

# Supreme Court of the United States

appeals

## United States Court of Appeals

### *Federal Appeals Courts*

- appeals courts serve as the second level in the system
- they only have **appellate jurisdiction**-authority to hear a case after it has already been heard in a lower court
- there are 12 U.S. Courts of Appeals
- cases are appealed due to unfairness or error

### *Procedures*

- no juries are used in Appeals Courts
- No determination is made of guilt or innocence
- Only decision is whether or not a fair trial was given
- written **briefs** of the unfair ruling or trial error and oral arguments are presented before the court
- panels of three or more judges hear the cases and make decisions

### *Rulings*

- Appeals courts can make one of three decisions on a case

**Uphold**-confirm the lower court's decision

**Overturn**-Reverse the lower court's decision

**Remand**-send the case back down to a lower court for a retrial (not double jeopardy)

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## Federal District Courts

### *Federal District Courts*

- lowest level of federal courts
- all federal cases begin at this level (original jurisdiction)
- each court rules over a district, at least one district per state
- Handle 90% of federal cases

### *Purpose*

- the purpose of district court is to handle cases that fall under federal jurisdiction
- district courts conduct a jury trial to determine guilt or innocence
- judges interpret the law and determine the punishment

### *Court Officials*

- federal judges are appointed by the president with Senate approval
- U.S. attorneys represent the federal government in all cases
- U.S. marshals
- U.S. magistrates
- Court clerks

## 24-Lower Federal Courts