

Structure and Basics of the Federal Court System and Judicial Branch

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◆ The U.S. Supreme Court:

- ➔ _____ in the land and the _____ one established by Article III of U.S. Constitution.
- ➔ Term: _____
- ➔ Total Number of Justices = _____: one Chief, eight associate justices which serve _____ appointments. Death, resignation, retirement, or conviction on impeachment are the only ways justices leave the Supreme Court.
- ➔ No _____ - lawyers appear on behalf of litigants. Usually evaluates arguments about legal and Constitutional questions of cases.
- ➔ Each side gets _____ to argue their case before the Justices. A case goes before the court if four justices agree to hear it. This is called the "_____".
- ➔ The annual salary: associate justices \$ _____; chief justice \$ _____. Constitution prohibits Congress from reducing pay for incumbent justices. A justice may retire and earn his or her final salary for life, plus cost of living increases.
- ➔ The Court is ruled by _____. The _____ is considered the most senior member of the Court, regardless of length of service. Associate Justices are ranked by the length of service.
- ➔ During Court sessions, justices sit according to seniority, with Chief Justice in center, and Associate Justices on alternating sides, with the most senior Associate Justice on the Chief Justice's immediate right, and the most junior Associate Justice seated on the left farthest away from the Chief Justice.
- ➔ Each justice is also a " _____ " and is assigned to oversee one or more federal judicial circuits.
- ➔ Primarily an _____; has original jurisdiction over small number of cases.

◆ Three "routes" to the U.S. Supreme Court:

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◆ U.S. Courts of Appeals:

➔ Hears appeals from the _____ located within its circuit, as well as appeals from decisions of federal administrative agencies.

➔ Have strictly _____ - handling appeals from U.S. District Courts and are the intermediate appellate courts in the federal system.

➔ Considered most _____ in the federal system. The Courts of Appeals serve as the _____ on most federal cases and _____ in regions that cover millions of people (because the Supreme Court chooses to hear fewer than 100 of the more than 10,000 cases filed with it annually). The Courts of Appeals have strong policy influence on U.S. law.

➔ Court of appeals decisions establish _____. Other federal courts in same circuit must follow the appeals court's guidance in similar cases, regardless of whether the trial judge thinks the case should be decided differently.

➔ _____ - only handle cases where party argues that district court judge made an error in handling their case.

➔ Currently _____ Judges on U.S. Courts of Appeals authorized by Congress and Article III of the Constitution. Judges are nominated by the _____ - and then confirmed by the Senate.

➔ Judges have lifetime tenure and earn an annual salary of \$_____.

◆ U.S. District Courts:

➔ _____ of courts in federal system. _____ United States district courts with least one judicial district for each state, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

➔ Serve as _____ of the U.S. federal court system and handle both civil and criminal cases. They have _____ and have _____ over most cases and can conduct jury trials. There is one bankruptcy court associated with each U.S. district court.

➔ Part of the " _____ " courts established by _____. **There is no constitutional requirement that there be any district courts.** Number of judges in each district court and structure of the judicial system are set by _____ and usually based on _____.

➔ The President appoints federal district judges whose role is to decide questions of _____ and _____.