

Objective

By the end of this lesson, you will have a better understanding of the Supreme Court and its role in the government, as well as the importance of being an informed and active citizen.

Materials and Prep

- Computer or tablet with internet access
- Pen and paper
- Access to a printer (optional)

Prior knowledge of the three branches of government (legislative, executive, and judicial) would be helpful, but not required.

Activities

1. Research the Supreme Court: Using the internet, explore the official website of the Supreme Court of the United States (www.supremecourt.gov). Take notes on the purpose, structure, and current justices of the Supreme Court.
2. Case Study: Choose a landmark Supreme Court case that interests you (e.g., *Brown v. Board of Education*, *Roe v. Wade*, etc.). Research and write a brief summary of the case, including the issue at hand, the arguments presented, and the Court's decision. Reflect on the impact of the decision on society.
3. Mock Supreme Court: Imagine you are a Supreme Court justice. Select a current issue or topic of your choice and write a persuasive opinion on the matter. Consider the Constitution, previous Supreme Court decisions, and your own beliefs. Present your opinion to a family member or friend, engaging in a thoughtful discussion about the issue.
4. Citizen's Rights and Responsibilities: Make a list of five rights and five responsibilities that citizens have in a democratic society. Reflect on the importance of these rights and responsibilities in maintaining a functioning government.

Eighth Grade Talking Points

- **The Supreme Court is the highest court in the United States.** It consists of nine justices who are appointed for life by the President. Their main role is to interpret the Constitution and make decisions that impact the entire country.
- **Landmark Supreme Court cases have shaped our nation's history.** For example, in *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Court ruled that racial segregation in schools was unconstitutional, leading to the desegregation of schools across the country. These cases have had a profound impact on civil rights and social justice.
- **The Supreme Court's decisions are not always unanimous.** Justices may have different interpretations of the Constitution and may write dissenting opinions when they disagree with the majority. This diversity of perspectives is important for a balanced and fair judicial system.
- **As citizens, we have both rights and responsibilities.** Our rights, such as freedom of speech and the right to vote, protect our individual freedoms. However, we also have responsibilities, such as obeying laws and staying informed about current issues, to ensure the well-being of our democratic society.

- **The Supreme Court's decisions can have a lasting impact on society.** It is important for citizens to stay informed about the Court's decisions and understand their implications. This allows us to actively participate in our democracy and advocate for change when necessary.