# Eighth Grade Social Studies Overview

| | First Semester | Second Semester |
|---|---|---|
| **Social Studies** | Qualities of good citizenship<br>Community leaders<br>Decision making<br>Immigration and citizenship<br>Disability awareness<br>Personal and public health<br>Political heritage and governing structures<br>Landmark cases of the U.S. Supreme Court<br>Civic debate | Voting rights and responsibilities<br>Branches of the U.S. federal government<br>State and local government<br>Media influence and news literacy<br>Civic involvement<br>Earth stewardship<br>Community service project<br>Landmark cases of the U.S. Supreme Court<br>Civic debate |

# Grade 8

## Civics

## Coursebook

Oak Meadow

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## Unit IV Political Systems

## Unit V Media Influence and News Literacy

## Unit VI Civic Involvement



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# Introduction

In Oak Meadow Civics, you will be learning about (and practicing) good citizenship, and exploring the essential elements of a healthy society. You'll explore topics of importance both locally and nationally through the lens of historic and current events and influential cases of the United States Supreme Court. You'll develop an understanding of social and political issues through reflection, discussion, and practical activities such as community service projects and interviewing local community leaders. You will gain experience in evaluating the validity of a claim or source and differentiating between fact and opinion. Throughout the course, you will also develop your ability to listen to others impartially, communicate effectively, and take initiative. Creative thinking is essential if new solutions to old problems are to be found. There are many opportunities for you to think creatively throughout this course.

While this course is written for students in the United States, it can easily be adapted for residents of other countries. Discuss the possibilities with your teacher or supervising adult.

## Course Materials

This coursebook is your primary resource for completing the course. It includes all the instructions for a full year of lessons. Take a few moments to familiarize yourself with how the coursebook is organized.

You will be doing a great deal of research on historic and current events. A reliable internet connection will be very helpful, and you will find a Curriculum Resource Links page for this course on the Oak Meadow website at www.oakmeadow.com/curriculum-links/. If you have access to the internet, take a few minutes to look it over and then bookmark the page for future reference.

If you will be doing your research offline, you may want to scan the topics of future lessons so you can acquire your research materials from the library, newspapers, journals, or other sources ahead of time.

## How the Course Is Set Up

This course is divided into 36 lessons, and each lesson is designed to take about one week to complete. In the lessons, you will find the following sections (not every section will be found in every lesson):

> An **Assignment Summary** is included at the beginning of each lesson; you can see at a glance what is required and check off assignments as you complete each one. Assignments are fully explained in the lesson.

**Learning Objectives** outline the main goals of the lesson and give you an idea of what to expect.

**Reading** assignments outline what you will be reading in each lesson. The reading selections are found at the end of each lesson.

**Reflect and Discuss** provides relevant topics related to the lessons for you to ponder and talk about with others. You do not need to write anything down for these. These opportunities are optional.

**Assignments** are designed to help you understand key concepts and apply your knowledge. If you have an idea for a project you would like to do to replace one or more assignments in the course, discuss it with your teacher.

**Up for a Challenge?** activities offer additional ways to explore the topics you are studying. You can choose any that interest you (all are optional).

**Learning Checklists** are included to help you keep track of your progress and the skills that still need work. These can be filled out by you or by an adult who is supervising your work.

**For Enrolled Students** provides reminders and information for students who are enrolled in Oak Meadow School and submitting work to their Oak Meadow teacher.

The **Appendix** includes transcripts of several founding documents of the United States: The Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights and constitutional amendments. The appendix also includes other important information that you will be expected to know and apply to your work. Please take a few minutes to read this information before you begin the first lesson.

This course is designed for independent learning, so hopefully you will find it easy to navigate. However, it is assumed you will have an adult supervising your work and providing support and feedback. If you have a question about your work, please ask for help!

When you begin each lesson, scan the entire lesson first. Take a quick look at the number of assignments and amount of reading. Having a sense of the whole lesson before you begin will help you manage your time effectively.

# For Students Enrolled in Oak Meadow School

If you are enrolled in Oak Meadow School, you will submit work to your Oak Meadow teacher on a regular basis. Continue working on your next lesson while you are waiting for your teacher to give you feedback. After you have submitted the first 18 lessons, you will receive a first semester evaluation and grade. At the end of 36 lessons, you will receive a final evaluation and grade.

Follow the instructions in your teacher's welcome letter about how and when to submit work. Your teacher may also provide information on alternate assignments and can help you adapt the lesson material or workload, if necessary. Students and parents or home teachers should look carefully at the

week's assignments across all subjects and determine which assignments best fit the student's individual needs or the time constraints. Contact your Oak Meadow teacher whenever you have a question. Please notify your teacher if you are making any alterations to the assignments or workload.

You are expected to submit original work, writing in your own words. When you use other sources, cite them accurately following the guidelines in the appendix. Plagiarism, whether accidental or intentional, is a serious matter.

The appendix of this coursebook includes complete details on Oak Meadow's academic expectations and original work guidelines. It is your responsibility to make sure you understand these academic expectations and abide by them.

Please remember to stay in touch with your Oak Meadow teacher and share your comments, ideas, questions, and challenges. Your teacher is eager to help you!

## Becoming an Informed Citizen

It is the responsibility of every citizen to be interested, informed, and involved in what is happening, starting with the community in which you live. Throughout this course, you will gain a greater understanding of the importance of good citizenship. You will also gain a sense of being a part of your community, and a recognition that you do make a difference in the world.

Lesson

1

# Values of Citizenship

## Learning Objectives

At the end of this lesson you will be able to:

- Express thoughts and ideas in civil discussion.
- Identify real life examples related to concepts of equality and justice.
- Summarize news articles.

### ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

- ☐ Complete reading selections.
- ☐ Reflect on and discuss issues.
- ☐ Explain the concept of equality.
- ☐ Give an example of a conflict of personal freedoms.
- ☐ Describe an example of justice in action.
- ☐ Give an example of disrespect or injustice.
- ☐ Collect and summarize positive news articles.

## Reading

Read the following sections (found in Reading Selections at the end of this lesson).

- What Is Civics?
- Qualities of Good Citizenship
- Being an Informed Citizen

In each lesson, before you begin reading, glance over the length of the reading selections to get an idea of how much reading is involved. If you find a lot of reading material, you will probably want to read one or two sections and then take a break before reading more. This will help you better understand and remember the material.

In addition to the reading selections in this coursebook, you are encouraged to learn more about topics you are interested in by visiting the library, reading newspapers, and doing research online. You'll find a list of online resources at www.oakmeadow.com/curriculum-links/. You can use these links to learn more about lesson topics. Your community may also have helpful resources that you can use.

You may find it useful to keep a journal for this course, using it to record your reflections, questions, ideas, and other thoughts about what you are learning. It will also help to practice active reading skills: underline reading passages that you want to remember or go back to, circle or highlight key ideas, define important terms in the margins, write down questions, or underline things you want to learn

more about. Active reading will help you gain a deeper understanding of the lesson topics and remember and retrieve the information more easily.

## Reflect and Discuss

Many communities struggle with unwanted graffiti, which can range from annoying to obscene to evidence of dangerous activity. Graffiti is considered by some to be an art form and those who draw graffiti ("taggers") are sometimes called "graffiti artists." Is tagging public property (or the property of others, such as the fence of a business or a train car) ever justified or acceptable? Are there ways that graffiti could contribute to a community in a positive way? Under what circumstances might graffiti be acceptable?

Take some time to reflect on your feelings about this topic, and then find someone—a friend, family member, neighbor, or community member—to discuss it with. Find out what they think and why. Share your thoughts. This is civic debate and ***rhetoric*** (the art of persuasive speaking or writing) and it is at the heart of any democracy.

## Assignments

Before you begin the first assignment, read through all the assignments. This will help you figure out how to best manage your time. Do this for each lesson. All assignments in this course are done after completing the required reading (listed above).

1. In any society, citizens do not have equal jobs, equal education, equal ability, or equal money. Explain what you think equality means in this country.
2. We have the freedom to play the kind of music that we like. But do we have the freedom to walk down the street playing loud music? We have the freedom to have pets, but do we have the right to allow our animals to roam in other people's yards? How might your freedom interfere with another person's freedom? Give at least two specific examples.
3. Define justice in your own words. Describe an example of justice in action in your own life, the life of someone you know, or in the life of a public figure.
4. Do you know of an incident in which a person or group experienced disrespect, injustice, or a lack of freedom? This can be a real example from your life, the life of someone you know, or something you read about or heard on the news. Explain what happened.
5. For two weeks, look for news articles that tell a positive story about a person or event that contributed to our society. Assemble these articles in a collage or little booklet. Next to each article, briefly summarize this "good news."

# Learning Checklist

Use this learning checklist to keep track of how your skills are progressing. Include notes about what you need to work on. Please remember that these skills continue to develop over time, and you aren't expected to be able to do all of them yet. The main goal is to be aware of which skills you need to focus on.

| SKILLS | Developing | Consistent | Competent | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Express thoughts and ideas in civil discussion | | | | |
| Demonstrate understanding of concepts of equality and justice | | | | |
| Identify real life examples related to concepts of equality and justice | | | | |
| Identify relevant, accurate news sources | | | | |
| Summarize news articles | | | | |
| Identify key ideas in primary and secondary sources | | | | |

## FOR ENROLLED STUDENTS

You will be sending your work from this lesson to your Oak Meadow teacher at the end of lesson 2. In the meantime, feel free to contact your teacher if you have any questions about the assignments or the submission process.

# Reading Selections

## What Is Civics?

What is civics? How can the study of civics make a difference in your life?

Civics is the study of what it means to be the citizen of a country. This course focuses on issues of citizenship in the United States of America, but every country in the world has citizens. Citizenship involves several things including individual rights and responsibilities, knowledge of laws and political structures, and being a valuable member of society.

Each of us is a member of many different groups. To begin with, we each belong to a family. You may have several distinct groups of friends, such as those in your neighborhood, in classes you have taken, on sports teams, at a job or through volunteer work, or from other parts of your life. You are also a citizen of your town, your state or region, and your country, and you are an important part of these groups. Each group has its own rights, responsibilities, values, and expectations.

In the United States—and in many other countries around the world—the belief that all people deserve equal respect is supported by three basic values: ***equality, freedom,*** and ***justice***. These values establish a common bond between people who belong to many different ethnic, religious, and social groups.

- **Equality** means that every person is entitled to the same respect as any other person. Everyone has something to contribute to our society. To be able to make this contribution, each person must have the same rights and opportunities in life as any other person, even when their individual circumstances are entirely different.
- **Freedom** is the ability to choose how to act, what to say, and what to think. This means that each person has the liberty to decide what to believe, who to associate with, and where to live, work, or travel.
- **Justice** means that each person will be treated fairly in every area of life. The laws and rules are applied equally to everyone. Justice also ensures that citizens' rights are protected under law.

There are many famous songs and poems that tell of these basic values of citizenship. Think about where you might have heard some of these phrases before, and see if you can think of others:

*let freedom ring*

*with liberty and justice for all*

*sweet land of liberty*

*all men are created equal*

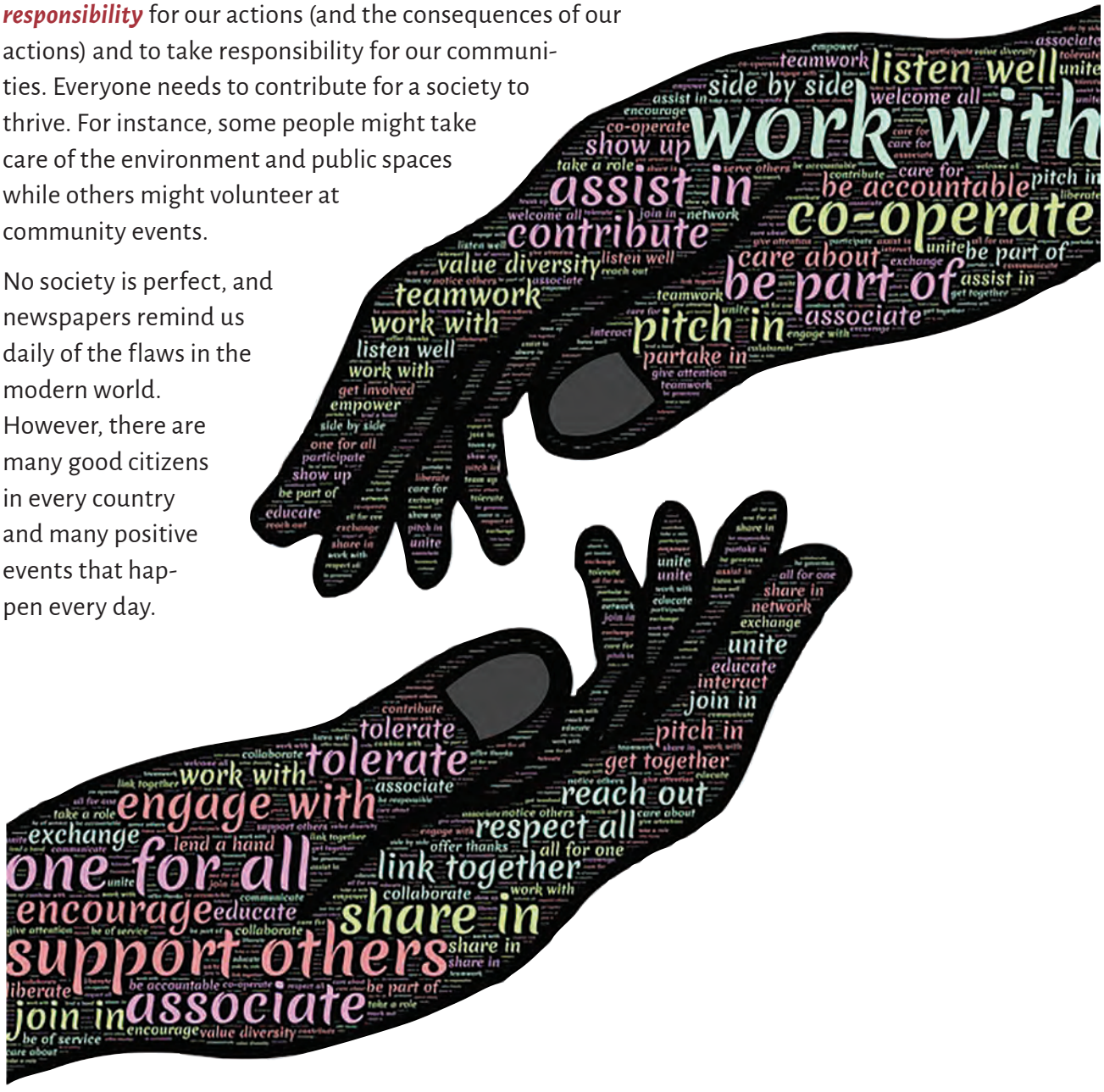
*the land of the free*

## Qualities of Good Citizenship

Participation is at the heart of the form of government we have in the United States. Being a good citizen takes time and energy, but it is important for every American to understand how our government works and what part we can and should play in it. There are duties and responsibilities of citizenship.

(A duty is something that is required or expected of you; a responsibility is an inner sense of a moral obligation.) For instance, it is every citizen's duty to know and obey the law, and to cooperate with emergency workers. It is every citizen's responsibility to investigate issues that impact the community, and to become an informed voter and participate in the voting process. Every person makes a difference in the local community.

There are many qualities related to good citizenship. ***Respect*** for people, laws, and public property or the property of others is one important quality. This means being honest and considerate when dealing with others. ***Compassion*** for others is how we care for one another and helps us connect with other people on an emotional level. Good citizenship also includes being willing to do the right thing and to stand up to injustice with ***courage***. It is important for each of us to take ***responsibility*** for our actions (and the consequences of our actions) and to take responsibility for our communities. Everyone needs to contribute for a society to thrive. For instance, some people might take care of the environment and public spaces while others might volunteer at community events.




No society is perfect, and newspapers remind us daily of the flaws in the modern world. However, there are many good citizens in every country and many positive events that happen every day.

## Being an Informed Citizen

Part of being a good citizen is being informed. This doesn't mean we have to listen to, read, or watch the news all the time. It means it is each person's responsibility to understand and respect the laws, rules, and regulations that help ensure a ***civil*** society. The word *civil* refers to anything involving ordinary citizens; it also means courteous and polite. In a civil society, laws are designed to create harmony, and keep everyone safe and healthy. For instance, traffic laws help avoid arguments, confusion, and accidents on the road, and it is the responsibility of each licensed driver to learn and follow these laws.

Being informed also means taking an interest in what is happening in the community and beyond. We need to pay attention to all sides of an issue, consider different perspectives, and make up our own minds. Being informed means gathering information from as many sources as necessary in order to fully understand an issue, event, or idea.

In gathering information, it is important to look to ***primary sources*** as well as ***secondary sources***.

- A primary source is a firsthand account of an event or situation (such as an interview or personal conversation between two people), or an original document (such as a letter or diary).
- A secondary source is an indirect source, a secondhand or thirdhand account of an event or situation, such as the encyclopedia, newspaper, magazines, etc. A secondhand account is a report by someone who was given the information by the individual who experienced the event. News reporters often give secondhand accounts of events.
- A third-hand account is removed one step further, such as when someone writes an article based on a news report of an event.

Have you ever played the game Telephone? One person whispers a message to someone else, and that person whispers the message to a third person, and so on, until the message is passed down the line of people. By the time the message gets to the last person, it is usually very different than when it started! Whenever you read or hear news, consider how close to the source the information originated. In general, the closer to the original source, the more accurate the information is likely to be.

Lesson

2

# Community Leaders

## Learning Objectives

At the end of this lesson you will be able to:

- Identify needs of community members.
- Describe civic work done by international groups and individuals.
- Conduct and summarize an interview.

## Reading

Read the following sections (found in Reading Selections at the end of this lesson).

- Champions of Freedom
- International Cooperation
- Community Leaders

### ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

- ☐ Complete reading selections.
- ☐ Perform helpful tasks in your neighborhood and write about it.
- ☐ Choose an activity to complete.
- ☐ Interview a first responder.
- ☐ Complete your collage or booklet of positive news articles.

## Assignments

1. This week, try to do at least two things to be a good citizen of your neighborhood. Here is a list of some things you might do, or you can come up with your own ideas:
    - Take a neighbor a gift of flowers you picked or food you prepared.
    - Help your neighbors do yard work.
    - Run an errand for a neighbor.
    - Visit an elderly neighbor who lives alone and might enjoy company.
    - Clean up around your neighborhood to make it look better.
    - Offer to help a family with young children with childcare, chores, or errands.

- Organize a potluck or neighborhood block party.
- With your parents, check the listings on Freecycle.org, an online forum for people to exchange things for free, and see if you have something to give away to someone who needs it.

Afterward, write down what you did. How did you feel after being a good neighbor? What was your neighbor's response? How can you continue to be a good neighbor? Write down your thoughts.

2. Choose one of the following activities.

   a. Read the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (found in the appendix). Draw a poster or create a picture that celebrates this vital document.

   b. Choose one of the agencies of the United Nations to learn more about. Give a summary of what the agency does and who benefits.

   c. Choose one of the "champions of freedom" mentioned in the reading selection, or someone else in whom you have an interest, and learn about their life's work. Describe some of the person's most significant contributions to humanity.

3. Interview a local firefighter, police officer, or EMT or paramedic. Ask questions such as the following (feel free to come up with more questions of your own):

   - What are the requirements for your job? What was the training like?
   - What do you do in a typical workday?
   - What is one of the hardest parts of your job?
   - What is the most rewarding part?
   - Why did you choose this career? What other careers did you consider? Would you make the same career choice again?

   Write a summary of the interview, making sure to give the person's full name and job title. Alternately, you might like to record the interview on video and then edit it down to show the highlights of what you talked about.

4. Continue to collect positive news articles. Summarize each one and add it to your collage or booklet. Complete this project by the end of the week.

### Up for a Challenge?

Have you ever seen a Little Free Library? These small structures are popping up in neighborhoods all around the country. Learn about how to construct one of your own and find books to stock it with that anyone is welcome to take and keep or read and return. If you don't have a place to put up a Little Free Library, you can still build one and then offer it to anyone who wants one.

# Learning Checklist

Use this learning checklist to keep track of how your skills are progressing. Include notes about what you need to work on. These skills will continue to develop over time.

| SKILLS | Developing | Consistent | Competent | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Identify needs of community members | | | | |
| Conduct an interview | | | | |
| Summarize an interview | | | | |
| Summarize news articles | | | | |
| Identify key ideas in primary and secondary sources | | | | |

### FOR ENROLLED STUDENTS

When you have completed this lesson, please send lessons 1 and 2 to your Oak Meadow teacher. Make sure to include your collage or booklet of positive news. Include any additional notes about the lesson work or anything you'd like your teacher to know. Feel free to include any questions you have—your teacher is eager to help.

If you have any questions about what to send or how to send it, please refer to your parent handbook and your teacher's welcome letter. Your teacher will respond to your submission of student work with detailed feedback. In the meantime, proceed to the next lesson.

# Reading Selections

## Champions of Freedom

The right to be free is one of the most cherished human rights. While millions of people work hard to ensure a free and just society, most are not well known. Regardless of that, they are champions of freedom. They may not need public acclaim or fame—many don't even want it. However, their work is valued and appreciated.

There are others who have become famous for their work for the good of humanity. Here are just a few of these people:

- **Franklin D. Roosevelt and Eleanor Roosevelt**

Franklin D. Roosevelt, U.S. President from 1933–45, once said, "Freedom from war is ideally linked with freedom from want." Both Franklin and his wife, Eleanor, were tireless champions of his dream of "peace and a more abundant life for the peoples of the world." Eleanor Roosevelt became one of the world's foremost advocates for human rights, often focusing on poverty, racism, and issues affecting children and women. She chaired the United Nation's Human Rights Commission, where she helped write the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

**Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, 1935 (Image credit: Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library Digital Archives)**

- **Dr. Linus Pauling and Ava Helen Pauling**

Dr. Linus Pauling was a scientist who won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1954 and then won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1962 for his exemplary work as a peace activist. He filed suit against the U.S. Department of Defense, the Atomic Energy Commission, and their counterparts, to protest their right to conduct nuclear bomb tests. Dr. Pauling believed that the way to avert nuclear war was to begin making safe, just, and effective international agreements, and that the first of these should involve the ending of all nuclear weapons tests. When accepting the Nobel Peace Prize, Pauling credited the influence of his wife, Ava Helen Pauling, who was a prominent human rights advocate. She was involved in social action and lectured around the world on women's rights, racial equality, and world peace.

**Linus and Ava Helen Pauling (Image credit: Oregon State University Archives)**

- **Martin Luther King, Jr. and Coretta Scott King**

Martin Luther King, Jr. was another tireless champion of freedom, leading the civil rights movement during the 1960s with peace and dignity. He advocated nonviolent social action and inspired generations of people across all racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds to work together for racial equality. For his extraordinary work, King was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. Coretta Scott King worked with her husband throughout his career until his assassination in 1968. After his death, she founded the Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change and continued her work with social activism for peace and justice.

**Martin Luther King, Jr. and Coretta Scott King meet Vice President-elect Hubert Humphrey at a Harlem rally in 1964. (Image credit: United States Library of Congress)**

- **Nelson Mandela**

Nelson Mandela was the first democratically-elected president of South Africa, serving from 1994 to 1999. Growing up under white minority rule in South Africa, Mandela devoted his life to the fight for freedom for all Africans. While still in law school, he joined a civil disobedience campaign against unjust laws and was arrested. Despite several arrests, he remained determined to speak up. He continued his involvement in protests and strikes, working toward a non-racial constitution for racially segregated South Africa. In a speech in 1964, he said, "I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities."

**Nelson Mandela in Johannesburg, 2008**
**(Image credit: South Africa The Good News)**

**First Lady Michelle Obama visits Nelson Mandela in his South African home, 2011**
**(Image credit: Official White House Photo by Samantha Appleton)**

## International Cooperation

The United Nations was formed in 1945 to promote peaceful relationships among nations of the world. It has over 190 Member States who work together to address issues affecting humanity, such as international peace and security, climate change, sustainable development, gender equality, food and water sources, and human rights. They are also instrumental in delivering humanitarian aid, such as delivering food, water, and medical supplies to countries suffering from drought, natural disasters, or war. The United Nations (U.N.) has a variety of agencies that address these issues. Here are just a few of the U.N. groups:

**The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)** provides assistance to families with children.

**The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees** works to protect and provide aid to refugees.

**The World Food Programme**'s goal is to eliminate hunger and malnutrition in the world.

**The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** advocates for the sustainable development of Earth's resources.

**UN Women** works at achieving gender equality and empowering women.

**The World Health Organization (WHO)** advocates for public health, which it defines as "complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."

## Community Leaders

Every community has its own local champions, people who work for the good of the community. For instance, your local fire department helps keep the community safe, and is ready to help in any emergency. Likewise, police officers—also called Peace Officers—work to ensure the harmony and safety of the communities they serve. Their job includes protecting people's lives and property, patrolling neighborhoods, finding stolen property, finding and arresting lawbreakers, enforcing traffic laws, mediating disputes, and helping to maintain peace and order in the community.

Many other people work for peace, justice, and other humanitarian causes. Most communities have a variety of programs designed to enhance and expand opportunities for their citizens. For instance, the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) trains young people for search and rescue operations in emergencies. Literacy programs are aimed at teaching adults to read, write, and speak in English. The Special Olympics is an organization that arranges athletic events for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Many communities also have special programs for senior citizens, people who are homeless, or others in need.

Lesson 5/6

# Landmark Cases and Civic Debate

## Learning Objectives

At the end of this lesson you will be able to:

- Identify key aspects of a court case.
- Compare the merits of opposing sides of an issue.
- Express or interpret a political or social stance in artistic form.

At the end of each unit, you will have the opportunity to read about an actual case that was decided by the United States Supreme Court, the highest and most influential court in the nation. Important cases that come before the Supreme Court are often called ***landmark cases*** because they have a powerful impact on society, and they inform and influence other court cases for decades afterward.

You will also have a chance to examine an important civic issue. You will look at the issue from the perspective of a concerned citizen, researching both sides and forming an opinion on the topic.

Look over the entire lesson before you begin so you can get a sense of what you will be doing.

### ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

- ☐ Learn about a landmark court case.
- ☐ Define unknown legal terms.
- ☐ Complete "Landmark Case: Looking Inside."
- ☐ Write a summary of the court's decision and your opinion of it.
- ☐ Give an opinion on a controversial issue.
- ☐ Complete "Compare and Evaluate."
- ☐ Locate or create an artistic commentary on a social or political issue.

# Landmark Supreme Court Cases

Read through the following list of cases that were decided by the United States Supreme Court. After the name of the case, you will see the year the case was decided by the court and how the Supreme Court justices (judges) voted. A 5–4 decision means that 5 justices voted in favor of the case and 4 justices voted against it.

- *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) (7–1 decision for Ferguson) Racial segregation is allowed in "separate but equal" public facilities
- *Chaplinsky v. New Hampshire* (1942) (9–0 decision for New Hampshire) Freedom of Speech (the 1st Amendment) does not protect "fighting words" that can provoke violence or cause an immediate breach of the peace.
- *Korematsu v. United States* (1944) (6–3 decision for United States) Confinement of U.S. citizens of Japanese ancestry during WWII is justified.
- *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) (9–0 decision for Brown) Racial segregation of schools is ruled unconstitutional.

You will choose one of these cases to learn more about. There are many technical and legal terms used in court cases. But before you begin your research, familiarize yourself with the glossary of legal terms. As you read cases and do research, you are likely to find other terms you don't know. Look up the definitions and then add them to this glossary.

# Glossary of Legal Terms

*Appeal:* Request that a court decision be reviewed and reversed.

*Arguments:* information given by each side to prove their case and convince the court to rule in their favor.

*Claims:* statements made as fact, which will have to be proven through reasoning and evidence.

*Decision:* the court's ruling on the case; most rulings have some justices voting for and some against; some decisions are unanimous, which means that all justices agree.

*Defendant (or Respondent):* the person or group against whom the complaint is made (and lawsuit is filed) or who is involved in the petition and called upon to defend or justify the actions that were taken.

*Dissenting opinion:* a vote or opinion that is not in agreement with the majority of the justices.

*Et al.:* abbreviation for "and others;" used to indicate other people are part of the group but not mentioned by name.

*Evidence:* specific examples that are cited to prove a claim or to support the reasoning behind a claim.

*Justices:* the appointed judges of the Supreme Court.

*Majority opinion:* an opinion shared by more than half of the justices.

*Plaintiff:* the person or group who brings the issue to the court by filing a formal complaint.

*Reasoning:* the logical thought processes by which evidence proves a claim; a clear connection between facts, actions, and outcomes.

*Rule:* the decision reached by the court, which is based on, upheld, and enforced by the law.

*Uphold:* to enforce or obey a law; to agree with another court's decision and allow it to stand.

*v.* abbreviation for *versus:* used in case names to show who brings the case (plaintiff) and who is responding (defendant or respondent); written as Plaintiff v. Respondent.

*Verdict:* the decision reached by the court.

# Landmark Case Assignments

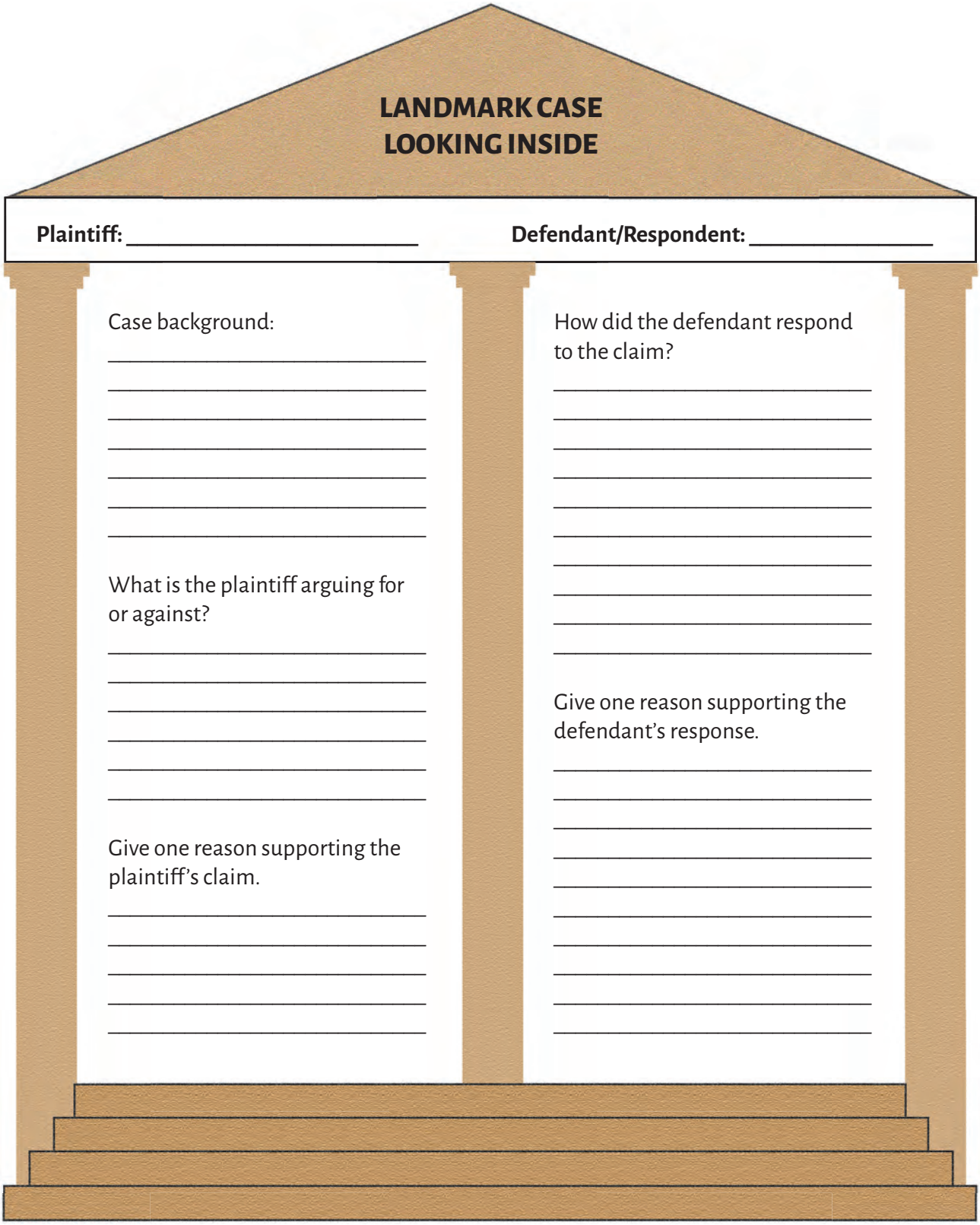
1. Choose a case and read a summary. You can easily find these online or in a library. Check the Curriculum Resource Links for this course at www.oakmeadow.com/curriculum-links/.

   These cases may be challenging to read, not just because of the subject matter but because highly educated adults are writing them for an adult audience. You aren't expected to understand everything you read. However, you should be able to understand enough to answer the questions below. If you have trouble understanding the case you have found, you might ask an adult to help explain it. *Uscourts.gov* is an excellent place to gain a general understanding of a topic. You can find basic explanations of each of these cases on numerous other sources as well. (See www.oakmeadow.com/curriculum-links/ for more ideas.)

2. As you read, make a list of words and phrases you don't understand. Find out the definitions and add them to the glossary of legal terms.

3. Once you have read a summary of the case and the decision, complete "Landmark Case: Looking Inside" (on the next page). Answer the questions in your own words. The information you need is often included in the summary but if not, you will have to do more research to find out how the lawyers for each side presented their case.

4. Write a brief summary of the decision and your opinion about it. If possible, include one direct quote from the decision in your explanation. Make sure to put the quote in quotation marks and specify who said or wrote it. Usually one justice will write an explanation of the majority opinion and one will write an explanation of the minority or dissenting opinion.



# LANDMARK CASE
# LOOKING INSIDE

**Plaintiff:** _____ **Defendant/Respondent:** _____

Case background:

What is the plaintiff arguing for or against?

Give one reason supporting the plaintiff's claim.

How did the defendant respond to the claim?

Give one reason supporting the defendant's response.

# Civic Debate

Important issues are debated every day in towns and cities all around the world. Sometimes issues are decided by a small committee or town representatives, and other times the issues are brought to the general public in a statewide or national vote.

When an issue comes before a group of people, they must first clarify what the issue involves. This can be done by making a statement, such as "The legal driving age should be raised to 18 years old." Creating a specific statement is essential. For instance, it is not enough to say "School shootings should be stopped." This is a statement everyone can agree with. The real question is what to do about it. If the issue is not whether school shootings should be allowed or not (everyone agrees they should not be allowed), what is the issue? This needs to be clarified. For instance, it might be phrased as "States should ban automatic assault rifles" or "Schools should install metal detectors to keep people from carrying guns into school."

Once a statement or claim is made, the group can discuss their opinions and debate what effects or consequences might arise if the claim is made into a rule, regulation, or law. To make the debate more focused, the issue is often phrased as a YES/NO question that people can vote on.

In order to be fair to everyone involved, the group must make every effort to see the issue from many different perspectives. This helps ensure that the viewpoints and needs of all citizens are represented in the debate.

Let's look at an example of how a group might tackle a difficult issue.

**Identify the issue:** A town library is requesting additional funds to develop programs to support the library users who are homeless.

**Form the issue as a YES/NO question:** Should the town fund library programs aimed at supporting patrons who are homeless?

**Background of the case:** In order to learn more about the issue, a librarian is invited to a meeting of the town council to explain the problem from her perspective. She states,

> "At our library, the staff are taking a course in how to deal with homeless patrons. We have many homeless people that spend all day at the library, from when we open at 9:00 a.m. to when we close at 9:00 p.m. They only leave to go to the community kitchen for meals. Those with substance abuse problems will leave for brief periods to smoke, drink, or do drugs. Drunken people are the biggest problem. The smell in some of our rooms is like a bar at quitting time. It's quite sad that there are no services for them during the day to guide them to health. We have a community problem that can only be solved through the generosity of the citizens.
>
> "In our town, there are no services for these people except homeless shelters, which close during the day, and the community kitchen, which is only open for meals. I read that an Oakland, California library has a social worker on duty full time and volunteers are also on

> hand to guide homeless people to resources. In Santa Cruz, California, librarians have arranged for tutors to help patrons with creating resumes and job searches, which can help them find gainful employment, so they can afford a place to live. The librarians also connect patrons with other social services that may provide support. This issue is also being addressed in Boston and many other cities. Our community needs to figure out how to do our part in finding solutions to this problem."

A spokesperson for a group of concerned citizens is invited to present their perspective on the issue:

> "A library should be a safe and comfortable place for all patrons. Homeless people have begun loitering around the library building, sometimes blocking steps and entrances as they sit surrounded by their belongings. We are sympathetic to the problems facing the homeless population. The city has already committed funds to various social service agencies that support people who are homeless. This is the responsibility of each community and our community is already doing this.
>
> "The library, however, should focus its resources and funds on programs that will benefit the majority of patrons, not just a small group of disadvantaged individuals. If programs aimed at homeless people are expanded, more homeless people will come to the library, making it harder and harder for others to feel comfortable there. Homelessness is a community problem but it's not a library problem."

**Weigh both sides of the issue:** Once both sides have been heard, the next step is to clarify the claims each is making and to look at the reasoning and evidence behind each claim.

- **Claim by Librarians:** The library needs more money for staff and resources to offer services to people who are homeless.
  - **Reasoning:** Helping this at-risk group will help the entire community.
  - **Evidence:** Helping people with computer access, technology skills, resumes, etc. will help them find work, get off the streets, and return to being productive members of the community.
- **Claim by Community Group:** The library should spend funds to improve programs that will benefit the majority of library users, not just one small group.
  - **Reasoning:** The library's first priority is to provide a safe, welcoming place for the general public.
  - **Evidence:** Providing services for the homeless population will encourage more homeless to congregate around the library building, which can lead to issues regarding health and safety.

After weighing the claims, reasoning, and evidence, the issue is put to a vote. Once the vote is decided, there may be more discussions, debates, and research as the group looks for practical solutions to solve the problem or carry out the ruling.

# Civic Debate Assignments

1. Now it is your turn to make your voice heard on an issue! Here is a list of controversial issues. Some you might already be aware of; others might be new to you. All are issues being debated, discussed, argued over, and, sometimes, put to a vote. One day, you might be called on to help decide laws related to these issues. Give some thought to each topic and then choose one to focus on in this lesson (you'll have a chance to explore other issues on the list in other lessons).

   **Issues for debate:**

   - NFL football players kneeling in protest during the national anthem
   - a cell phone company plans to build a tower near a popular scenic mountain resort
   - expanding right to die or physician aid in dying (PAD) laws to more states
   - abolishing daylight savings time
   - oil pipeline projects and protests (in the Dakotas and elsewhere)
   - using tigers, elephants, and other wild animals in circus acts
   - juveniles accused of a crime being tried as adults
   - statewide bans on smoking in public places
   - animals used in science experiments or testing
   - young men but not young women are required to register for selective service

   Conduct some basic research into the issue and summarize your findings. You don't have to write a long report or do hours of research; just consult two or three sources to get a general idea of the concerns and opinions involved on both sides of the issue. Make a note of your sources and include them when you share your work with your teacher. Citing your source makes it easy to refer back to the original information, if necessary.

2. Imagine this issue is brought to your town council for a vote. Complete "Compare and Evaluate" (on the next page). The first thing to do is to form the issue as a YES/NO question. Using the first topic in the list as an example, the issue might be formed in several different ways:

   - "Should football players be allowed to kneel in protest of racial discrimination during the national anthem?"
   - "Should NFL football players be penalized for kneeling during the national anthem?"
   - "Should peaceful political protests be allowed by professional athletes at a nationally televised game?"

   For the first and third example, a YES vote would be in favor of the kneeling players, and for the second question, a YES vote would penalize the players.

## COMPARE AND EVALUATE

**Issue:**

_____

_____

**Form the issue as a YES/NO question (such as "Should _____ be allowed to happen?"):**

_____

_____

| Reasons in favor of issue (YES vote) | Reasons against issue (NO vote) |
|---|---|
| | |

3. Political cartoons, advertisements, paintings, songs, and other styles of art are commonly used as political commentary. Try to find a piece of art that expresses issues related to the topic you've chosen or another current social or political issue. Write a brief explanation of what the art portrays and give credit to the source. Alternately, you might create a piece of art to express your views on an issue.

# Learning Checklist

Use this learning checklist to track how your skills are developing over time and identify skills that need more work.

| SKILLS | Developing | Consistent | Competent | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Locate primary source material | | | | |
| Identify key aspects of a court case | | | | |
| Summarize a court decision | | | | |
| Cite direct quotations in a relevant context | | | | |
| Express an opinion on a court case | | | | |
| Research facts and perspectives related to an issue | | | | |
| Compare the merits of opposing sides of an issue | | | | |
| Express or interpret a political or social stance in artistic form | | | | |

## FOR ENROLLED STUDENTS

When you have completed your work from this lesson, please share it with your Oak Meadow teacher. If you have difficulty understanding any of the concepts in your landmark case or civic issue, let your teacher know before submitting your work or send a note with your submission.

Please remember to update your teacher on your progress with your person goal (from lesson 4).

Lesson 17/18

# Landmark Cases and Civic Debate

## Learning Objectives

At the end of this lesson you will be able to:

- Identify key aspects of a court case.
- Construct an argument based on reasoning and evidence.
- Reflect on the skills you have learned and challenges you've faced.

For the next two weeks, you will be exploring another landmark United States Supreme Court case and learning about civil debate. Look over the entire lesson before you begin so you can get a sense of what you will be doing.

### ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

- ☐ Learn about a landmark court case.
- ☐ Complete "Landmark Case: Interpreting the Bill of Rights."
- ☐ Identify one significant aspect of the case.
- ☐ Choose an issue to argue for or against and explain your choice.
- ☐ Complete "Constructing an Argument."
- ☐ Complete a learning reflection.

## Landmark Supreme Court Cases

Consider these three cases:

- *Miranda v. Arizona* (1966) (5–4 decision for Miranda) Persons suspected of a crime have the right to remain silent to avoid incriminating themselves and to have an attorney present during questioning.
- *Texas v. Johnson* (1989) (5–4 decision for Johnson) Burning a U.S. flag as a form of political protest is protected as a form of freedom of speech.
- *West Virginia v. Barnette* (1943) (6–3 decision for Barnette) Schools cannot require students and teachers to salute the flag.

## Landmark Case Assignments

1. Choose a case and read a summary. If you come across any unfamiliar terms, find out what they mean and add them to the glossary in lesson 5/6. Take your time reading the case, focusing on one sentence at a time. Try to restate the sentence in your own words to see if you understand it.

Ask for help when you need it and use the resources available on the Oak Meadow Curriculum Resource Links page. Read more than one account of the case to get a clearer understanding of the principles and details.

Once you have read a summary of the case and the decision, complete "Landmark Case: Interpreting the Bill of Rights" (on the next page). Answer the questions in your own words. The information you need is often included in the summary but if not, you will have to do more research to find out how the lawyers for each side presented their case. Remember, you are summarizing this information, so try to explain things concisely.

2. What is one thing you found intriguing or unusual or significant about this case? Include a direct quote from the decision, if applicable.

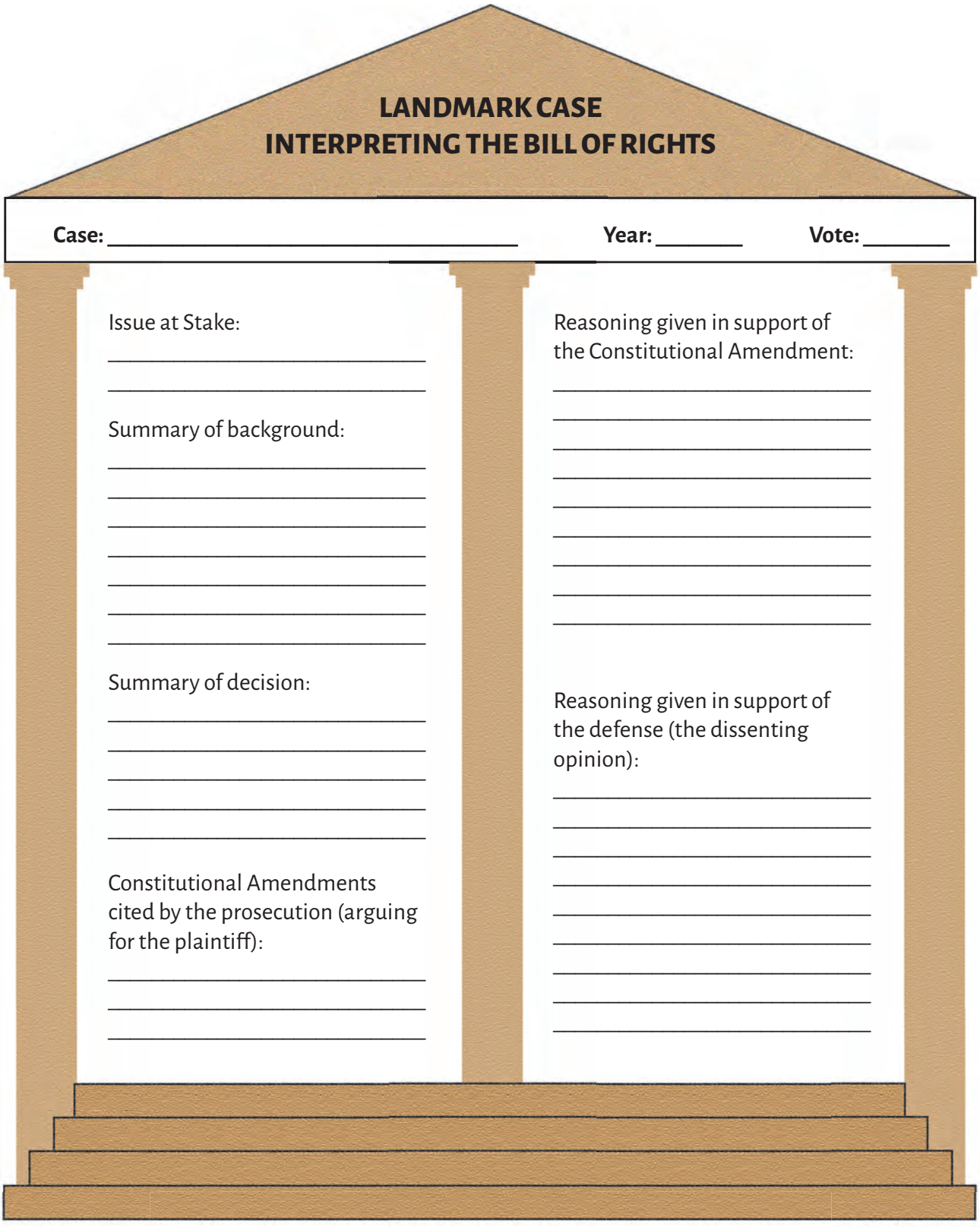
# Civic Debate

When people set out to make a change, they often have to convince others that their request or claim is valid. This usually entails constructing an argument by presenting reasons and providing evidence to support those reasons.

Let's return to our original list of issues. Consider each one carefully and then choose one that you'd like to argue for or against. You can also come up with another issue that is important to you.

**Issues for debate:**

- NFL football players kneeling in protest during the national anthem
- a cell phone company plans to build a tower near a popular scenic mountain resort
- expanding right to die or physician aid in dying (PAD) laws to more states
- abolishing daylight savings time
- oil pipeline projects and protests (in the Dakotas and elsewhere)
- using tigers, elephants, and other wild animals in circus acts
- juveniles accused of a crime being tried as adults
- statewide bans on smoking in public places
- animals used in science experiments or testing
- young men but not young women are required to register for selective service



## LANDMARK CASE
## INTERPRETING THE BILL OF RIGHTS

**Case:** _____ **Year:** _____ **Vote:** _____

Issue at Stake:

Summary of background:

Summary of decision:

Constitutional Amendments cited by the prosecution (arguing for the plaintiff):

Reasoning given in support of the Constitutional Amendment:

Reasoning given in support of the defense (the dissenting opinion):

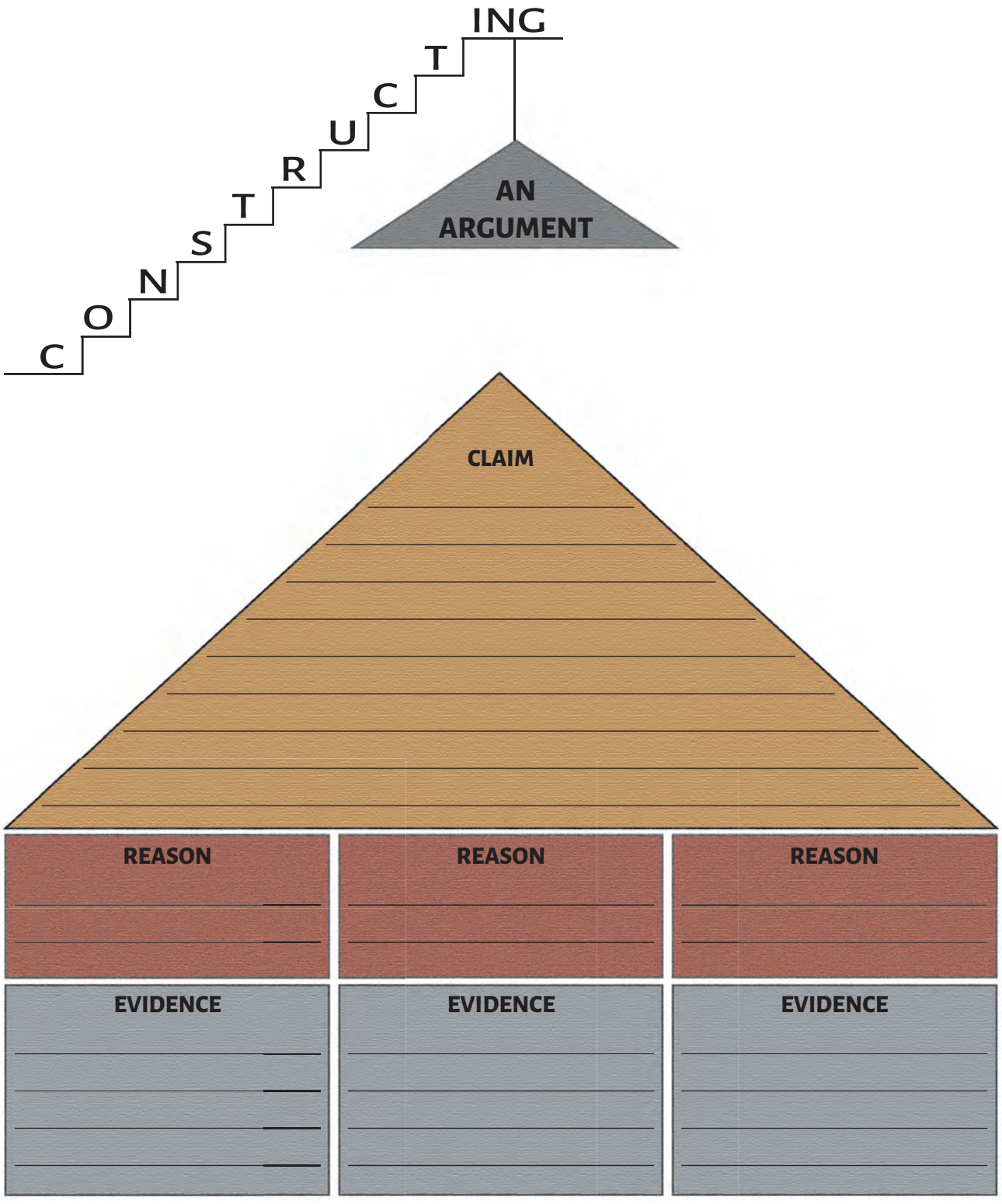
# Civic Debate Assignments

1. Briefly explain why you chose this issue and which side you will be arguing.
2. Research your topic to gather data to use as evidence in your argument, and then complete "Constructing an Argument" (on the next page). You might have to gather more data as you work on explaining your reasoning and backing it up.
3. Since this lesson completes the first semester of the course, it is a good time to reflect on your work so far. Write down your responses in the following learning reflection.

# Learning Reflection

Take a few moments to look back over the previous lessons and then answer the following questions.

1. What topics interested you the most? Why?
2. You have studied in depth three landmark cases of the United States Supreme Court. This has been challenging work. What was the hardest part for you? Is there anything you needed help with or would like help with in future lessons?
3. Learning skills related to civic debate has also been part of each unit. You have learned to compare and evaluate claims, weigh two sides of an issue, and construct an argument. Has it gotten easier for you to explain reasoning and provide evidence? What is the hardest part of this process? What would make it easier?
4. If you could change one thing or add something to this course, what would it be?


CONSTRUCTING
AN ARGUMENT
CLAIM
REASON
REASON
REASON
EVIDENCE
EVIDENCE
EVIDENCE

# Learning Checklist

Use this learning checklist to track how your skills are developing over time and identify skills that need more work.

| SKILLS | Developing | Consistent | Competent | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Locate primary source material | | | | |
| Identify key aspects of a court case | | | | |
| Summarize a court decision | | | | |
| Cite direct quotations in a relevant context | | | | |
| Express an opinion on a court case | | | | |
| Construct an argument based on reasoning and evidence | | | | |
| Complete a learning reflection | | | | |

### FOR ENROLLED STUDENTS

Feel free to contact your teacher if you have any questions about this lesson. When you have completed your work, share it with your Oak Meadow teacher. Your teacher will review your work and write a first semester evaluation. In the meantime, please proceed to the next lesson.

Lesson 23/24

# Landmark Cases and Civic Debate

## Learning Objectives

At the end of this lesson you will be able to:

- Identify key aspects of a court case.
- Construct an argument based on reasoning and evidence.
- Express a thoughtful, well-reasoned opinion about a local issue.

For the next two weeks, you will be exploring a landmark United States Supreme Court case and learning about civil debate. Look over the entire lesson before you begin so you can get a sense of what you will be doing.

### ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

- ☐ Learn about a landmark court case.
- ☐ Complete "Landmark Case: Political Debate."
- ☐ Gather information about a local issue and complete "Debate: Refuting a Claim."
- ☐ Formulate a thoughtful opinion about a local issue.

## Landmark Supreme Court Cases

When there is disagreement among Supreme Court justices, how does each side address or refute claims of the other in their final opinion? Consider these three cases:

- *Santa Fe Independent School District v. Doe* (2000) (6–3 decision for Doe) Supporting prayer at public school events is in direct violation of the Establishment Clause of the 1st Amendment, which prohibits any government actions that favor one religion over another or show preference for religion over non-religion (or vice versa).
- *Bush v. Gore* (2000) (7–2 decision for Bush) Recounting votes would be unconstitutional because different standards would be applied from county to county, making the recount unfair in practice.
- *Grutter v. Bollinger* (2003) (5–4 decision for Bollinger) Considering race in college admissions to achieve diversity in the student body does not violate the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment.

# Landmark Case Assignments

1. Choose a case to learn about. Read a summary carefully, checking your comprehension with each sentence or paragraph. If something is unclear, ask for help or read a summary of the case from another source to try to really understand what it was about.

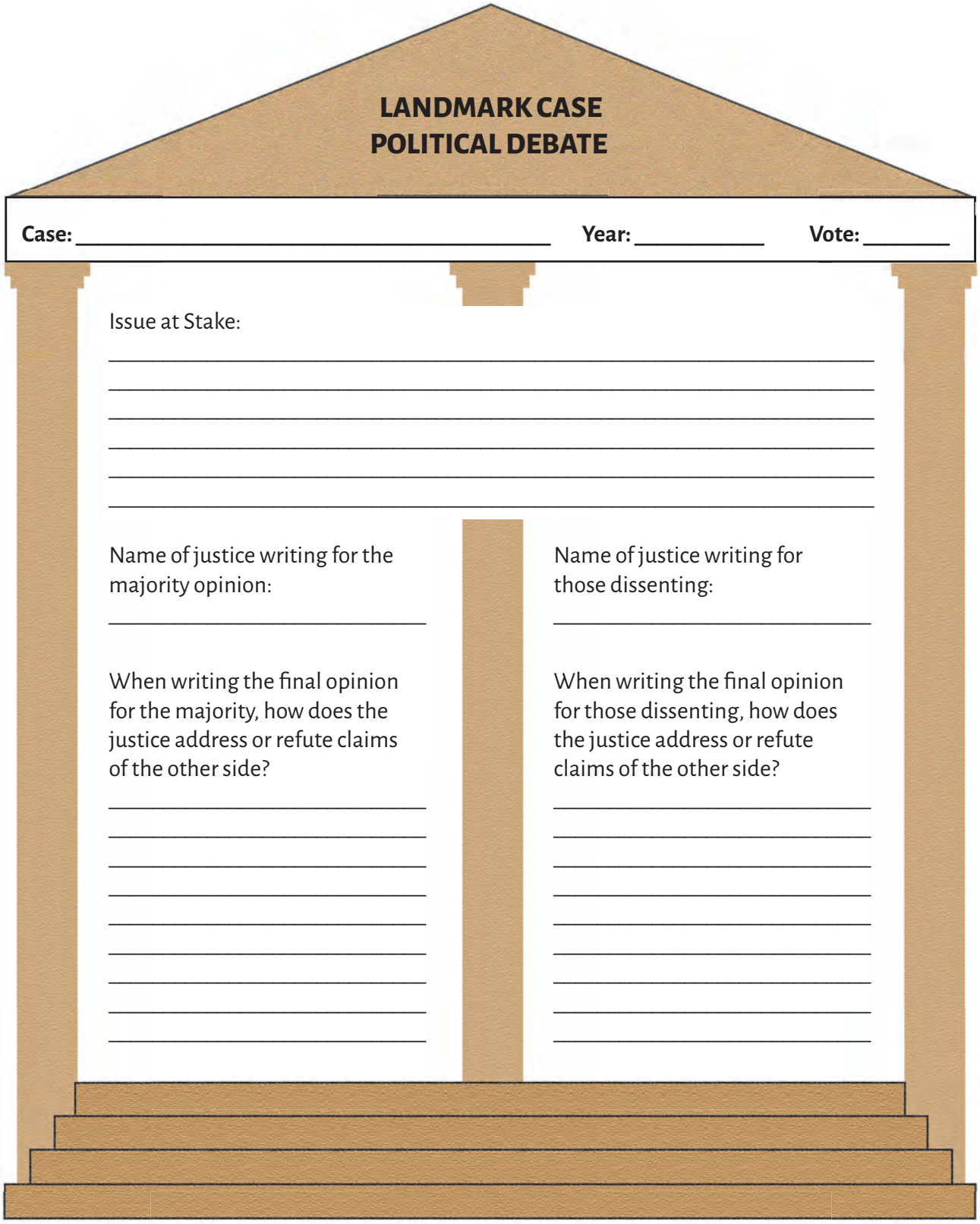
   Once you have read a summary of the case and the decision, complete "Landmark Case: Political Debate" (on the next page). Answer the questions in your own words, and include at least one direct quote from the majority or dissenting opinion.

# Civic Debate

For this lesson, you will look at one of the issues that your state or local government is currently working on (see assignment #2 in lesson 22). Often people on one side of an issue make a claim, and opponents will counter or challenge the claim. When Side A states their reasoning, Side B will try to expose flaws in the reasoning. Side A will produce evidence and Side B will refute the evidence or produce evidence that runs counter to (disagrees with) the evidence. Through this back and forth process of civic debate, city councils and other governing boards as well as voters become more educated about an issue and better able to come to a decision. See an example on page 174.

# Civic Debate Assignments

1. Learn about one of the issues currently facing your state or local government. Educate yourself about the claims or concerns of both sides. Gather data about the claims, counter claims, reasoning, and evidence, and then complete "Refuting a Claim" (on page 164). You might have to gather more data as you work to fill in the blanks.
2. After you have completed the form and looked carefully at both sides of the issue, explain your own thoughts on the issue. Which side do you most agree with and why? Give a clear, thoughtful, well-reasoned response.



## LANDMARK CASE
## POLITICAL DEBATE

**Case:** _____ **Year:** _____ **Vote:** _____

Issue at Stake:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Name of justice writing for the majority opinion:

_____

When writing the final opinion for the majority, how does the justice address or refute claims of the other side?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
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_____

Name of justice writing for those dissenting:

_____

When writing the final opinion for those dissenting, how does the justice address or refute claims of the other side?

_____
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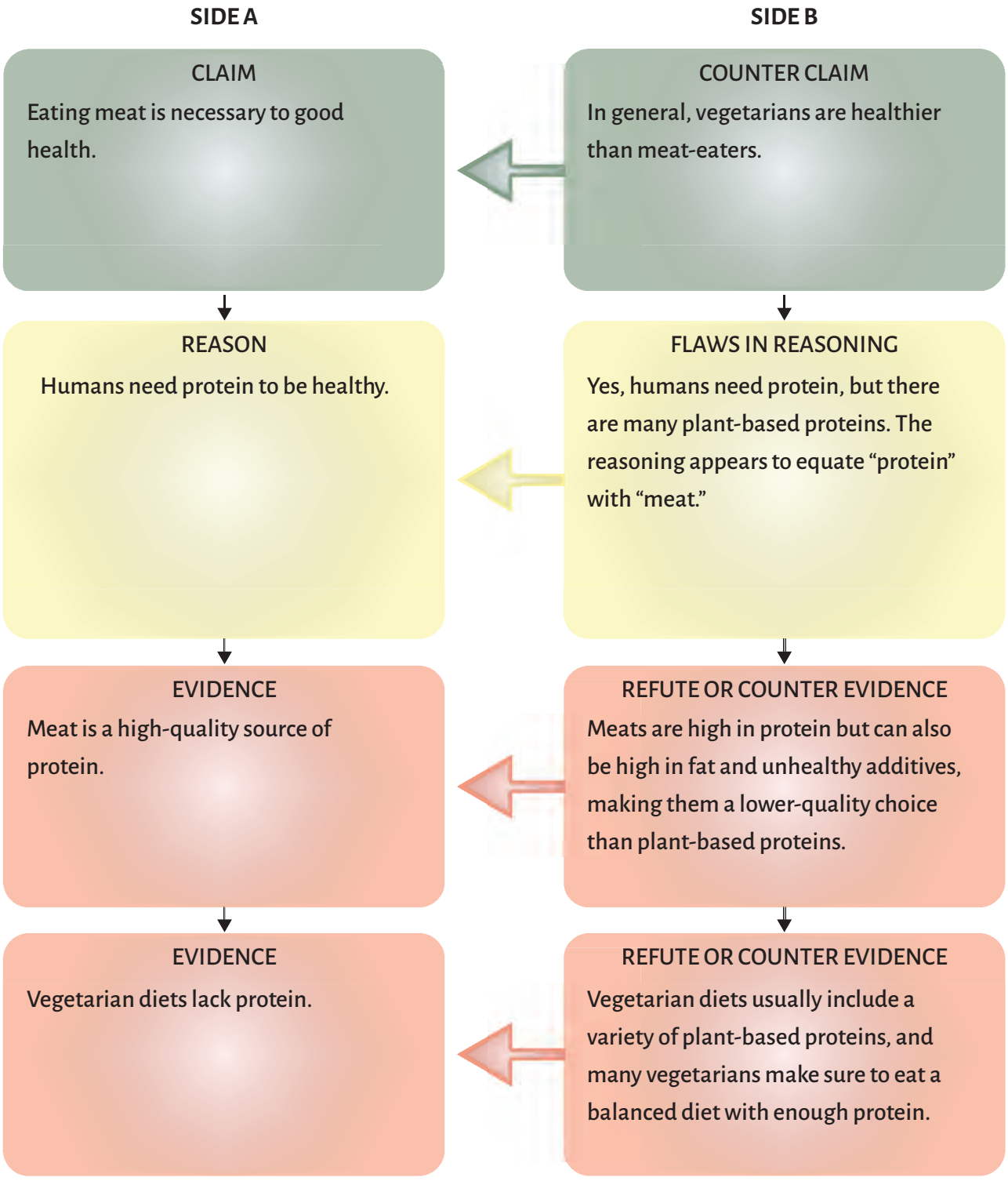
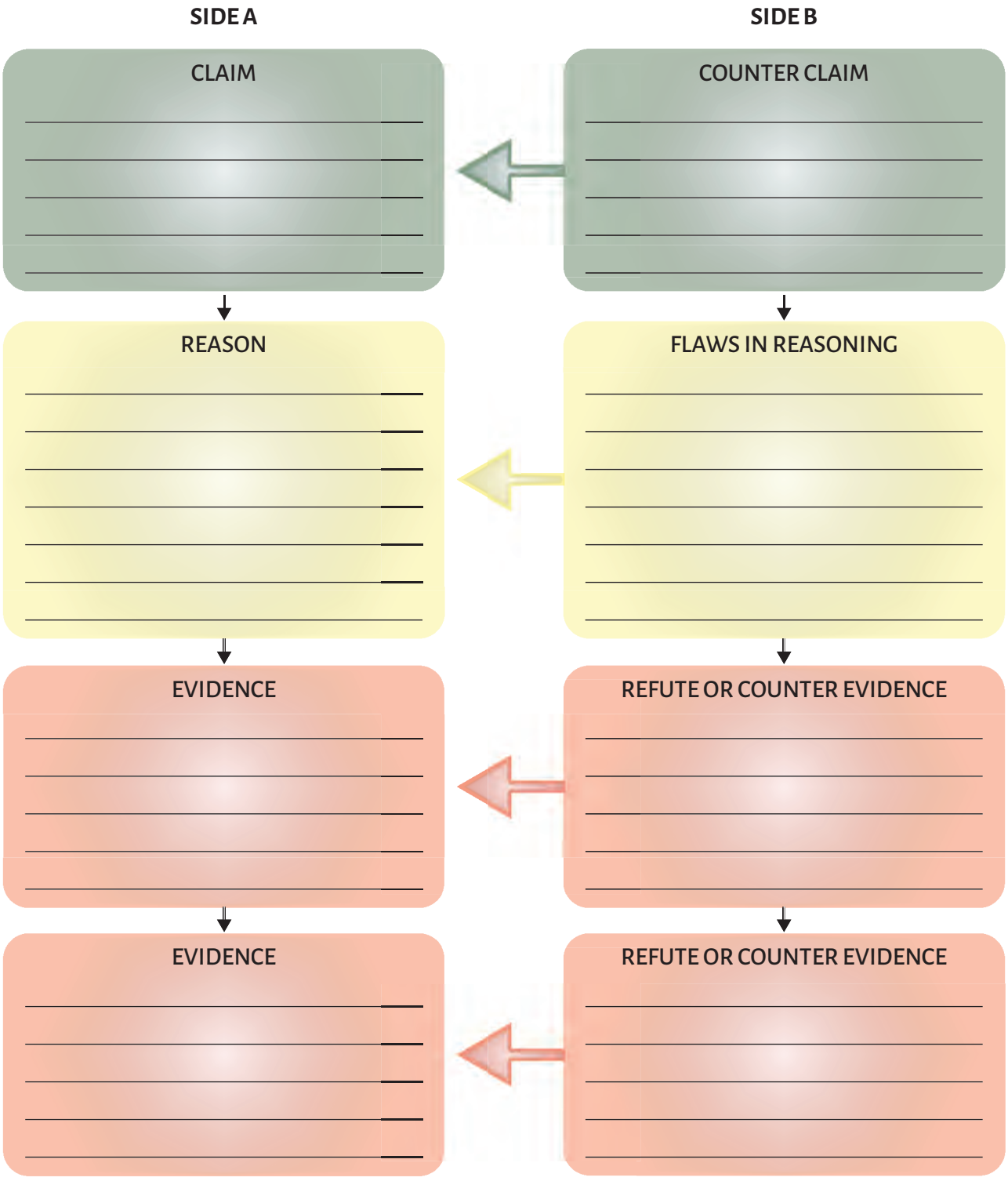
## DEBATE: REFUTING A CLAIM



# DEBATE: REFUTING A CLAIM



# Learning Checklist

Use this learning checklist to track how your skills are developing over time and identify skills that need more work.

| SKILLS | Developing | Consistent | Competent | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Locate primary source material | | | | |
| Identify key aspects of a court case | | | | |
| Provide evidence of how justices refute claims of the other side in writing their opinion | | | | |
| Cite direct quotations in a relevant context | | | | |
| Research the claims of citizens on both sides of a current issue | | | | |
| Construct an argument refuting the claims, reasoning, and evidence of the opposition | | | | |
| Formulate and express a well-reasoned opinion | | | | |

## FOR ENROLLED STUDENTS

When you have completed this lesson, share it with your Oak Meadow teacher. If you have difficulty understanding any of the concepts in your landmark case or civic issue, let your teacher know before submitting your work or send a note with your submission.

# Appendix