

How Well Do You Know Your U.S. Supreme Court?

1. Name the nine justices currently on the Court.
2. Historically, the Court's members have been Protestant. At various times there has been discussion of the "Catholic seat" or the "Jewish seat" on the Court. How many members of the current Court are Protestant? Catholic? Jewish?
3. TRUE or FALSE? In a typical term the Court decides more cases 5 to 4 than 9 to 0.
4. Court watchers are typically hesitant to predict voting patterns among justices because the labels of "liberal" and "conservative" are not always clear or consistent and justices are not always in one "camp" or another. However, typically, which justices tend to be considered most "conservative"?
5. Which justices tend to be considered most "liberal"?
6. Which justice(s) tends to be considered a swing voter(s) – sometimes voting with liberals and sometimes voting with conservatives?
7. Approximately how many cases are appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court each year? Approximately how many are accepted for briefing and oral argument? Approximately what percent are accepted?
8. TRUE OR FALSE? When the Supreme Court decides not to hear a case (denies *certiorari*) it is saying that it agrees with the lower court's opinion and that the lower court decision should become a precedent.
9. Which court system generates most of the cases accepted by the U.S. Supreme Court—state or federal? Explain your answer.
10. TRUE or FALSE? Most experts who study the Court believe that the primary reason the Court decides to hear a case is to correct a legal error made by a court below.
11. Which justices, if any, had no prior judicial experience before joining the Court?