



My Rights and Liberties:
SS.7.CG.3.11
Landmark Supreme Court Cases
READING #2

Name: _____

Date: _____



SS.7.CG.3.11 Benchmark Clarification 2: Students will use primary sources to assess the significance of each U.S. Supreme Court case.

There have been several landmark U.S. Supreme Court judicial opinions that have significantly impacted American society and government.

Landmark Supreme Court Cases		Primary Sources
Case	Significant Details	Passages from the Court Opinion Linked to the Significance of the Case
Dred Scott v. Sanford (1857)	Dred Scott was born a slave. For 10 years, he lived in the free state of Illinois, completing various tasks for his owner. After having to return to Missouri (a slave state) when his owner died, Scott sued for his freedom, claiming that after living in a free state he should be a free man. The courts did not rule in his favor. The Supreme Court ruled that African Americans, enslaved or free, were not citizens under the U.S. Constitution and therefore Scott had no standing to even sue.	"A free negro of the African race, whose ancestors were brought to this country and sold as slaves, is not a "citizen" within the meaning of the Constitution of the United States."
Plessy v. Ferguson (1896)	A law in Louisiana required black and white passengers to sit in segregated railway cars. Homer Plessy, who was mixed race and one-eighth Black, sat in the "whites only" railway car. He was asked to move and refused. Because of this, he was arrested, put in jail, and convicted in court.	"If the civil and political rights of both races be equal, one cannot be inferior to the other civilly or politically."
Brown v. Board of Education (1954)	Under the legal doctrine of "separate but equal" laws were put into place to prevent Black children from attending the same public schools as white children. This case argued that the segregated schools were not equal and therefore violated the 14 th Amendment. This case was just one of many that were filed on this issue.	"Segregation of white and colored children in public schools has a detrimental effect upon the colored children...."

<p>Gideon v. Wainwright (1963)</p>	<p>Clarence Gideon was arrested and charged in a Florida court for breaking and entering. He was unable to afford a lawyer, and the court refused to appoint a lawyer for him. Gideon was forced to defend himself in court, and the jury found him guilty. In his appeal to the Supreme Court, Gideon said that the lower court violated his 6th Amendment right, which says the accused has the right to a lawyer. He also argued that his 14th amendment rights had been violated under the Equal Protection Clause. The 14th Amendment says that states must apply the law equally and cannot discriminate against citizens or groups of citizens. The Supreme Court sided with Gideon and said that states must provide a lawyer for accused people who can't afford one.</p>	<p>"Lawyers in criminal courts are necessities, not luxuries."</p>
<p>Miranda v. Arizona (1966)</p>	<p>The state of Arizona tried Ernesto Miranda for kidnapping and found him guilty. When he was arrested, the police questioned him about the charges without telling him he had the right to remain silent or the right to speak with an attorney. Miranda appealed his conviction to the Supreme Court. He said the police violated his rights under the section of the 5th Amendment that protects the accused from self-incrimination. The Supreme Court ruled in Miranda's favor and said his rights had been violated. Police must now use the "Miranda warning" when they arrest people to tell them what their rights are.</p>	<p>"The prosecution may not use statements ...from questioning initiated by law enforcement officers after a person has been taken into custody or otherwise deprived of his freedom of action in any significant way, unless it demonstrates the use of procedural safeguards effective to secure the Fifth Amendment's privilege against self- incrimination."</p>
<p>In re Gault (1967)</p>	<p>Gerald Francis Gault was a fifteen year old boy and allegedly made inappropriate phone calls to his neighbor. He was arrested and taken into custody by police. Gault was on probation at the time. The police did not notify Gault's parents who were not home when he was arrested. After a trial in juvenile court, Gault was sent to the State Industrial School until he turned 21.</p>	<p>"Neither man nor child can be allowed to stand condemned by methods which flout constitutional requirements of due process of law."</p>

<p>United States v. Nixon (1974)</p>	<p>In 1972, the offices of the Democratic National Committee in Washington D.C. were broken into. During the criminal investigation, a federal judge ordered President Nixon to turn over audiotapes of conversations about the break-in. Nixon refused, saying that executive privilege (the belief that conversations between the president and his aides should remain private) allowed him to keep the tapes. The United States government prosecuted President Nixon and asked the Supreme Court to order him to turn over the tapes. With the Supreme Court’s ruling, Nixon had to return the tapes.</p>	<p>“Neither the doctrine of separation of powers nor the generalized need for confidentiality of high-level communications, without more, can sustain an absolute, unqualified Presidential privilege of immunity from judicial process under all circumstances.”</p>
<p>Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier (1987)</p>	<p>Students of Hazelwood East High School wrote and produced a school-sponsored newspaper. The school principal removed two articles from one issue of the paper because he said they were inappropriate. Cathy Kuhlmeier and two other students took the case to court because they believed the principal violated their 1st Amendment rights of freedom of the press. The Supreme Court ruled in favor of the school district, saying the principal has the right to make decisions that keep the school safe and orderly.</p>	<p>“First Amendment rights of students in the public schools are not automatically coextensive with the rights of adults in other settings, and must be applied in light of the special characteristics of the school environment. A school need not tolerate student speech that is inconsistent with its basic educational mission, even though the government could not censor similar speech outside the school.”</p>

Brown v. Board of Education - U.S. Supreme Court case that determined that “separate but equal” segregation was not equal in public education

discriminate - to treat a person or group unfairly based on their race, religion, gender, disability, or other reasons

Dred Scott v. Sanford – U.S. Supreme Court case that upheld the constitutionality of racial segregation under the “separate but equal” doctrine

Equal Protection Clause - the section of the Fourteenth Amendment that says that states must apply the law equally and cannot discriminate against citizens or groups of citizens

executive privilege - the belief that the conversations between the president and his aides are confidential

Gideon v. Wainwright - U.S. Supreme Court case that upheld the Sixth Amendment right that all defendants must be appointed a lawyer if they cannot afford their own attorney

Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier - U.S. Supreme Court case that determined that the First Amendment does not protect all types of student speech in school

In re’ Gault - U.S. Supreme Court case that determined that juvenile court must follow the Fourteenth Amendment

judicial opinion - judgment by a court

landmark - an important or unique decision, event, fact, or discovery

Marbury v. Madison - U.S. Supreme Court case that established judicial review

Miranda v. Arizona - U.S. Supreme Court case that upheld the Fifth Amendment protection from self-incrimination

Plessy v. Ferguson - U.S. Supreme Court case that determined that “separate but equal” segregation was not discrimination

self-incrimination - the right in the Fifth Amendment that protects a person from being forced to tell the police, prosecutor, judge, or jury any information that might subject him or her to criminal prosecution

United States v. Nixon - U.S. Supreme Court case that limited executive privilege

violate - to break or to treat with great disrespect