**Name:**

**Date:**

**School:**

**Facilitator:**

6.03 Notes Guide

**“Landmark Supreme Court Decisions”**

Answer the 6.03 Notes Guide as you review the lesson.

Introduction:

Why do police officers always give this exact speech when they arrest someone?

Must a person be read their rights when they are arrested?

Landmark Supreme Court Decisions

Decisions made by the Supreme Court in past landmark cases greatly impact the everyday lives of “We the People.”

Often the decisions made by the court interpret the meaning of the United States Constitution and clarify issues that have previously been vague. As times change, new issues arise that require consideration. Issues that come before the court often give the court an opportunity to resolve issues that have been decided differently in two or more United States Circuit Courts of Appeal.

In this lesson you will examine decisions made by the Supreme Court in      that have become famous due to their impact on the nation's legal system. Read [*Landmark Cases*](http://www.streetlaw.org/en/landmark/cases) to learn more about the key issues involved in landmark Supreme Court cases.

*Marbury v. Madison*

**Essential Question**

Does the Supreme Court have the power of judicial review?

**Overview**

Marbury sued the Secretary of State James Madison to force him to keep an appointment that had been made by the previous Presidential administration.

In the final days of John Adams’ presidency, Marbury was appointed as justice of the peace for Washington D.C. There was a time limit established in these appointments. The appointment did not get delivered under the previous administration and the new administration passed laws that immediately rolled back the laws passed under the Adams administration.

Marbury took the case directly to the Supreme Court hoping to get a court order directing Madison to follow through on the appointments.

The Supreme Court ruled 4-0 that the authority to issue the court order was not valid. The majority opinion stated that under Article III of the Constitution, the Judiciary Act of 1789 (which permitted such orders) was in violation of the Constitution. This ruling established the idea of      . All laws passed by Congress must line up with the Constitution and the judicial branch has the power to overturn laws not in accordance.

Watch [*The Case of Marbury v. Madison: 1803*](https://app.discoveryeducation.com/player/view/assetGuid/7E253D3F-BBC9-4D6B-AEE8-31AFCDA2D7FB) (1:15) to learn more about the landmark case that established judicial review.

**Essential Question**

Does the 14th amendment guarantee the defendant the right to counsel?

**Overview**

Nine African-Americans teens were charged with raping two white women. The defendants were assigned court appointed lawyers but they were denied the right to consult with them in a normal attorney /client relationship. The defendants were convicted and sentenced to death in a series of one day trials. They appealed on the grounds they were denied adequate legal counsel. The Alabama Supreme Court upheld the decision. The case was appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court.

In a 7-2 reversal of lower courts decisions, the Supreme Court ruled that the “     ” were denied due process guaranteed to them by the 14th amendment to the Constitution.

*Gideon v. Wainwright*

**Essential Question**

Does a defendant have a right to counsel in all trials?

**Overview**

Gideon was arrested on burglary charges. He petitioned the court for a lawyer to represent him. The court denied him this right due to an existing state law that provided an attorney only in       cases. Gideon was convicted and sentenced to five years in prison.

Gideon appealed to the Supreme Court stating that his 6th amendment rights were violated. The Supreme Court ruled in a 9-0 decision that Gideon was entitled to counsel. The court recalled their decision in *Powell v. Alabama* and expanded the ruling from just capital offenses to include all criminal offenses. This decision indirectly led to the establishment of statewide systems of public defenders.

**Essential Question**

Are teachers allowed to have a moment of prayer in a class before school starts?

**Overview**

According to Alabama law, teachers and schools observe a moment of silence and/or lead the class in a prayer before school.

A man with three children in the school system sued on the grounds that the law violated the establishment clause in our Constitution.

Alabama won the initial decision. In a 6-3 decision the U.S. Supreme Court overruled the decision. The decision stated the law violated the establishment of religion since the school system is a branch of government.

**Essential Question**

Are students entitled to free speech protection?

**Overview**

A 15-year old boy and his 13-year old sister (with parental approval) decided to protest the Vietnam War by wearing black armbands to school. The school stated that the armbands would be a disruption. When the two students refused to remove the armbands, they were suspended. The parents of the two children sued the school district on the grounds that the students were denied freedom of speech.

The school district won the case; however, the decision was appealed until it reached the U.S. Supreme Court. The U.S. Supreme Court reversed the lower court’s decision 7-2. The decision helps to establish some      protections for students.

*Miranda v. Arizona*

**Essential Question**

Can admission of guilt be accepted in a court case, if the police didn’t inform the defendant of their right to remain silent?

**Overview**

Miranda was arrested on charges of burglary. In the course of his interrogation, he confessed to raping a girl two days earlier. Miranda was convicted based on his confession and sentenced to 20-30 years.

His court appointed lawyer appealed the decision on the grounds that his confession violated his 5th and 6th amendments rights. The 5th amendment allows for people not to give incriminating evidence against themselves or the right to remain silent. The 6th amendment states that a person is in entitled to legal counsel.

In a controversial decision the court stated that Miranda’s conviction must be thrown out. The majority opinion stated that       had been violated. The decision opened the door for every criminal that had confessed without being read a warning of their right to remain silent.

Miranda was retried and convicted without the use of a confession. He served 5 years for his crime.

Watch [*Miranda vs. Arizona*](https://app.discoveryeducation.com/player/view/assetGuid/FBF12CCE-CF68-433D-AD51-144855848521) (1:30) to learn more about the reading of a suspect’s rights at the time of arrest based on the landmark decision.

**Essential Question**

Do people with a mental illness have a constitutional right to medical care and minimum standards?

**Overview**

The State of Alabama rolled back a tax on cigarettes and forced several government institutions to make cut backs.      , a hospital that served patients with a mental illness, made severe cutbacks. After the cutbacks, Bryce had a ratio of one nurse per 250 patients.

Wyatt, a 15-year old delinquent, had been placed in the institution. He sued in order to establish a constitutional right for the mentally ill to receive adequate care and to set minimum standards for proper staffing regulations of the mentally ill.

The suit was filed in 1970 and was finally dismissed in 2003. The state courts ordered the plaintiffs and defendants to work out the minimum standards that should be set. The court would periodically check to see that the state was complying with the standards being set forth. In 2003 the courts found that Alabama had fully complied with the standards and the case could be dismissed. Throughout the life of the case, the state appealed and was defeated in circuit court. The plaintiffs appealed to the federal courts that the state was not complying.

These court ordered agreements set the standard for each state in the nation to follow. Rather than face costly court imposed fines and standards, the states took the initiative to impose the standards themselves.

Review of Supreme Court Decisions

The Supreme Court must have at least four justices agree in order for a case to be decided. When the United States Supreme Court makes a decision in a case, it issues opinions to announce the verdict. One of the justices who vote with the majority will write the      reflecting the court's decision. One of the justices who disagree writes a       expressing the views of those whose opinions differ from the majority. Those justices who agree with one of the opinions but for a different legal reason will write a       explaining their reasoning.

Find more information

Study the court cases below. Each case was selected for you to consider because of its long term impact on American society.

* [Marbury v. Madison](http://www.oyez.org/cases/1792-1850/1803/1803_0)
* [McCulloch v. Maryland](http://www.oyez.org/cases/1792-1850/1819/1819_0)
* [Gibbons v. Ogden](http://www.oyez.org/cases/1792-1850/1824/1824_0)
* [Wallace v. Jaffree](http://www.oyez.org/cases/1980-1989/1984/1984_83_812)
* [Bush v. Gore](http://www.oyez.org/cases/2000-2009/2000/2000_00_949)
* [Texas v. Johnson](http://www.oyez.org/cases/1980-1989/1988/1988_88_155)
* [Tinker v. Des Moines](http://www.oyez.org/cases/1960-1969/1968/1968_21)
* [Reno v. ACLU](http://www.oyez.org/cases/1990-1999/1996/1996_96_511)
* [Brown v. Board](http://www.oyez.org/cases/1950-1959/1952/1952_1)
* [Miranda v. Arizona](http://www.oyez.org/cases/1960-1969/1965/1965_759)
* [Gideon v. Wainwright](http://www.oyez.org/cases/1960-1969/1962/1962_155)
* [U.S. v. Nixon](http://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/418/683)
* [Wyatt v. Stickney](http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/face/Article.jsp?id=h-2375)
* [Powell v. Alabama](http://www.oyez.org/cases/1901-1939/1932/1932_98)
* [Roe v. Wade](http://www.oyez.org/cases/1970-1979/1971/1971_70_18)