

# THE SUPREME COURT *of* OHIO

## GUIDE TO OBSERVING ORAL ARGUMENTS



# BEFORE OBSERVING THE ORAL ARGUMENT

## How does Ohio's Court System Work?



Watch “[How Does Ohio's Court System Work?](#)” as former Justice Yvette McGee Brown explains the levels of Ohio's court system and how cases move from the trial courts to the Ohio Supreme Court.

- While watching, complete the corresponding worksheet on page 5 of this document.

## A Day in the Life of the Supreme Court of Ohio



Watch “[A Day in the Life of the Supreme Court of Ohio](#)” as Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor explains what it's like when the Ohio Supreme Court is in session.

## Use the Supreme Court of Ohio Website to Prepare for Oral Arguments

Navigate to [sc.ohio.gov](http://sc.ohio.gov).

- Click on the *Clerk of Court & Case Information* section on the left side of the Supreme Court home page and select the Oral Argument Calendar: [Oral Argument Calendar](#).
  - Use this calendar to determine which case or cases you will observe.
- Go back to the *Clerk of Court & Case Information* section on the left side of the Supreme Court home page and select [Online Docket](#).
  - From the online docket, enter the case year and case number as they appear on the oral argument calendar.

Examine the Docket:

- The docket includes merit briefs, which provide background on the issue(s) before the Court. The appellant is the party or person who filed the case with the Supreme Court and the appellee (or respondent) is the party or person responding. The documents that are most helpful in gathering case information are the appellant and appellee merit briefs.
  - Amicus Curiae: Latin, meaning “friend of the court.” This is a person or group that is not a party in a case, but who asks a court or is requested by a court to file a brief because of a special interest in the subject of the case. The Supreme Court allows these groups to submit written briefs, but generally doesn't allow them to present oral arguments.

# CASE DETAILS

Once you have located the case information using the Online Docket, fill in the following details:

- **Case name:**

- **Who originated the suit?**

- **Which court gave the last ruling opinion (Prior Jurisdiction)?**

- **On what date did the Ohio Supreme Court accept the appeal?**

- **List the parties for both sides:**

*Appellant:*

*Appellee:*

- **List any Amicus Curiae:**

- **Read the Case Preview**

The Court's Office of Public Information will post previews of the cases one week in advance of the arguments. The previews are written in non-legal language and include a synopsis of each case, as well as the issue(s) the justices are being asked to decide.

→ View previews on Court News Ohio:  
[courtnewsorio.gov/cases/previews](http://courtnewsorio.gov/cases/previews).

- **Provide the facts of the case:**

- **Identify the legal issues:**

# OBSERVING THE ORAL ARGUMENT

At 9 a.m. on the day of the oral argument, you can access the live stream on the [Supreme Court of Ohio's home page](#) or on the [Ohio Channel's website](#).  
*Recordings of the oral arguments will be available on the Ohio Channel's website by the next day.*

In the space provided, write down each side's arguments:

Appellant	Appellee

# AFTER OBSERVING THE ORAL ARGUMENT

- How would you decide this case? Explain.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- How will the decision in this case affect citizens of Ohio?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Write down any questions you have about the oral argument for class discussion.

## Follow the Case

*Create an account and sign-up to receive case notification emails for the case you observed. The case activity notification login is in the upper right hand corner of the docket page for each case. You will receive an email notification when the case opinion is announced.*

# HOW DOES OHIO'S COURT SYSTEM WORK?

1. Where is the Supreme Court of Ohio located?
  - a. Cincinnati
  - b. Cleveland
  - c. Columbus
2. What type of court is in every county in Ohio?
3. Name at least two kinds of trial courts:
4. How many judges are in a trial court?
  - a. 1
  - b. 25
  - c. 10
5. Who decides the outcome of a trial?
  - a. Jury/Judge
  - b. Bailiff
  - c. Governor
6. What can you do if you don't agree with the trial court's decision?
  - a. Nothing, you're stuck with it
  - b. Appeal
  - c. Ignore it
7. How many district courts of appeals are in Ohio?
  - a. 12
  - b. 20
  - c. 3
8. How many judges sit on a panel at the district court of appeals?
  - a. 10
  - b. 3
  - c. 1
9. Does the Supreme Court of Ohio have to accept every appeal? (Circle "yes" or "no")  
Yes / No
10. How many justices are there on the Supreme Court of Ohio?
  - a. 12
  - b. 9
  - c. 7
11. What does the majority opinion mean for Ohioans?
12. How are judges and justices selected in Ohio?
  - a. Voted on by the people
  - b. Appointed by the governor
  - c. Appointed by the president

# HOW DOES OHIO'S COURT SYSTEM WORK?

## ANSWER KEY

- Where is the Supreme Court of Ohio located?
  - Cincinnati
  - Cleveland
  - Columbus**
- What type of court is in every county in Ohio?  
**Trial courts**
- Name at least two kinds of trial courts:  
**Juvenile, probate, domestic relations, municipal, general (civil and criminal cases), and county courts**
- How many judges are in a trial court?
  - 1**
  - 25
  - 10
- Who decides the outcome of a trial?
  - Jury/Judge**
  - Bailiff
  - Governor
- What can you do if you don't agree with the trial court's decision?
  - Nothing, you're stuck with it
  - Appeal**
  - Ignore it
- How many district courts of appeals are in Ohio?
  - 12**
  - 20
  - 3
- How many judges sit on a panel at the district court of appeals?
  - 10
  - 3**
  - 1
- Does the Supreme Court of Ohio have to accept every appeal? (Circle "yes" or "no")  
Yes / **No**
- How many justices are there on the Supreme Court of Ohio?
  - 12
  - 9
  - 7**
- What does the majority opinion mean for Ohioans?  
**The majority opinion becomes Ohio law.**
- How are judges and justices selected in Ohio?
  - Voted on by the people**
  - Appointed by the governor
  - Appointed by the president