



## Supreme Court Challenge

[teachgeocivics.com](http://teachgeocivics.com)

**Grade band:** 8    **Subject:** Social Studies    **Topic:** Landmark Supreme Cases

**Introduction** Students will assume the role of the Supreme Court in a simulation. 9 justices (different students each time) will listen to arguments from both sides and ultimately make a decision that will have an effect on the entire nation.

**Purpose** Students will gain a deeper understanding of the difficult and important job that the Supreme Court has in shaping what the Bill of Rights looks like in actual real-world applications.

**Materials**

- Documents: “Chief Justice Protocol,” “Supreme Court Challenge”
- Projection screen
- Personal laptop/tablet (if available); if not, printed versions of the documents



### Instructions

1. Teacher will airdrop/hand out the “Chief Justice Protocol.” Explain that 9 students will be chosen for each specific case, but one will be chosen as the Chief Justice that will move the case along through the proceedings.
2. Decide which students will be the legal team representing each side. Let them know that they will be given time to research the arguments that their legal team would make. The

teacher can also choose to play those roles if time is a constraint. Otherwise, allow them a period to research and prepare their argument. Their argument only has to be a few minutes long.

3. Project the “Supreme Court Challenge” powerpoint when ready. It contains a brief description of each case. Read the summary of the first case, then cue your Chief Justice to begin the protocol. After step 6 of the protocol, allow them to step into the hallway to deliberate. While they are deliberating outside, hold a class survey to see what the “public” thinks of the case—as would happen in the real world.
4. When the Supreme Court re-enters the class, the Chief Justice will continue with the protocol until the final step. From there, go to the next slide on the projection. Review what the actual Supreme Court of the time ruled and its implications on the rest of the nation.
5. Move onto the next case and choose new students to assume the role of the Supreme Court (and designate a new Chief Justice). Continue the process through all four cases.
6. The final slide on the “Supreme Court Challenge” projection will prompt all students to individually reflect on the experience. Have them type out/write out their responses, then have them share their thoughts on the simulation with a final whole-class discussion.

### Activity Materials & Answer Keys

***\*All necessary activity documents must be downloaded separately.***