

GOVERNMENT AP

Chapter 14: The Courts

MERIDIAN NOTES

Vocabulary

1. Judicial Review	The power to declare congressional (and presidential) acts invalid because they violate the Constitution.	12. Rule of Four	An unwritten rule that requires at least four justices to agree that a case warrants consideration before it is reviewed by the U.S. Supreme Court.
2. Criminal Case	A court case that involving a crime, or violation of public order.	13. Solicitor General	The third highest ranking official of the U.S. Department of justice, and one who represents the national government before the Supreme Court.
3. Civil Case	A court case that involves a private dispute arising from such matters as accidents, contractual obligations, and divorce.	14. Amicus Curae Brief	A brief filed (with permission of the court) by an individual or a group that is not a party to a legal action but has an interest in it.
4. Plea Bargain	A defendant's admission of guilt in exchange for a less severe punishment.	15. Judicial Restraint	A judicial philosophy whereby judges adhere closely to statutes and precedents in reaching their decisions.
5. Common Law	"Judge-made" law. Legal precedents derived from previous judicial decisions.	16. Judicial Activism	A judicial philosophy whereby judges interpret existing laws and precedents loosely and interject their own values into court decisions.
6. U.S. District Court	A court within the lowest tier of the three-tiered federal court system; a court where ligation begins.	17. Judgement	The judicial decision in a court case.
7. U.S. Court of Appeals	A court within the second tier of the three-tiered federal court system, to which the decision of the district courts and federal agencies may be appealed for review.	18. Arguement	The heart of a judicial opinion; its logical content separated from facts, rhetotic
8. Precedent	Judicial ruling that serves as the basis in a subsequent case.	19. Concurrence	The agreement of a judge with the coust's majority decision, for a reason other than the majority reason.
9. <i>Stare Decisis</i>	Literally, "let the decision stand"; decision making according to precedent.	20. Dissent	The diagreement of a judge with a majority decision.
10. Original Jurisdiction	The authority of a court to hear a cases before any other court does.	21. Senatorial Courtesy	A practice whereby the Senate will not confirm for a lower federal court judgship a nominee who is opposed by the senior senator in the president's party in the nominee's state.
11. Appellate Jurisdiction	The authority of a court to hear cases that have been tried, decided, or reexamined in other courts.	22. Class Action	A procedure by which similarly situated litigants may be heard in a single lawsuit.
12. Federal Question	An issue covered by the Constitution, national laws, or U.S. treaties.		
13. Docket	A court's agenda.		

See page 444 of Textbook for "court tiers".



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