

Courts at Work

Read how court systems protect rights and check laws.

CE.5 “The student will apply history and social science skills to explain the judicial systems established by the Constitution of Virginia and the Constitution of the United States by describing the system of state and federal courts including...”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each detail that tells which court system can hear a case. Circle due-process protections, and number the sentences that explain civil cases, criminal cases, and judicial review.

Two Court Systems, Shared Responsibilities

- ① Virginia and the United States have separate court systems. Each system has jurisdiction, or legal authority, over certain kinds of cases. Virginia state courts usually hear cases involving Virginia laws, such as traffic violations, family disputes, contracts, and crimes under state law. Federal courts hear cases involving the U.S. Constitution, federal laws, treaties, or disputes between parties from different states when the amount in dispute meets a legal requirement. A case may move from a trial court to an appeals court when a party claims that a legal error affected the decision.
- ② Both court systems must follow due process, protections meant to make legal proceedings fair. A person accused of a crime has the right to know the charge, to have a lawyer, to question witnesses, and to receive a fair and public trial. Judges must be neutral, and juries are chosen through rules designed to reduce unfairness. In a criminal case, the government tries to prove that a defendant committed a crime beyond a reasonable doubt. Possible results include fines, probation, or jail.
- ③ Civil cases settle disagreements between people, businesses, or groups. One side may ask for money or for a court order, rather than punishment for a crime. For example, a customer might sue a contractor over unfinished work. Courts also use judicial review. In *Marbury v. Madison*, decided in 1803, the U.S. Supreme Court stated that it could declare a law unconstitutional if the law conflicts with the Constitution. This power helps courts check whether actions by other parts of government follow the Constitution.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How does jurisdiction help decide whether a case belongs in a Virginia state court or a federal court?

2 Name two due-process protections for a person accused of a crime. Explain how one of them supports fairness.

3 Compare a civil case with a criminal case. What does each type of case seek or involve?

4 What power did the Supreme Court state in *Marbury v. Madison*, and what does that power allow courts to check?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a four-sentence case summary about a Virginia resident accused of shoplifting under Virginia law. Identify the court system likely to have jurisdiction, name two due-process protections, and explain what could happen if the law conflicts with the Constitution.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each detail that tells which court system can hear a case. Circle due-process protections, and number the sentences that explain civil cases, criminal cases, and judicial review. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does jurisdiction help decide whether a case belongs in a Virginia state court or a federal court?	Jurisdiction gives a court legal authority over certain cases. Virginia courts usually hear cases involving Virginia laws, while federal courts hear cases involving the U.S. Constitution, federal laws, treaties, or certain disputes between parties from different states.
2	Name two due-process protections for a person accused of a crime. Explain how one of them supports fairness.	Answers include knowing the charge, having a lawyer, questioning witnesses, and receiving a fair and public trial. A valid explanation connects one protection to a fair legal proceeding.
3	Compare a civil case with a criminal case. What does each type of case seek or involve?	A civil case settles a disagreement and may seek money or a court order. In a criminal case, the government tries to prove that a defendant committed a crime beyond a reasonable doubt, and punishment may include fines, probation, or jail.
4	What power did the Supreme Court state in Marbury v. Madison, and what does that power allow courts to check?	The Court stated that it could declare a law unconstitutional if it conflicts with the Constitution. Judicial review lets courts check whether actions by other parts of government follow the Constitution.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A Virginia state court would likely have jurisdiction because the accusation involves a Virginia law. This is a criminal case because the government is accusing a person of a crime. The accused person must know the charge and may have a lawyer. If the law conflicts with the Constitution, a court can use judicial review to declare it unconstitutional.

Accept equivalent descriptions of state and federal jurisdiction that match the passage. For the open response, accept any accurate court-system choice, due-process protections, and explanation of judicial review that fit the student's case.