

Landmark Supreme Court Cases for United States History

Year	Name of Case	Constitutional Principal	Why Decision is Important
1803	<i>Marbury v. Madison</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separation of Powers: Checks and Balances • The Judiciary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established the Supreme Court's right of <i>judicial review</i>-the right to determine the constitutionality of laws. • Strengthened the judiciary in relation to other branches of government
1819	<i>McCulloch v. Maryland</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federalism: Federal Supremacy • National Power: <i>Necessary and Proper Clause</i> • The Judiciary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Said no state could tax a federally chartered bank because the power to tax involves the power to destroy. • Supported the use of the elastic clause to expand federal power. • Ruling established the principal of national supremacy that the Constitution and federal laws overruled state laws when the two conflict. • Expanded national power by supporting use of necessary and proper clause to carry out constitutional powers.
1824	<i>Gibbons v. Ogden</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federalism: Federal Supremacy • Property rights and economic policy: Interstate Commerce state • The Judiciary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • States may regulate only what is solely interstate commerce (within a state) • Congress has power to regulate interstate commerce, including commerce that involved intrastate-interstate activity. • Ruling established the basis of congressional regulation of interstate commerce
1832	<i>Worcester v. Georgia</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federalism • National power • Separation of powers • Equality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Constitution gives the federal, not state governments, exclusive jurisdiction over Indian nations. • Treaties between the United States government and Indian nations are the Supreme Law of the Land. • Therefore, Georgia laws taking jurisdiction of Cherokee people and land were void • President Andrew Jackson defied the ruling and the national policy of Indian Removal followed.
1857	<i>Dred Scott v. Sanford</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Judiciary • Equality • Civil Liberties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ruled that African-Americans were not citizens. (Overruled by 14th Amendment) • Declared that slaves were property of owners • As property, protected by 5th amendment, slaves could be taken anywhere; therefore, Missouri Compromise was unconstitutional
1895	<i>United States v. E.C. Knight Co.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National power 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While federal government did have the right to regulate some parts of economy, states under 10th amendment, could regulate interstate economic activities such as manufacturing • Refineries were manufacturing operations, not commerce; therefore, the Sherman Anti-Trust Act could not be applied to American Sugar Refining Co. although company controlled 90% of sugar processing in the nation.

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1896	<i>Plessy v. Ferguson</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality • Rights of Ethnic/Racial groups: <i>colored</i> races 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upheld Louisiana law providing for equal but separate accommodations for white and colored races • Said law did not conflict with 13th or 14th amendments, nor with interstate commerce • 14th amendment was not intended to enforce what court called social equality • Provided legal justification for separate but equal segregation policy until overturned in 1954 by <i>Brown v Board of Education</i>
1919	<i>Schneck v. United Sates</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil Liberties: Limited in wartime • Freedom of Speech 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established limits on free speech; right is not absolute but dependent on circumstances, i.e. person is not protected if falsely shouts fire in a crowded theatre • In this case saw defendants' actions as a clear and present danger to security of the nation in wartime.
1944	<i>Korematsu v. United States</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil liberties: Equal Protection • Presidential Power in Wartime • Rights of ethnic/racial groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upheld the power of the president in wartime to limit a group's civil liberties. • Ruled that forcible relocation of Japanese Americans to Wartime Relocation Agency Camps during World War II was legal.
1954	<i>Brown v. Board of Education</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality: Equal Protection • Federalism • Rights of ethnic/racial groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In this school segregation case, Court overturned <i>Plessy v. Ferguson</i> separate but equal doctrine • Ruled that separate educational facilities are inherently (inseparably) unequal and violate the 14th Amendment's equal protection clause
1962	<i>Baker v. Carr</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avenues of Representation : Voting Rights; Equal Protection • Federalism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Court has jurisdiction over apportionment of seats in state legislatures • Overrepresentation of rural voters and under representation of urban voters was a violation of 14th amendment's equal protection clause • Ruling led to other court cases that established one person-one vote concept.
1962	<i>Engel v. Vitale</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil Liberties: Establishment Clause, 1st and 14th Amendments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reciting of an official prayer in the schools violated the 1st amendment's establishment of religion clause, which was applied to the states by the 14th amendment • Although students were not required to say the non-denominational prayer, its recitation in class put them under pressure

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1963	<i>Gideon v. Wainwright</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil Liberties • Criminal Procedures: 6th and 14th Amendments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ruled unanimously that the 6th amendment right to an attorney, which was applied to the states by lawyers for poor people accused of felony crimes, not just capital crimes
1966	<i>Miranda v. Arizona</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criminal Procedures: Due Process • Civil Liberties: Equal Protection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established the requirements prior to questioning to inform those accused of crimes that they have the right to remain silent, the right to a lawyer, and that what they say can be used against them in court • Evidence obtained without this warning may not be used in court under the exclusionary rule
1969	<i>Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil Liberties: 1st Amendment • Student Rights/Safe School Environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While recognizing the authority of schools to prescribe and control conduct in the schools, the court ruled that neither students or teachers shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gate • Symbolic, silent expression of opinion in absence of any disorder (wearing of black armbands to protest Vietnam War) is protected under the 1st amendment
1971	<i>New York Times Co. v. United States</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil Liberties: Freedom of the Press • National Power 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Court narrowly upheld first amendment right to Freedom of the Press • Ruled that government had not met the heavy burden of prior restraint i.e. not made a strong enough case to stop publication of The Pentagon Papers on the grounds that national security would be hurt
1971	<i>Swann v. Charlotte Mecklenburg Board of Education</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality: Equal Protection • Rights of ethnic/racial groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ruled in favor of busing students to promote integration in public schools. • This would ensure that schools would be “properly” integrated and all students would receive equal educational opportunities regardless of race.
1973	<i>Roe v. Wade</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil Liberties: Right to Privacy • Rights of Women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declared state laws making abortions illegal; to be unconstitutional while stating certain limits and conditions • Basis of decision was right to privacy, citing primarily the due process clause of 14th amendment
1974	<i>United States v. Nixon</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separation of powers: Due Process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 8-0 vote, Court ruled that Nixon had to turn over the Watergate Tapes to the Special Prosecutor • No President was above the law; executive privilege (confidentiality) was not absolute • Separation of powers does not protect a president from judicial review of executive privilege, nor from the needs of the judicial process

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1978	<i>Regents of UC v. Bakke</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil liberties: Equal Protection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Race could be a factor in choosing a diverse student body in university admission decisions • It also held however that the use of quotas in affirmative action programs was not allowed.
1989	<i>Texas v. Johnson</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freedom of Speech 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ruled a Texas statute that criminalized the desecration of the American flag unconstitutional because it violated the first amendment.
1992	<i>Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania et al. v. Casey</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil Liberties • Rights of Women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upheld Roe decision • Determined that Pennsylvania law with provisions such as 24 hour waiting period and parental consent to a minor's abortion did not create undue burden or substantial obstacles to abortion • Struck down requirement of husband notification
1904	<i>Northern Securities Co. v. United States</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Power: Anti-Trust, Commerce Clause • Property rights/Economic policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal suit brought as part of Theodore Roosevelt's trust-busting using Sherman Antitrust Act. • Court ruled that the Northern Securities Company was formed only to eliminate competition and ordered it to be dissolved • Congress under commerce clause had authority to eliminate competition.
1911	<i>American Tobacco v. U.S.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Power: Anti-Trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used the "rule of reason" to allow the reorganization of ATC rather than its dissolution.