

25-Supreme Court of the United States

- ★ Highest court in the land
- ★ All decisions are final
- ★ Usually only hears cases on **appellate jurisdiction**
- ★ Only hears about 150 cases per year (thousands of cases are appealed)

Court's Power

- Constitution is the highest law
- Constitution is supreme when there is a conflict with other laws (Supremacy Clause of Constitution)
- Court is responsible for holding up the Constitution

Judicial Review-power of the Supreme Court to examine a law or executive order and determine if it is constitutional

Limits to Supreme Court's Power

- ❑ *Constitutional Amendments*
- ❑ *Presidential appointment and Senate confirmation of Supreme Court Justices*

Supreme Court Justices

Supreme Court of the United States is made up of 9 justices

- 1-Chief Justice
 - 8-Associate Justices
- No official requirements; but all have been lawyers
- Appointed by the president with senate approval
- Serve a life term or until they choose to retire
- Very important appointment, Supreme Court justices can end up being more important the president who appointed them!

Supreme Court at Work

The Supreme Court is in session from October to June or July each year

Each month follows this pattern

- 1st 2 weeks-the court hears cases, makes announcements, and discusses current cases
- 2nd 2 weeks-the justices write opinions, decide which cases to hear, and conduct legal research

Which cases?

Justices discuss and must agree on the merits of a case for it to be heard

The Supreme Court only hears certain kinds of cases:

****Usually only hears appeals from lower courts that deal with a constitutional question*

Court Decisions

-Justices discuss cases with each other

-Make one of three decisions (**uphold, overturn, remand**)

Each decision is accompanied with a written opinion explaining the law about the case

- ❑ **Majority opinion**-the written decision of the justices on the winning side
- ❑ **Concurring opinion**-the written opinion of a justice who agrees with the majority but may have different reasons than they do
- ❑ **Minority opinion**-the written opinion of a justice who disagreed with the majority