

10 SUPREME COURT CASES EVERY TEEN SHOULD KNOW

Suggested Lesson Procedure:

1. Begin by asking students to name some rights they think they have as minors. Follow-up on their list of rights by asking questions, such as, "Does our principal have the right to search your backpack?" and/or "Are student athletes required to participate in drug testing?" Explain that today's activity is going to help students answer these – and many more – questions about the rights of minors in the United States.
2. After the quick warm-up discussion, either hand out paper copies of the article from the *New York Times* or have students work on internet-enabled devices to read the article online (links below). Give students a blank two-page question grid handout (pages 2 and 3 of this PDF) and have them start reading and answering the questions on their own. Depending on the amount of time available, you may want students to work alone on this task or in cooperative teams of two.
3. After all students have completed the question grid, review the answers with the class. The final two questions should lead to a lively discussion, as students will have strong opinions to share about some of these cases.

Another Option: Instead of having students work through the article on their own, turn the lesson into a group research/speech activity. Break your class into 10 teams, assigning one court case per team. Each team will become "mini-experts" on that case, not only reading their section of the *New York Times* article, but also completing additional research on their smart-devices or within your school's computer lab. Then, each team presents information about its assigned case and all students complete the two-page grid, based on what they learn from each team's short presentation. If you use this option, the lesson will expand and likely fill two class sessions.

Due to copyright law, I am unable to offer the full *New York Times* article here. You have purchased my lesson materials to use with the article, not the article itself. If you enter "10 Supreme Court Cases Every Teen Should Know Tom Jacobs" into any search engine, you'll find numerous copies of the article available for you to use in class. During my last update, these websites were hosting the text. Copy-and-paste any of the addresses below to access the content:

Original article from the *New York Times*' archive:

https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/learning/teachers/featured_articles/20080915monday.html

Immediate download of an editable Microsoft Word version of the article
(check your internet browser's download folder right after you click this link):

<https://www.sewanhakaschools.org/cms/lib/NY01001491/Centricity/Domain/2088/10%20Supreme%20Court%20Cases%20Every%20Teen%20Should%20Know.docx>

Same article as a 6-page PDF:

<http://www.isd622.org/cms/lib07/MN01001375/Centricity/Domain/777/Supreme%20Court%20Cases%20Every%20Teen%20Should%20Know%20P%201-2.pdf>

Lots of **ideas** and **solutions** for secondary English teachers at:

<https://laurarandazzo.com/>

<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Store/Laura-Randazzo>

10 SUPREME COURT CASES EVERY TEEN SHOULD KNOW

Directions: Read through the *New York Times* article and fill in the question grid for each case. For the “Background” and “Who Won the Case?” sections, be sure to answer in thoughtful, complete sentences. Summarize with your own words. Do not repeat sentences or exact phrases from the article. I want to see **your** words.

1. Tinker v. Des Moines Independent School District Year:

Issue:

Background:

Who won the case? Why?

2. New Jersey vs. T.L.O. Year:

Issue:

Background:

Who won the case? Why?

3. Ingraham v. Wright Year:

Issue:

Background:

Who won the case? Why?

4. Santa Fe Independent School Dist. v. Jane Doe Year:

Issue:

Background:

Who won the case? Why?

5. Kent v. United States Year:

Issue:

Background:

Who won the case? Why?

<div data-bbox="94 99 149 126" data-label="Text"><p>Year:</p></div> <div data-bbox="268 99 686 126" data-label="Text"><p>6. Hazelwood School Dist. v. Kuhlmeier</p></div> <div data-bbox="268 146 323 173" data-label="Text"><p>Issue:</p></div> <div data-bbox="94 219 226 246" data-label="Text"><p>Background:</p></div> <div data-bbox="94 519 369 547" data-label="Text"><p>Who won the case? Why?</p></div>	<div data-bbox="716 99 1052 126" data-label="Text"><p>7. Vernonia School Dist. v. Acton</p></div> <div data-bbox="1073 99 1127 126" data-label="Text"><p>Year:</p></div> <div data-bbox="716 146 770 173" data-label="Text"><p>Issue:</p></div> <div data-bbox="716 219 848 246" data-label="Text"><p>Background:</p></div> <div data-bbox="716 519 991 547" data-label="Text"><p>Who won the case? Why?</p></div>	<div data-bbox="1417 99 1881 126" data-label="Text"><p>8. West Side Community Schools v. Mergens</p></div> <div data-bbox="1902 99 1957 126" data-label="Text"><p>Year:</p></div> <div data-bbox="1417 146 1472 173" data-label="Text"><p>Issue:</p></div> <div data-bbox="1417 219 1549 246" data-label="Text"><p>Background:</p></div> <div data-bbox="1417 519 1692 547" data-label="Text"><p>Who won the case? Why?</p></div>
<div data-bbox="94 813 331 850" data-label="Text"><p>9. Grutter v. Bollinger</p></div> <div data-bbox="344 813 399 841" data-label="Text"><p>Year:</p></div> <div data-bbox="94 860 149 888" data-label="Text"><p>Issue:</p></div> <div data-bbox="94 945 226 972" data-label="Text"><p>Background:</p></div> <div data-bbox="94 1245 369 1273" data-label="Text"><p>Who won the case? Why?</p></div>	<div data-bbox="716 813 1274 850" data-label="Text"><p>10. DeShaney v. Winnebago County Social Services</p></div> <div data-bbox="1287 813 1341 841" data-label="Text"><p>Year:</p></div> <div data-bbox="716 860 770 888" data-label="Text"><p>Issue:</p></div> <div data-bbox="716 945 848 972" data-label="Text"><p>Background:</p></div> <div data-bbox="716 1245 991 1273" data-label="Text"><p>Who won the case? Why?</p></div>	<div data-bbox="1417 813 1688 850" data-label="Text"><p>Post-Reading Questions</p></div> <div data-bbox="1417 860 1976 917" data-label="Text"><p>11. Of the ten court rulings, which one did you find the most surprising? Why?</p></div> <div data-bbox="1417 1182 2001 1297" data-label="Text"><p>12. Choose one of the cases (other than the one you discussed in #11 above) and explain whether you agree or disagree with the court's ruling. Explain and defend your opinion.</p></div>

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1. Tinker v. Des Moines Independent School District Year: 1969
Issue: Freedom of Speech at School

Background:
Three students were suspended from school for refusing to remove black armbands they had worn to campus as a protest of the Vietnam War. They and their parents said the school had violated their First Amendment right to freedom of speech.

Who won the case? Why?
The students won. The justices said that the armbands were not disrupting the education of other students or infringing on other students’ rights, so the armbands were fine. A vulgar or racist item of clothing, though, would not receive such protection under the law.

2. New Jersey vs. T.L.O. Year: 1985
Issue: Privacy Rights at School

Background:
A girl was caught smoking. When the principal searched her bag, cigarettes, rolling papers, and marijuana was found. She admitted that she had sold drugs at school. Later, she complained the search violated her Fourth Amendment right against unreasonable search and seizure.

Who won the case? Why?
The school won because administrators must keep their campuses safe and drug-free. If a staff member has “reasonable suspicion” that a student might be breaking a rule/committing a crime, the adult is allowed to search the student’s bag.

3. Ingraham v. Wright Year: 1977
Issue: School Discipline

Background:
An 8th grade boy was swatted 20 times with a paddle, leaving him in need of medical attention. The boy’s mother sued, arguing the school’s use of the paddle violated her son’s Eighth Amendment right against cruel and unusual punishment.

Who won the case? Why?
The school won because the justices said the paddling was a reasonable punishment. They suggested that schools find other ways of disciplining students, but decided that physical punishment is okay, as long as the local school district policy allows it.

4. Santa Fe Independent School Dist. v. Jane Doe Year: 2000
Issue: School Prayer

Background:
A Texas school district allowed a student “chaplain” to broadcast a prayer before the school’s football games. An anonymous group of students sued, saying that the school-supported public prayer violated their First Amendment freedom of religion.

Who won the case? Why?
The students won because the court said the prayer broadcasts were forcing students of different faiths/no faiths to participate in a religious ritual. Individual students can still pray whenever they want on campus, but the school can’t be involved.

5. Kent v. United States Year: 1966
Issue: Juveniles and Serious Crime

Background:
A 16-year-old boy with a criminal history was accused of many crimes, including robbery and rape. He was tried as an adult, receiving 30-to-90 years. He sued, saying he should have been tried in juvenile court, where punishments are less severe.

Who won the case? Why?
The government won. The justices said that juveniles are allowed to be tried as adults, depending on the severity of their crimes, their age, their criminal history, and their mental state.

Year: 1988
Issue: 6. Hazelwood School Dist. v. Kuhlmeier

Student Journalism & First Amendment

Background:

Three girls on the school newspaper staff wanted to publish articles on divorce and teen pregnancy. The principal cut the articles, saying the content wasn't appropriate. The girls sued, saying their First Amendment right to freedom of expression was violated.

Who won the case? Why?

The school won because the student newspaper isn't a public forum. The paper is a learning tool, so administrators can determine how that tool is used. Speeches and other school assignments/performance fall under this same rule.

9. Grutter v. Bollinger Year: 2003

Affirmative Action in College

Background:

A white woman who wanted to attend the Univ. of Michigan law school was rejected. She argued that lesser-qualified minority applicants were unfairly admitted. She said this violated her Fourteenth Amendment right to equal protection under the law and sued.

Who won the case? Why?

The school won because the justices said increasing diversity amongst college attendees is important. Since the school administrators didn't use a quota system and, instead, looked at the merits of each individual applicant, they were within the law.

7. Vernonia School Dist. v. Acton Year: 1995

Student Athletes and Drug Testing

Background:

A 7th grade boy who wanted to try out for his school's football team was required to submit to a drug test. His parents sued, saying the school's drug test requirement violated their son's Fourth Amendment rights (illegal search and seizure), since there was no suspicion that the boy used drugs.

Who won the case? Why?

The school won. Similar to the T.L.O. case (#2), the justices said the school needs to balance students' privacy concerns with the need to keep campuses safe. In their decision, the justices also said that student-athletes give up some of their rights to privacy when they join an extracurricular team.

10. DeShaney v. Winnebago County Social Services Year: 1989

Constitutional Rights at Home

Background:

A 4-year-old boy was beaten by his father and left paralyzed and brain damaged. The boy's mother sued the Dept. of Social Services, which had earlier investigated but then returned the boy to the abusive father's home. The mother said her son's Fourteenth Amendment rights were violated.

Who won the case? Why?

The Dept. of Social Services won because the justices said the Constitution does not protect children from their own parents. The court basically said it's up to the state and local agencies to enforce child protection laws, but it's not a Constitutional issue.

8. West Side Community Schools v. Mergens Year: 1990

Student Clubs

Background:

A girl wanted to form a Christian club at school, but her principal refused her request, saying it would be illegal to offer such a club in a public school. She sued, arguing that her First Amendment right to freedom of speech and religion should be honored.

Who won the case? Why?

The girl won because the school offered other student-interest based clubs. If all of the clubs had to have an academic tie-in, then the club would not be allowed. But since the school had other interest-based clubs (jazz club, scuba club, etc.), it needed to allow this club, too.

Post-Reading Questions

11. Of the ten court rulings, which one did you find the most surprising? Why?

Students' answers will vary and this question should lead to a good discussion when you review the answers with the class.

12. Choose one of the cases (other than the one you discussed in #11 above) and explain whether you agree or disagree with the court's ruling. Explain and defend your opinion.

Students' answers will vary and this question should lead to a good discussion when you review the answers with the class.

The half-sheets on the next page five pages were designed for use with the 10 teams research/speech option mentioned on page 1. The information to be gathered on these larger sheets is the same as on the two-page grid handout, but designed with more room for students to write and to reflect on how the court ruling affects teens today.

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Team 1 – Tinker v. Des Moines Independent School District

1. Year of the ruling:

2. Issue:

3. Describe the background of the case:

4. Who won the case? Why?

5. How does this court decision affect teens today?

Team 2 – New Jersey v. T.L.O.

1. Year of the ruling:

2. Issue:

3. Describe the background of the case:

4. Who won the case? Why?

5. How does this court decision affect teens today?

Team 3 – Ingraham v. Wright

1. Year of the ruling:

2. Issue:

3. Describe the background of the case:

4. Who won the case? Why?

5. How does this court decision affect teens today?

Team 4 – Santa Fe Independent School Dist. v. Jane Doe

1. Year of the ruling:

2. Issue:

3. Describe the background of the case:

4. Who won the case? Why?

5. How does this court decision affect teens today?

Team 5 – Kent v. United States

1. Year of the ruling:

2. Issue:

3. Describe the background of the case:

4. Who won the case? Why?

5. How does this court decision affect teens today?

Team 6 – Hazelwood School Dist. v. Kuhlmeier

1. Year of the ruling:

2. Issue:

3. Describe the background of the case:

4. Who won the case? Why?

5. How does this court decision affect teens today?

Team 7 – Vernonia School Dist. v. Acton

1. Year of the ruling:

2. Issue:

3. Describe the background of the case:

4. Who won the case? Why?

5. How does this court decision affect teens today?

Team 8 – West Side Community Schools v. Mergens

1. Year of the ruling:

2. Issue:

3. Describe the background of the case:

4. Who won the case? Why?

5. How does this court decision affect teens today?

Team 9 – Grutter v. Bollinger

1. Year of the ruling:

2. Issue:

3. Describe the background of the case:

4. Who won the case? Why?

5. How does this court decision affect teens today?

Team 10 – DeShaney v. Winnebago County Social Services

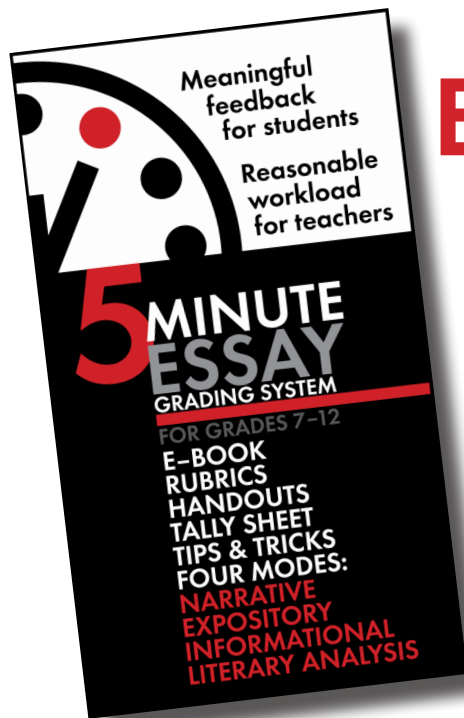
1. Year of the ruling:

2. Issue:

3. Describe the background of the case:

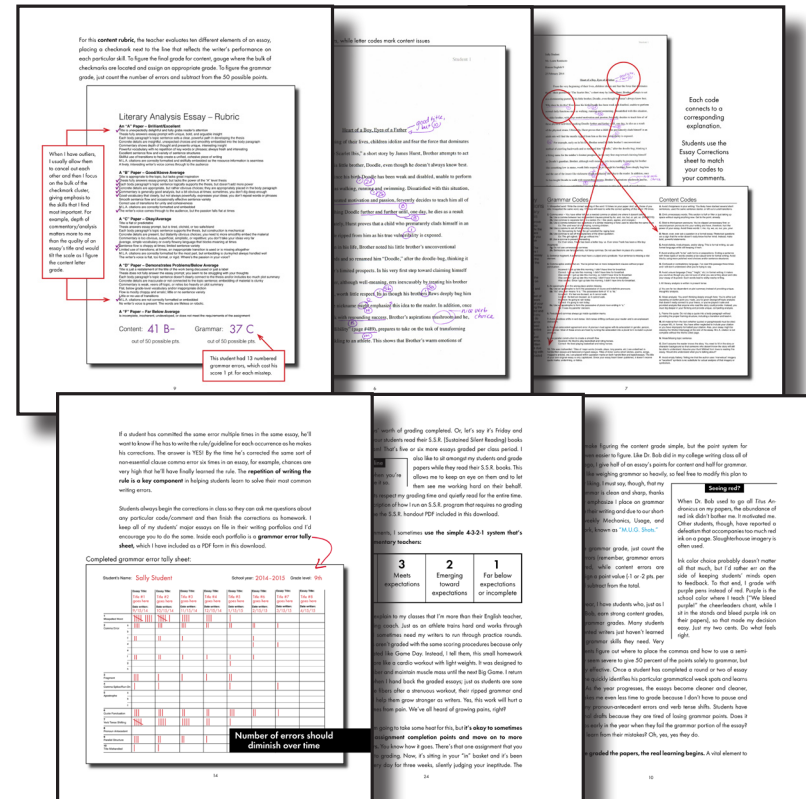
4. Who won the case? Why?

5. How does this court decision affect teens today?



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