

**Project: Analyzing a Supreme Court Case –**  
**Honors – USG**

Created By: Marshall Swindall and Ann Marion (June 2012)

**Note:** This is an individual Project. Each student must complete a different Supreme Court case. Projects are due to be presented on the date agreed upon by Mr. Swindall and student. Projects not presented on the agreed date will receive a failing grade. Student(s) who have a physical illness on the presentation day must still submit all materials on the agreed date. Presentation must take place the next class in which the student is present with proof that absence was excused (i.e. a doctor's note). If absence is unexcused student will receive a failing grade. Each student must obtain approval and get Mr. Swindall's signature for their case.

Case name: \_\_\_\_\_ Student: \_\_\_\_\_  
Approval: \_\_\_\_\_ Presentation date: \_\_\_\_\_

**SC Standards:** Structure/functions of the Constitutional/Legislative courts in the federal system. (USG 3.1)

**Objectives:**

Students will be able to research, write and present a Landmark Supreme Court Case.  
Students will be able to assemble and clearly communicate a logical presentation using computer technology (i.e. PowerPoint).

**Research/Writing portion:** guide for analyzing Supreme Court Cases.

- » Written part must be typed on a word processor, using 12 point *Times New Roman* font, using black ink, no cover page. Project must be presented in a three ring binder.
- » **First page** of your project is the grading rubric page.
- » **Second page** you turn in the project sheet (this sheet).
- » **Content pages** should be in the consecutive order listed below.
- » **Last page** of your project is a works cited or bibliography page. All sources used in your research, writing, graphic and/or presentation must be listed.

**Originality:**

- » All parts of your project must be original with you. If a student copies any part of another student's research, writing, graphic or presentation, both students will receive a failing grade for his/her project.
- » If a student copies any part of their research, writing, graphic or presentation from any source (books, internet web sites, etc.) and fails to give credit to that source in their works cited or bibliography page that student will receive a failing grade for his/her project.

**Off limits:** there are cases that are off limits to students and may not be used and will not be graded. If a student persists and attempts to do one of the following they will not be allowed to present and will receive a failing grade for this project. Cases off limits are: *New Jersey v T.L.O.*, *People v. Larry Flint*. Make certain you gain approval for your case from Mr. Swindall.

**Final note:** Once your presentation is complete all materials must be turned in to Mr. Swindall. None of these materials will be returned to the student. All case materials become the property of Mr. Swindall for potential parent conferences concerning this project.

On the **project itself** in upper left hand corner, single spaced, type the following: on first page only:

Honors United States Government  
Supreme Court Case name  
Your Name  
Mr. Swindall

Due date for your project

**Content pages:** each of the following content items must have an adequate written response and should be addressed in your PowerPoint presentation. Each of the following must have its own page.

**Case name:**

**Facts of the case** (summarize the story behind the case... you are telling a story)

**Lower court verdict:**

What court or courts heard this case before the U.S. Supreme Court (name each court and verdict)

**Petition before the Supreme Court:** (minimum of three arguments for each)

What were the arguments for the plaintiff?

What were the arguments for the defendant?

**Relief sought:**

What the plaintiff really wants is...in plain English what does the plaintiff desire?

**Majority decision of the Court: what was the decision?**

What was the Supreme Court vote in the majority?

What date for the majority decision?

Which justices voted for the majority?

Who wrote the majority decision?

Describe the majority opinion...

Were there any concurrent opinions written? by whom?

How are the concurrent opinions different from the majority opinion?

**Dissenting opinion(s):**

**What was the Supreme Court vote in the dissent?**

Which justice wrote the opinion for the dissent?

Describe the dissenting opinion...

Were there any concurrent opinions written by whom?

How are the concurrent opinions different from the dissenting opinion?

**Importance/significance of this case:**

Did this case change/add to/take from the Constitution or any of the Amendments? If so, how?

Explain fully.

**Does this case remain relevant or has it been superseded by another case?**

If it has been superseded, name the case and tell how your case changed the preceding case?

**Graphic portion:**

» Project must have a visual or graphic that will contribute to your presentation. Something like a tri-fold describing the history of the case with photos and a timeline would be appropriate. Be creative, make your graphic professional looking. No videotapes or audiotapes of Supreme Court cases are allowed.

**Presentation portion:**

» In the PP presentation of your case the student must convince Mr. Swindall that the student is knowledgeable of their case. Is your information correct? (do you know what you are talking about?)

» Presentation time: minimum 10 minutes and a maximum of 12 minutes. Student will lose points if your presentation is less than 10 minutes. If your presentation extends to 12+ minutes Mr. Swindall and the class will begin to applaud and thank you for your presentation. At that point your presentation is finished.

**You will be timed in class therefore, practice your presentation at home until it falls within the prescribed time limitations. Be prepared!**

» **Remember** you are preparing to tell the story of your case. You are informing your classmates about a Supreme Court Case and they probably know very little about your case.

» **DRESS:** Students should be dressed appropriately for this presentation. Appropriate means "Church clothes" or "business like" clothing (male = shirt and tie; female = dress or skirt and blouse; or professional looking pants suit), denim is unacceptable (no jeans or jeans skirts). Imagine that you are making a presentation before a judge and jury and explaining why this case is significant. You cannot earn a grade of "A" if you do not dress appropriately.

# Grading Rubric for Analyzing Supreme Court Cases.

Every project will be graded using this rubric. In order for the student to receive a grade this rubric page must be turned in as the first page of the written part of your presentation.

**Student name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Project:** Supreme Court Cases **Teacher:** Mr. Swindall **Class:** Honors U.S. Government

**Three Part Project:** 1) Research/Writing 2) Graphic 3) PowerPoint Presentation

Organization skills	Below Avg.	Satisfactory	Excellent
1. On time (presented in class on due date)	N/A	N/A	10
Notebook arranged correctly	2, 3, 4	5, 6, 7	8, 9, 10
Research/Writing skills			
2. Format (correct heading, font, etc.)	2, 3, 4	5, 6, 7	8, 9, 10
3. Each part completed correctly (10 parts)			
Case name	2, 3, 4	5, 6, 7	8, 9, 10
Facts of the case	2, 3, 4	5, 6, 7	8, 9, 10
Lower court verdict	2, 3, 4	5, 6, 7	8, 9, 10
Arguments for plaintiff	2, 3, 4	5, 6, 7	8, 9, 10
Arguments for defendant	2, 3, 4	5, 6, 7	8, 9, 10
Relief sought	2, 3, 4	5, 6, 7	8, 9, 10
Majority decision	2, 3, 4	5, 6, 7	8, 9, 10
Dissenting opinion (s)	2, 3, 4	5, 6, 7	8, 9, 10
Importance/significance of the case	2, 3, 4	5, 6, 7	8, 9, 10
Does this case remain relevant?	2, 3, 4	5, 6, 7	8, 9, 10
4. Demonstrates ORIGINAL research	2, 3, 4	5, 6, 7	8, 9, 10
5. Good grammar and spelling	2, 3, 4	5, 6, 7	8, 9, 10
Graphic skills			
6. Graphic demonstrates knowledge of case	2, 3, 4	5, 6, 7	8, 9, 10
7. Graphic demonstrates thought and creativity	2, 3, 4	5, 6, 7	8, 9, 10
Presentation skills			
8. Presented w/in time limit: (                    )	2, 3, 4	5, 6, 7	8, 9, 10
9. Participant was dressed appropriately	2, 3, 4	5, 6, 7	8, 9, 10
10. Well presented project (good story, etc.)	2, 3, 4	5, 6, 7	8, 9, 10

**Project is worth:** 600 points.    Total Score: \_\_\_\_\_ x 3 = grade \_\_\_\_\_ / 600 \_\_\_\_\_

**Teacher comments**

## **Potential SC Cases – study cases to determine which you would like – first come/first served**

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1. Brown v Board of Education, 1954
2. Bush v Gore (2000)
3. California v Acevedo, 1991
4. Dennis v. United States (1951)
5. Dred Scott v Sandford (1857)
6. Engel v. Vitale (1962)
7. Escobedo v Illinois (1964)
8. Gideon v Wainwright (1963) (background Betts v. Brady, 1942)
9. Gitlow v New York (1923)
10. Gonzales v Raich (2005)
11. Greedwood v California (1988)
12. Gregg v Georgia, 1976
13. Hazelwood School District v Kuhlmeier (1988)
14. Katz v United States, 1967
15. Korematsu v United States (1944)
16. Mapp v Ohio (1961)
17. Miranda v Arozona (1966)
18. Near v Minnesota (1931)
19. New York Times v United States (1971)
20. Olmstead v United States (1928)
21. Plessy v Ferguson (1896)
22. Powell v Alabama (1932)
23. Regents of the University of California v Bakke, 1978
24. Roe v Wade, 1973
25. Schenck v United States (1919)
26. Sheppard v Maxwell (1966)
27. Slaughterhouse cases (1873)
28. Tinker v Des Moines (1969)
29. United States v Nixon (1974)
30. Wallace v Jeffree, 1985

\* There are 30 cases listed here. You may propose a Landmark Supreme Court case that is not on this list but you must ask permission from Mr. Swindall. Once approval is given then you can proceed with your project. Cases are assigned on a “first come first served” basis.