

Key Vocabulary—Courts

breaks the law: to not follow the law

case: a question or an argument that is decided in the court system

constitutional: when something is allowed because it is in the U.S. Constitution

federal: part of the central U.S. government, not state or local government

illegal: not allowed by the law

justice: 1. a judge on the U.S. Supreme Court; 2. fairness under the law

nominate: to officially recommend a specific person to work in a political office

segregation: to make people live, work, and study separately because of their race, religion, or ethnicity

separate: to keep something or someone apart

Background Information

- The Supreme Court of the United States is the highest court in the land and the only part of the federal judiciary specifically required by the Constitution.
- All Justices are nominated by the President, confirmed by the Senate, and hold their offices under life tenure.
- Since Justices do not have to run or campaign for reelection, they are thought to be insulated from political pressure when deciding cases.
- Justices may remain in office until they resign, pass away, or are impeached and convicted by Congress.
- The Court's decisions cannot be appealed to any authority, as it is the final judicial arbiter in the United States on matters of federal law. However, the Court may consider appeals from the highest state courts or from federal appellate courts.
- The Court has original jurisdiction in cases involving ambassadors and other diplomats, and in cases between states.
- Although the Supreme Court may hear an appeal on any question of law provided it has jurisdiction, it usually does not hold trials. Instead, the Court's task is to interpret the meaning of a law, to decide whether a law is relevant to a particular set of facts, or to rule on how a law should be applied.
- Lower courts are obligated to follow the precedent set by the Supreme Court when rendering decisions.

USCIS questions

In the Courts theme:

37. What does the judicial branch do?
38. What is the highest court in the United States?
39. How many justices are on the Supreme Court?
40. Who is the Chief Justice of the United States now?

Related:

4. What is an amendment?
5. What do we call the first ten amendments to the Constitution?
6. What is one right or freedom from the First Amendment?
14. What stops one branch of government from becoming too powerful?
12. What is the "rule of law"?
84. What movement tried to end racial discrimination?

Courts

Directions: As you watch the video, write down the answers to the questions below. Eventually you'll have your answers for all 100 civics questions.

Judicial Branch: Purpose

What does the judicial branch do? USCIS #37

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The Supreme Court

What is the highest court of the United States? USCIS #38

.....

Supreme Court Justices

How many justices are on the Supreme Court? USCIS #39

.....

The Chief Justice Today

Who is the Chief Justice of the United States now? USCIS #40

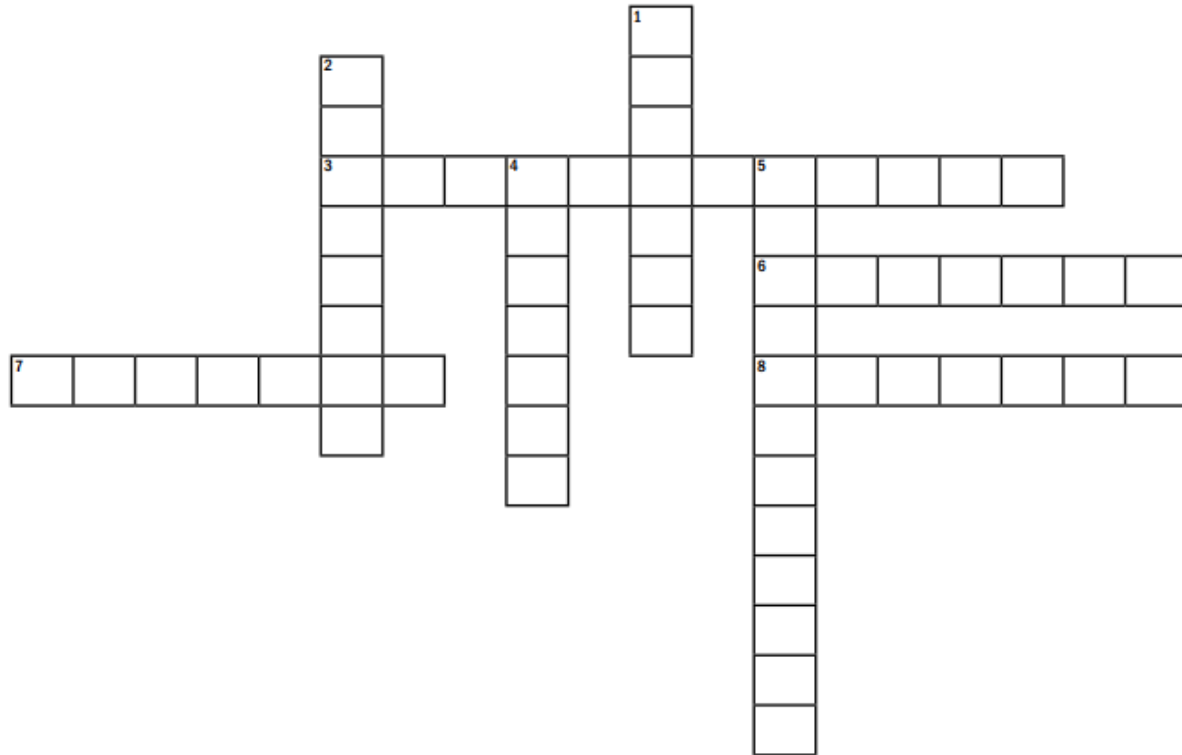
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Crossword Puzzle—Courts

Think about the Courts theme and the key vocabulary you have studied. Read the sentences below and fill in the correct word or words in each blank. Then write those words in the crossword puzzle.

IMPORTANT REMINDER:

Visit www.supremecourt.gov right before your naturalization interview for current information on the U.S. Supreme Court.



Across

3. The _____ is the highest court in the United States.
6. It is _____ to break the law.
7. The judicial branch _____ if a law goes against the Constitution.
8. _____ means part of the national U.S. government and not the state or local government.

Down

1. _____ justices are on the Supreme Court?
2. There are nine _____ on the Supreme Court.
4. The judicial branch _____ laws.
5. Who is the _____ of the United States?



Visit <http://americanhistory.si.edu/citizenship/index.html?theme=3> to go directly to the Courts theme.

The U.S. Supreme Court

The Supreme Court has nine justices, or judges.

One justice is called the Chief Justice of the United States.

The justices serve for life or until they retire.

What does the judicial branch do? _____

What is the highest court in the United States? _____

How many justices are on the Supreme Court? _____

Who is the Chief Justice of the United States now? _____