

Name _____

Date _____



The Judicial Branch

Today we're going to talk about the judicial branch...in just a minute.

The judicial branch is the branch of the federal government that includes the Supreme Court and the lower federal courts. It's responsible for interpreting the laws, making sure they are just and align with the US Constitution.

Article III of the Constitution outlines the role of the judicial branch but mostly focuses on the powers of the Supreme Court. The Judiciary Act of 1789 created the three-part judiciary as we know it today.

There are 94 district courts, 13 circuit courts, and one Supreme Court in the judiciary system. Each level of courts has a different role. District courts are trial courts where cases are heard for the first time. Circuit courts are the first level of appeal and review decisions made by district courts. The Supreme Court is the highest court in the judicial system. It reviews decisions made by lower courts, and its verdicts are final.

The judicial branch also plays a critical role in maintaining the balance of power among the three branches of government. The Supreme Court has the power of judicial review, allowing the Court to declare laws passed by Congress and the president unconstitutional. Federal judges are appointed by the president, confirmed by the Senate, and serve for life, which ensures that their decisions are free from outside influences.

Why do you think it's important that there are different levels of federal courts?