Rights in Court

Weighing Supreme Court interpretations of constitutional protections

9-12.GOV.24 "Evaluate the Supreme Court's interpretations of freedoms in the Fourth through Eighth Amendments, including Mapp v. Ohio, Gideon v. Wainwright, and Miranda v. Arizona."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline what each named Supreme Court ruling requires, circle the right it protects, and number two places where the passage identifies a limit or trade-off.

What Rights Require

1. Imagine police entering a student's home, taking a notebook without permission or a warrant, and using it at a state criminal trial. The Fourth Amendment guards against unreasonable searches and seizures; it does not ban every search without a warrant. In Mapp v. Ohio (1961), the Supreme Court ruled that states, like the federal government, generally cannot use evidence obtained through a search that violates the Fourth Amendment. This exclusionary rule gives courts a way to enforce the right by keeping illegally obtained evidence out of the prosecution's case. Critics argue that it can keep reliable evidence from a jury.

2. Now picture someone charged with a felony who cannot pay for a lawyer. The Sixth Amendment protects the right to counsel in criminal prosecutions. In Gideon v. Wainwright (1963), the Supreme Court held that states must provide a lawyer to a defendant charged with a felony who cannot afford one. The justices reasoned that a fair trial is hard to achieve when only the government has a trained advocate. This ruling expanded access to counsel, but it does not guarantee that every person accused of a crime will be found innocent or that every legal problem receives a free lawyer.

3. A different pressure arises when police question a suspect in custody. In Miranda v. Arizona (1966), the Court held that before custodial interrogation, police must explain the rights to remain silent and to have a lawyer. Unwarned statements generally cannot be used to prove guilt in the prosecution's main case. The Fifth Amendment protects against compelled self-incrimination; the Sixth guarantees counsel in criminal prosecutions. Other limits address different stages: the Seventh preserves a jury right in certain federal civil cases, while the Eighth prohibits excessive bail, excessive fines, and cruel and unusual punishments. These protections do not stop every investigation, conviction, or penalty.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Evaluate the rule in Mapp v. Ohio. How does it protect a right, and what cost might it carry?

2. Why did the Court require states to provide counsel in Gideon v. Wainwright? Explain one limit of the ruling.

3. How does Miranda v. Arizona limit the use of a suspect's statements, and what constitutional concern does that limit address?

4. A judge says the Seventh and Eighth Amendments both concern only criminal punishment. Evaluate that claim using the passage.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

At a state felony trial, prosecutors want to use a diary police took from a locked locker without a warrant, permission, or any other legal basis. The defendant cannot afford a lawyer. In three sentences, evaluate how two Supreme Court rulings apply and explain what each protects.

ANSWER KEY

Rights in Court

HIGH SCHOOL · 9-12.GOV.24

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline what each named Supreme Court ruling requires, circle the right it protects, and number two places where the passage identifies a limit or trade-off. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Evaluate the rule in Mapp v. Ohio. How does it protect a right, and what cost might it carry?	**Excluding evidence from an unconstitutional search enforces the Fourth Amendment, but it can keep reliable evidence from a jury.**
2	Why did the Court require states to provide counsel in Gideon v. Wainwright? Explain one limit of the ruling.	**The Court found a fair trial difficult when a defendant charged with a felony faces the government without a lawyer. The ruling does not promise an acquittal or a free lawyer for every legal problem.**
3	How does Miranda v. Arizona limit the use of a suspect's statements, and what constitutional concern does that limit address?	**Unwarned statements from custodial interrogation generally cannot be used to prove guilt in the prosecution's main case. This protects against compelled self-incrimination under the Fifth Amendment.**
4	A judge says the Seventh and Eighth Amendments both concern only criminal punishment. Evaluate that claim using the passage.	**The claim is false. The Seventh preserves a jury right in certain federal civil cases, while the Eighth limits excessive bail, excessive fines, and cruel and unusual punishments.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Under Mapp v. Ohio, the diary should generally be excluded because police obtained it through an unjustified search, protecting the Fourth Amendment right against unreasonable searches. Under Gideon v. Wainwright, the state must provide a lawyer because the defendant faces a felony charge and cannot afford counsel. Together, these rulings limit the prosecution's use of unlawfully obtained evidence and protect the defendant's ability to receive a fair trial.

Accept answers that distinguish an amendment's protection from the Court's way of enforcing it. For the open task, students should apply both Mapp and Gideon to the new facts, not simply restate the rulings.