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**5 Things You Need To Know About the US Supreme Court**

**With your partner, read *Upfront Magazine’s ‘5 Things You Need to Know about the Supreme Court’ and* answer the following questions in a complete sentence(s).**

**Critical Thinking & Discussion Questions:**

1. Why does the general public know so little about the way the Supreme Court operates?

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1. Why do you think today’s Court is so polarized (divided)? How might that affect Americans’ perceptions of the Court and its rulings?

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1. Where do Supreme Court cases come from? Why is the court so selective when determining which cases to hear?

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1. What factors does the Court consider when selecting cases for its docket? Why?

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1. Describe the job of a Supreme Court law clerk. Does it surprise you that clerks wield so much influence? Explain.

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1. What role does the precedent play in the decisions of the Court? Why might the Court decide to reverse precedent?

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1. What is the purpose of a straw vote in the Supreme Court?

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1. What ruling did the court overturn in the famous case of *Brown vs. Board of Education*? How did this reversal affect the nation?

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1. What was the rationale for granting life tenure to Supreme Court justices? Is this precedent still applicable in the 21st century? (Be sure to include arguments from the *Upfront*, “Debate: Should Supreme Court Justices Continue to Have a Life Tenure?” (*Upfront*, 9/2/13, pg. 22)

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**Fast Fact:** *Only one U.S. President William Howard Taft, also served on the Supreme Court. He became Chief Justice in 1921, eight years after leaving the White House.*

