

Choosing Georgia Judges

Trace how voters and appointing officials select judges.

SS8CG4.a "Describe the ways that judges are selected in Georgia."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB In paragraph 1, underline each court whose judges are elected statewide; in paragraph 2, circle each court type elected by circuit or county voters; in paragraph 3, write 1 beside the governor's vacancy appointment process, 2 beside juvenile court appointments, and 3 beside municipal court appointments.

Who Selects the Judges?

- ① Georgia uses nonpartisan elections for many judges. Nonpartisan means candidates run without a political-party label on the ballot. Voters across the entire state elect the judges of the Georgia Supreme Court and the Georgia Court of Appeals. Because these courts hear cases from throughout Georgia, their judges are chosen statewide. These judges serve six-year terms. Voters decide which candidate will fill the office, so neither the General Assembly nor the governor chooses a judge for a regular full term.
- ② Other elected judges are chosen by a smaller group of voters. Superior court judges are elected by voters in the judicial circuit where they serve, and they serve four-year terms. State court judges, probate court judges, and chief magistrates are elected by voters in their counties. Their elections are also nonpartisan. This system connects a court's area of responsibility with the people who vote for its judges. A person in one county does not vote for a state court judge serving only another county.
- ③ Not every Georgia judge first reaches office through a regular election. When a vacancy occurs in an elected judgeship, the governor appoints a qualified person. That appointee serves until the next general election held more than six months after the appointment, when voters choose a judge to complete the term. Judges of juvenile courts are appointed by the superior court judges of their judicial circuits. Municipal court judges are appointed by the governing authority of the city they serve.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Which two courts have judges elected by voters across all of Georgia?

2 How are superior court judges selected, and how are state court judges selected?

3 What happens after a vacancy occurs in an elected judgeship? Include the governor's role and the voters' later role.

4 Who appoints juvenile court judges, and who appoints municipal court judges?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write exactly three sentences for a new Georgia voter. Explain one statewide judicial election, one circuit or county judicial election, and one way a judge can be appointed.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

In paragraph 1, underline each court whose judges are elected statewide; in paragraph 2, circle each court type elected by circuit or county voters; in paragraph 3, write 1 beside the governor's vacancy appointment process, 2 beside juvenile court appointments, and 3 beside municipal court appointments. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which two courts have judges elected by voters across all of Georgia?	The Georgia Supreme Court and the Georgia Court of Appeals.
2	How are superior court judges selected, and how are state court judges selected?	Superior court judges are elected by voters in their judicial circuits. State court judges are elected by voters in their counties.
3	What happens after a vacancy occurs in an elected judgeship? Include the governor's role and the voters' later role.	The governor appoints a qualified person. The appointee serves until the next general election held more than six months after the appointment, when voters choose a judge to complete the term.
4	Who appoints juvenile court judges, and who appoints municipal court judges?	Superior court judges in the judicial circuit appoint juvenile court judges. The governing authority of the city appoints municipal court judges.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Georgia voters statewide elect judges to the Georgia Supreme Court. Voters in a judicial circuit elect superior court judges for that circuit. If an elected judgeship becomes vacant, the governor appoints a person until voters choose a judge at the next qualifying general election.

Accept equivalent wording that correctly identifies the selecting group or appointing authority. For the open response, check that all three required selection methods are accurate and that the student writes exactly three sentences.