

Vocabulary Activity

The Judicial Branch

Content Vocabulary

1. **DIRECTIONS:** Use this graphic organizer to explain what types of cases can be heard in the United States court system. Use the terms **criminal case** and **civil case** in your answer.

Criminal case	Civil case

2. **DIRECTIONS:** Use this graphic organizer to first describe what *jurisdiction* means. Then explain the differences among the four types of jurisdictions in the United States. Use the terms **jurisdiction**, **exclusive jurisdiction**, **concurrent jurisdiction**, **original jurisdiction**, and **appellate jurisdiction** in your answer.

Type of Jurisdiction	Description
jurisdiction	
exclusive jurisdiction	
concurrent jurisdiction	
original jurisdiction	
appellate jurisdiction	

Vocabulary Activity (*continued*)

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DIRECTIONS: Read the following sentences. If the statement is true, write *T* in the first blank. If the sentence is false, write *F*, and then explain in the space provided why the statement is false. Include the vocabulary word(s) in parentheses in your explanation.

_____ 3. A **dual court system** is a court system made up of both local and state courts. (**dual court system**)

_____ 4. A **litigant** is a party to a lawsuit. (**litigant**)

_____ 5. **Nullify** means to cancel legally. (**nullify**)

_____ 6. The Latin term **stare decisis** is the name of the legal principle by which a court overrules earlier judicial rulings. (**stare decisis**)

_____ 7. A **ruling** is a detailed explanation of the legal thinking behind a court's decision in a case. (**ruling**)

8. **DIRECTIONS:** Read the following sentences and explain what the terms **majority opinion**, **concurring opinion**, and **dissenting opinion** mean based on the information in the passage. Use the chart to write your explanations.

The chief justice wrote the draft opinion. Once it was finalized, five other members of the court signed on, making it the **majority opinion**. While a sixth justice agreed with the outcome of the opinion, he wrote a **concurring opinion** based on different legal reasoning. Three justices did not agree with the majority opinion at all. One of the three justices wrote a **dissenting opinion**, which the other two signed.

Type of Opinion	Explanation
majority opinion	
concurring opinion	
dissenting opinion	

Vocabulary Activity (*continued*)

The Judicial Branch

DIRECTIONS: In the space provided before each word in the left column, write the letter of the correct definition.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| _____ 9. opinion | a. a court order to appear in court or to produce evidence |
| _____ 10. tenure | b. a judge's or court's workload of cases in a period of time |
| _____ 11. subpoena | c. specific part of a law |
| _____ 12. provision | d. a federal judge who does much of a district court judge's routine work |
| _____ 13. caseload | e. a detailed explanation of the legal thinking behind a court's decision in a case |
| _____ 14. docket | f. a written document explaining the position of one side or the other in a case |
| _____ 15. brief | g. a court's calendar, showing the schedule of cases it is to hear |
| _____ 16. magistrate judge | h. the right to hold an office once a person is confirmed |

DIRECTIONS: Read the following sentences. If the **bold** term is used correctly in the sentence, write C in the first blank. If the term is used incorrectly, write I, and then explain in the space provided why the term is not used correctly. Include the bold vocabulary term in your explanation.

- _____ 17. The **chief justice** is the leader of the U.S. Supreme Court who is also responsible for overseeing the whole federal judicial system.
- _____ 18. A **confirmation hearing** is a set of meetings by the Senate Judiciary Committee to consider and vote on people nominated to be state judges.
- _____ 19. **Judicial review** is the power of the legislative branch to say whether any justice is fit to serve on a federal court.
- _____ 20. A **writ of certiorari** is an order a higher court issues to a lower court to overturn the lower court's ruling.
- _____ 21. An **oral argument** is a public session of the U.S. Supreme Court in which lawyers for each party discuss their view of a law and answer the justices' questions.

Vocabulary Activity (*continued*)

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Academic Vocabulary

DIRECTIONS: From the vocabulary list, choose the best word to answer each question.

interpret, presume, exclude, initiate, submit

22. Which word means “to put forward”?

23. Which term is another word for “explain the meaning of”?

24. Which word means “to keep out”?

25. Which term is another word for *assume*?

26. Which word means “to begin”?