

Our Supreme Court

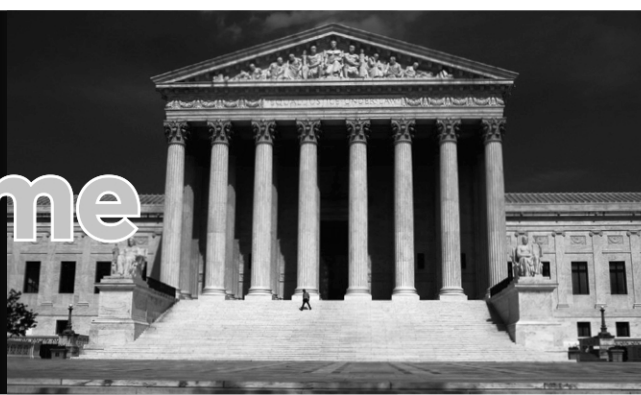


photo by FaceMePLS

In late October, the U.S. Senate **confirmed**, or approved, a new **justice** for the Supreme Court. Justice Amy Coney Barrett, 48, fills the seat that opened when Ruth Bader Ginsburg, 87, died in September.

The U.S. Constitution allows justices of the Supreme Court to serve until their death. They can also resign, retire or be **impeached**.

This week, The Mini Page learns more about the Supreme Court and what a justice does.

The U.S. Supreme Court

The Supreme Court is the United States' highest court. The justices must decide how laws are followed and whether our laws agree with the U.S. Constitution. This is called **judicial** (joo-DISH-uhl) review.

In the United States, the Supreme Court is an **appellate** court. This means that the court decides cases that are being reviewed after making their way through the lower courts.

Judicial process

The U.S. Constitution promises that a person accused of a crime will receive a fair trial. If a person involved in a trial doesn't agree with the outcome, or **verdict**, the case may be **appealed** to a state or federal appeals court. Someone who loses at this level may ask the Supreme Court to review the lower court's decision. The Supreme Court usually hears cases that will decide important legal principles.



photo by Rachel Malehorn

Amy Coney Barrett



photo by Phil Roeder

The chambers of the Supreme Court.

Deciding a case

On the first Monday in October of each year, the Supreme Court begins its new term. Once the Court has accepted a case for review, the two sides present their arguments to the justices. Each justice works with law school graduates who study cases and discuss them with the justice. They may also examine all the records from the case and ask questions of the people involved.

The justices meet with each other to talk about the case. Sometimes this takes months. Then they offer their opinion. At least five votes are needed to make a decision.

One of the justices writes a **summary** of the opinion. A justice who **dissented**, or disagreed, may write an opposing argument.



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Consider a case

In 1988, three students at a high school in St. Louis, Missouri, worked on their school's newspaper staff. They prepared two stories for the newspaper — one about how divorce affects students, and another about teenagers who become pregnant.

Their teacher and adviser said the paper couldn't publish the stories because the subject matter was too sensitive for younger students. The three students went to court, saying their First Amendment right to freedom of speech had been violated. The case eventually was heard in the U.S. Supreme Court.

How did the court rule?

Five of the Supreme Court justices, a majority, ruled against the students. The Court said that a school newspaper isn't like a community newspaper because it is a supervised learning experience for students.

How would you have ruled?

Discuss this case with your classmates or with your family. Do you agree with the Supreme Court justices that the school has a right to control what the students publish? Why or why not?

Learn more about the case *Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier* here: bit.ly/MPHazelwood



Resources



On the Web:

- bit.ly/MPGinsburg

At the library:

- "The U.S. Supreme Court" by Amy Kortuem
- "Turning Pages: My Life Story" by Sonia Sotomayor

Try 'n' Find

Words that remind us of the Supreme Court are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:

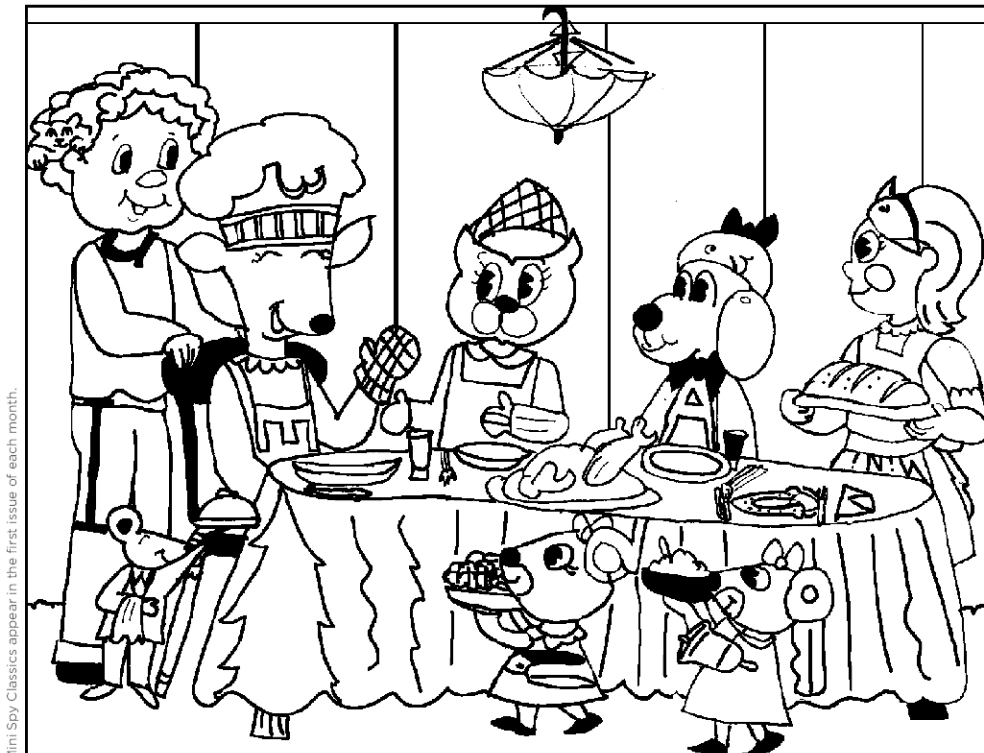


APPEAL, APPELLATE,
BARRETT, CONFIRM,
CONSTITUTION,
COURT, DISSENT,
GINSBURG, IMPEACH,
JUDGE, JUDICIAL,
JUSTICE, LAW, REVIEW,
SUMMARY, SUPREME,
TERM, TRIAL, VERDICT.

H	C	A	E	P	M	I	C	O	U	R	T	S	I	G
T	T	E	R	R	A	B	L	A	I	R	T	U	Y	G
N	X	Z	J	U	D	I	C	I	A	L	F	P	R	E
I	R	E	A	P	P	E	L	L	A	T	E	R	A	C
X	E	G	R	L	A	E	P	P	A	X	S	E	M	I
L	V	D	V	E	R	D	I	C	T	Z	X	M	M	T
A	I	U	E	G	R	U	B	S	N	I	G	E	U	S
W	E	J	C	O	N	F	I	R	M	X	A	G	S	U
F	W	G	T	E	R	M	D	I	S	S	E	N	T	J
V	C	O	N	S	T	I	T	U	T	I	O	N	I	K

Mini Spy Classics

Mini Spy and her friends have cooked a meal for Rookie for a change! See if you can find the hidden pictures. Then color the picture.

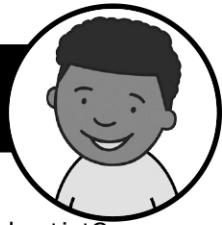


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Based on materials originally produced and/or created by Betty Debnam.

- | | | | | | |
|-------------------|-------------|------------|----------|----------|------------|
| • man in the moon | • word MINI | • letter O | • cat | • pencil | • bird |
| • Christmas tree | • letter A | • letter U | | • ladder | • iron |
| • umbrella | • letter E | • number 2 | | • olive | • acorn |
| | • letter I | • key | • banana | • bell | • number 3 |

Mini Jokes



Sandra: What did the judge say to the dentist?

Elena: "Do you swear to pull the tooth, the whole tooth, and nothing but the tooth?"

Eco Note



Want to help the environment? Cut down on your use of plastics. Since the 1950s, when plastic was invented, more than 6 billion metric tons of waste has been created. Only 9% of that plastic has been recycled. Plus, the greenhouse gas emissions caused by producing plastic add to our climate crisis. What to do? Stop using plastic bags and straws. Make sure recyclable items like plastic bottles make it to the recycler.

adapted from OceanConservancy.org

For later:

Look for items in your newspaper about the Supreme Court.

Teachers: For standards-based activities to accompany this feature, visit: bit.ly/MPstandards. And follow The Mini Page on Facebook!



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