

Name: _____

Structure of the Court System: Crash Course U.S. Government and Politics Video Analysis- Key

Directions: Complete the following questions using resources from the link listed below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGyx5UEwgtA> (Crash Course Video)



1. Which courts have original jurisdiction in a case in the U.S.?
 - The trial courts.
2. Where do the vast majority of cases start?
 - In the state courts.
3. Where are the vast majority of cases solved?
 - The vast majority of disputes, criminal and civil, are settled outside of court.
4. Federally, what are the trial courts known as? How many of them are there?
 - The federal trial courts are known as the U.S. district courts.
 - There are 94 of them with 663 judges.

5. Where do almost all criminal cases start?
 - They begin in state courts.
6. When can you appeal a trial court decision?
 - When you have a reasonable claim that there was something procedurally wrong with the case or the way the law was applied, you can bring an appeal.
7. If you start in state courts, why do you usually have more chances for an appeal?
 - Most states have two levels of appellate courts, and the federal system only has one.
8. What can appellate courts refuse to do? What happens if they do this?
 - An appeals court can refuse to hear your appeal.
 - If they refuse to hear your appeal, you're case is done.
9. What are the federal appeals court known as? How are these courts distributed across the nation?
 - The appeals courts are known as circuit courts, and there are 12 of them distributed regionally throughout the U.S.
10. How are appeals (circuit courts) presided over differently than the original district courts?
 - Federal appeals are usually heard by a panel of three judges.
 - Trials in the district courts are before a single judge.
11. When do federal courts have original jurisdiction?
 - Cases where the law at issue is a federal law.
 - Cases involving treaties.
 - Cases involving the U.S. Constitution.
 - Cases where the U.S. government is a party to the litigation.
12. What other type of case can go before federal courts? Why?
 - One involving more than one state where there's more than \$70,000 at issue.
 - If the conflict is between two states, they may not agree where the trial will take place.
 - Also, federal judges are supposed to be more impartial than state judges.

13. Most of the time, what kind of jurisdiction does the Supreme Court have?

- It has appellate jurisdiction- it's the final court of appeals.

14. Can you appeal any higher if you lose an appeal before the Supreme Court?

- No, you are as far as you can go.

15. What is it called when an appellate court here's a case?

- Judicial review.

16. When does the Supreme Court have original jurisdiction in a case?

- In cases between the U.S. and a state.
- In cases between two or more states.
- In cases involving foreign ministers or ambassadors.
- In cases brought by citizens of one state against citizens of another state or against a foreign country.

17. Why does the Supreme Court have original jurisdiction over crimes which occurred on the high seas?

- The crime didn't occur in any state so where else could it be heard in court?

18. How do most cases make it to the Supreme Court?

- They make it to the Supreme Court because of appeals.

19. In order for the Supreme Court to exercise its appellate jurisdiction, what must the case do? Provide examples.

- It must raise a federal question.
- For example, due process, equal protection, or an important federal statute.

20. Why can't the Supreme Court see a lot of cases? How many requests to review cases do they get a year?

- There are only 9 justices on the Supreme Court.
- They get requests to review about 8,000 cases a year.

21. How many cases does the Supreme Court actually hand down a year?

- About 80 decisions are handed down a year.

22. What decision rules does the Supreme Court use to weed out the cases they don't want to hear? Briefly describe each.

- There has to be a case or controversy- you can't request the court to review whether or not a law is unconstitutional before it has gone into effect. There has to be an actual injury first.
- Standing- in order to bring a case, the parties must have a substantial stake in the outcome, which usually means an actual injury.
- Mootness- the case no longer requires a resolution, such as if one of the parties in the case was dead.
- Ripeness- If a potential injury has not occurred, the case is not ripe.

23. What is the political question doctrine?

- In some cases, the court would rather let the executive or the legislative branch handle the issue and not get involved.

24. What is a circuit split? How does the Supreme Court react to a circuit split?

- When the circuit courts have reached different or conflicting conclusions on the same issue.
- The Supreme Court will usually hear the case to resolve the confusion.

25. What other situations will result in the Supreme Court almost always hearing a case?

- Where the federal government itself initiated the appeal.
- A case that has a clear constitutional question, like one involving freedom of speech or religion.

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