law**

Grade level: 10th grade

Timeframe: Four or five 50 minute class periods

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OVERVIEW

In this lesson the students will examine a Supreme Court decision; from the case's inception in the lower courts, through the effects the decision has had on subsequent lower court decisions, law, and police procedure, if applicable. Successful completion of the assignment will require thoughtful use of a variety of resources. Eligible cases will be those heard in the last half of the twentieth century.

GOAL/OBJECTIVE

The students will gain an understanding of the issues that surround a case that culminates in a Supreme Court decision, the processes and procedures the Court follows, and the implications of such a ruling.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

How does a case get to the Supreme Court?

What is a "landmark" decision?

How does the court reach its decision?

How does a Supreme Court ruling affect existing and future laws and procedures?

STANDARDS

Curriculum connection: The grade ten social studies curriculum for the state of Ohio focuses on American history and the ways government policies have been shaped by the rights and responsibilities of the government and of the people.

Correlation with Ohio Social Studies Academic Content Standards:

Grade 10; Benchmark A; Government, Rules and Laws. "Examine the Constitution as a living document by analyzing its evolution through amendments and Supreme Court decisions."

Correlation with Draft Guidelines for Effective School Library Media Programs in Ohio:

"Utilize a research-based process in collaboration with teachers to integrate the library program with academic content standards and district curriculum."

Correlation with National Educational Technology Standards for Students:

Information literacy standards: The student who is information literate accesses information efficiently and effectively; evaluates information critically and competently; and uses information accurately and creatively.

TIMEFRAME

Day One: Teacher and Librarian will explain the assignment and demonstrate an effective presentation, based on an actual court case.

Students will 'grade' the presentation using the supplied rubric.

Librarian will demonstrate use of required and optional electronic resources.

Students will be given requirements and tip sheets.

Students will begin the research required to choose their topics.

Day Two: Students will get topics approved and begin research.

Days Three to Five: Students will use the library and/or computer lab for research, note taking, writing their paper, and constructing their presentation.

The final project will be due two weeks from day five.

END PRODUCT

Students will write a 5-6 page paper summarizing the history, hearing, decision, and effects of the case.

Students will present their research to the class in a 10-15 minute presentation. Visual aids are required. A PowerPoint presentation is desirable, but not required.

ACTIVITIES

To produce the paper and presentation the students will:

- Obtain a listing of landmark Supreme Court decisions and summaries and choose one that interests them
- Use a variety of print and electronic resources for their research
- Develop a search strategy that will allow them to access primary source documents from the time of the Supreme Court hearing, as well as recent literature dealing with the effects of the case
- Access images to illustrate their presentation

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PAPER AND PRESENTATION

- Choose a 'landmark' decision of the Supreme Court from the last half of the twentieth century.
- Have your topic approved by your teacher.
- Use EBSCO*host's* Secondary Search. Use Academic Search Premier and MasterFILE Premier (or choose all databases).
Use the 'folder' feature to record citations of pertinent articles. Print out this folder with at least three good citations and turn it in with your paper.
- Use Britannica--search using all databases. Narrow your search to the web guide and/or magazine and journal database as applicable. Print out at least one pertinent citation to include with your paper.
- Use at least one print resource from our school library or the public library.
- Use at least one resource from the Internet that is not an INFOhio resource.
- A five-six page paper is due two weeks from completion of your class time in the library.
- Present your research to the class. Use your paper as a guide, but do not read your paper to the class.
- Your presentation must include at least one visual. A PowerPoint presentation is nice, but not required.

TIPS:

- ❑ A list of landmark Supreme Court decisions is available by searching 'landmark decision' and 'Supreme Court' in EBSCOhost.
- ❑ Vary your search terms to produce more/better results. If you aren't getting the results you think you should be getting, ask for help. "There's nothing out there" is not acceptable.
- ❑ Some electronic resources provide the citation you will need for your bibliography. Use it.
- ❑ Cite your sources! Attribute quotes to their author. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade.
- ❑ When using Internet resources, consider the credibility of the source.
 - What are the qualifications/reputation of the writer?
 - Consider consistency with other reputable sources.
 - Does the author employ stereotypes?
 - What are the author's motivations in publishing the page or site?

ASSESSMENT: RUBRIC FOR GRADING SUPREME COURT ASSIGNMENT

CATEGORY	MEETS OR EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS 4 or 5 points	MEETS EXPECTATIONS 2 or 3 points	DOES NOT MEET EXPECTATIONS 0 or 1 point	SCORE
Length requirements	5-6 page paper 10-15 minute presentation	4 page paper shorter presentation	Paper is 3 pages or less Incomplete presentation	
Source requirements	More pertinent resources were used and cited than the four required	The four required resources were used and cited	Missing resources	
Accuracy	Dates, names, and conclusions drawn are all accurate.	Some discrepancies appear	Little regard for accuracy of information	
Time on task	Time in library and/or lab is used for research, writing, and consulting	Most of the time in the library or lab is spent on task.	Wastes time talking or in ineffective searching.	
Attention to detail	Information is organized; events reported include dates and key figures.	Generally well-organized; events reported need more detail back-up.	Sloppy organization; few or no details.	
Mechanics	Grammar, spelling and punctuation are correct. Bibliography is complete and in correct form.	Some spelling or grammatical errors. Bibliography is incomplete or not in correct form.	Errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation detract from the effectiveness of the paper. Bibliography not useable or not included.	
Graphics	Appropriate, interesting; add to the presentation.	Visuals are of questionable effect and add little to the presentation.	No visuals.	
Quality of presentation	Interesting, rehearsed, organized.	Some incompleteness or lack of organization, but interest in the material is apparent.	Not organized, hard to follow. Read form paper. No interest in material is evident.	

RESOURCES AND TECHNOLOGY

Required electronic resources:

EBSCOhost Secondary Search -- www.infohio.org
Britannica School Edition -- www.infohio.org

Suggested Web sites:

Supreme Court Historical Society -- <http://www.supremecourthistory.org>

The Oyez Project: Supreme Court Multimedia Database -- <http://oyez.nwu.edu/>

Federal Court Locator -- <http://vls.law.vill.edu/locator/fedcourt.html>

U.S. Supreme Court Online -- <http://www.uscplus.com>

Suggested books:

Landmark Decisions of the Supreme Court (Volumes I--III)

Landmark Supreme Court Cases

Supreme Court Drama: Cases That Changed America (Volumes I--IV)

Technology:

A multimedia projector is required for demonstration and for student presentations.