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Our Supreme Court: A History With 14 Activities (For Kids Series)



Synopsis

This lively and comprehensive activity book teaches young readers everything they need to know about the nation's highest court. Organized around keystones of the Constitution—including free speech, freedom of religion, civil rights, criminal justice, and property rights—the book juxtaposes historical cases with similar current cases. Presented with opinions from both sides of the court cases, readers can make up their own minds on where they stand on the important issues that have evolved in the Court over the past 200 years. Interviews with prominent politicians, high-court lawyers, and those involved with landmark decisions—including Ralph Nader, Rudolph Giuliani, Mario Cuomo, and Arlen Specter—show the personal impact and far-reaching consequences of the decisions. Fourteen engaging classroom-oriented activities involving violations of civil rights, exercises of free speech, and selecting a classroom Supreme Court bring the issues and cases to life. The first 15 amendments to the Constitution and a glossary of legal terms are also included.

Book Information

Series: For Kids series

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Age Range: 10 and up

Grade Level: 5 and up

Customer Reviews

Grade 7 Up — The history and evolution of the court and how it works are discussed in the first chapter. Thematic sections follow, covering such topics as free speech, privacy, and civil rights,

with significant decisions included. The cases are arranged chronologically, giving readers a sense of how the court's opinions have changed over time. Throughout, interviews with a variety of people involved in Supreme Court cases add to the text. They include former attorneys general, politicians, lawyers, and litigants. Some of the interviews contribute a wider perspective on issues, while others give personal insight into the case and the time period. The variety and arrangement of photos, drawings, posters, and news clippings add interest and help to break up the text into manageable chunks. Some of the activities are of dubious value ("Be a Court Stenographer" – court cases are now recorded, not typed), and others may be too time-consuming for many of today's standards-based, high-stakes-testing classrooms (electing a class Supreme Court and holding mock trials). All in all, though, this is a solid work that makes a complex and important subject accessible to students. – Anthony C. Doyle, Livingston High School Library, CA Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

This wide-format paperback presents the U.S. Supreme Court by describing some of its significant cases. Interspersed with discussions of legal issues and historical precedents are short interviews with dozens of individuals--among them Dick Thornburgh, Walter Mondale, Kenneth Starr, and Norma McCorvey. The book's arrangement is chronological within thematic chapters that explore cases in areas such as civil rights, freedom of speech, and the regulation of business. Panchyk's explanations are clear, and the interviews, appearing in sidebars, offer interesting perspectives. Drawings, portrait paintings, and photos reproduced in shades of blue and black break up the text. Varied in difficulty and usefulness, the activities range from making a "Supreme Court scrapbook" to holding a mock trial in the classroom. A list of Supreme Court justices and when they served, a glossary of legal terms, and an annotated list of recommended Internet sites are among the appended resources. Carolyn Phelan Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

As a homeschool teacher, I love the "For Kids" series and purchased this book while planning an American government class. While I enjoyed the text, I can't imagine any child curling up with this book and reading it unless it is assigned. The "activities" are largely instructions for making up your own skits based on court cases. If complete scripts were included, that would have helped make it useful to me, but there are none. There is very little "activity" included in this book, it's mostly reading and writing.

This is a good book when it come to talking and teaching certain case law in a high school law class. Very useful, especially the activities.

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