Rules That Restrain

Supreme Court cases and the limits of government power

USG.C.6.8 "Explain why due process rights are essential for the protection of individual rights and the maintenance of limited government by examining landmark Supreme Court cases which have specified due process rights over time (e.g., Mapp v. Ohio..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the protection established in each case. Circle words that show how that protection limits government power.

When the Government Must Follow Rules

1. Imagine police searching a home without a lawful basis and finding evidence of a crime. Should a court be allowed to use what they found? Due process means government must follow fair legal procedures before taking a person's life, liberty, or property. The Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments protect due process, and Supreme Court decisions have made its requirements more specific. In Mapp v. Ohio (1961), the Court held that evidence obtained through a search that violates the Fourth Amendment generally cannot be used in a state criminal trial. That rule gives police a reason to respect constitutional search limits, even when evidence seems useful.

2. A person accused of a crime may also face the government without the tools needed to defend themselves. In Gideon v. Wainwright (1963), the Court ruled that states must provide a lawyer to a defendant charged with a serious crime who cannot afford one. The ruling helps make a fair trial possible regardless of wealth and prevents states from leaving poor defendants to face prosecutors alone. In Miranda v. Arizona (1966), the Court required police to warn suspects in custody about their right to remain silent and their right to a lawyer before questioning. Those warnings help protect against compelled self-incrimination and limit how police obtain statements.

3. Due process matters at sentencing, too. In Furman v. Georgia (1972), the Court found that the death penalty, as imposed under the laws it reviewed, was applied so unpredictably that it violated the Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments. The ruling did not permanently ban the death penalty. Instead, states had to change their laws if they wanted to use it again. A punishment as severe as death cannot depend on unchecked discretion. Together, these cases show that fair rules are not favors granted by officials. They are limits on government power that help protect people when the stakes are highest.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the rule in Mapp protect a person's rights while limiting the government's power to use evidence?

2. How does Gideon protect defendants who cannot afford a lawyer, and what must states do as a result?

3. How do Miranda warnings limit police power during questioning, and what right do they help protect?

4. Why did the Court reject the death penalty as imposed under the laws reviewed in Furman, and what limit did that place on states?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A judge says, "The evidence looks strong, so we can skip safeguards to save time." Write five or six sentences challenging this claim. Use one case about investigation or questioning and one case about trials or sentencing, explaining how each protects a right and limits government power.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · USG.C.6.8

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the protection established in each case. Circle words that show how that protection limits government power. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the rule in Mapp protect a person's rights while limiting the government's power to use evidence?	**It generally keeps evidence from a search that violates the Fourth Amendment out of a state criminal trial, giving police a reason to respect constitutional search limits.**
2	How does Gideon protect defendants who cannot afford a lawyer, and what must states do as a result?	**It helps make a fair trial possible regardless of wealth by requiring states to provide a lawyer to a defendant charged with a serious crime who cannot afford one.**
3	How do Miranda warnings limit police power during questioning, and what right do they help protect?	**Police must warn suspects in custody of their rights before questioning, which limits how police obtain statements and helps protect against compelled self-incrimination.**
4	Why did the Court reject the death penalty as imposed under the laws reviewed in Furman, and what limit did that place on states?	**The penalty was applied too unpredictably. States could not keep imposing it under those laws and had to change their laws if they wanted to use it again.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Strong evidence does not let officials skip rules that protect people. Under Miranda v. Arizona, police must warn a suspect in custody about the rights to remain silent and to a lawyer before questioning. Those warnings help protect against compelled self-incrimination and limit how police obtain statements. Under Gideon v. Wainwright, a state must provide a lawyer to a defendant charged with a serious crime who cannot afford one. That requirement protects the chance for a fair trial and prevents the state from leaving a poor defendant to face prosecutors alone.

Accept responses that accurately connect each case to both an individual protection and a limit on government power. For Your Turn, students should use cases from two different stages of the criminal process and explain why apparently strong evidence does not remove those safeguards.