



Federal Courts' National Educational Outreach that  
Involves, Informs, Inspires, and Ignites

## WHAT IS THE JOB OF FEDERAL JUDGES?

This is a teaching tool that simplifies key points for students. Find courtroom-ready and classroom-ready resources and activities in the educational resources section at [uscourts.gov](https://uscourts.gov)



### SETTLE CASES



### TRY CASES



### ENSURE THE PROCESS IS FAIR



### MAKE AND WRITE DECISIONS



Article III of the U.S. Constitution establishes the Three Branches of Government.  
The Third Branch is the Judiciary.



### *Justices of the Supreme Court*

**ROLE:** The ultimate interpreter of the Constitution

- Consider ~7,000 appeals per year and select ~100 cases for oral arguments
- Hear ~100 oral arguments every year
- Write opinions



### *Judges on U.S. Court of Appeals*

**ROLE:** The error-correcting court for trial courts. Last stop for all but ~100 cases taken by the Supreme Court

- Hear appeals in panels of 3 or more appellate judges in each Circuit
- Review the record of the trial court below for errors in procedures and/or application of laws
- Examine the trial transcripts
- No witness testimony; no new evidence



### *Judges on U.S. District Courts*

**ROLE:** The court where cases start—either settled or tried. Witnesses testify. Evidence is presented. The Judge decides the law. If there is a jury, jurors determine the facts.

#### *U.S. District Judges*

- Settle or try criminal & civil cases from first appearance through sentencing

#### *U.S. Magistrate Judges*

- Hear cases authorized by law and/or assigned by District Court Judges

#### *U.S. Bankruptcy Judges*

- Handle matters related to individual and corporate debtors and creditors

**Developed by the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts**

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