

## Lesson Plan

### The Court Is in Session

**Book:** *Ruth Bader Ginsburg: Supreme Court Justice*

**Series:** Important Women

**Level:** Beacon

#### Objective

To help students practice their speaking, listening, writing, and critical thinking skills as they consider a Supreme Court case.

#### Supplies

- *Ruth Bader Ginsburg: Supreme Court Justice* book
- Access to the USAGov “Branches of the U.S. Government” web page: <https://www.usa.gov/branches-of-government#item-213376>
- Access to the Landmark Cases of the Supreme Court “Tinker v. Des Moines (1969)” web page: <https://www.landmarkcases.org/cases/tinker-v-des-moines>
- Computer access for students
- Pencils and paper

#### Before the Activity

Read through the *Ruth Bader Ginsburg: Supreme Court Justice* book, or assign it to students to read on their own. Pull up the “Branches of the U.S. Government” web page and scroll down to the infographic titled “How the Supreme Court Works.” Make sure each student has a pencil and paper.

#### Activity

As a class, read through the infographic on how the Supreme Court works. In honor of Ruth Bader Ginsburg, students will practice drafting opinions on a real Supreme Court case. Pull up the “Tinker v. Des Moines (1969)” web page and click on the “Background” tab. Then, under “Background summary and questions to consider (by reading level),” click the third bullet point with the single asterisk. As a class, read through the background summary for the 1969 *Tinker v. Des Moines* case. Have students discuss their answers to the four questions.

Next, return to the main “Tinker v. Des Moines (1969)” web page. Under the “Teaching” tab, click on “Classifying Arguments in the Case.” As a class, discuss each numbered statement and determine which side of the argument it supports.

Once students have an understanding of the arguments in this case, explain that they will write their opinions on the case, as if they were Supreme Court justices. In five-paragraph essays, students should argue whether the Tinkers' wearing of armbands is protected under the US Constitution. Essays should include the following:

- A thesis statement that clearly gives the student's position on the case
- Three body paragraphs that give reasons and supporting evidence for the student's position on the case
- A clear concluding paragraph that summarize the student's position

Once students have turned in their essays, return to the main "Tinker v. Des Moines (1969)" web page. Under the "Teaching" tab, click on "How Does a School Identify 'Disruptive Speech'?" As a class, read about the Supreme Court decision in the case of *Tinker v. Des Moines*. Then discuss each of the five examples on the web page, which are about other forms of student expression. Students should use the court's decision in the case of *Tinker v. Des Moines* as a guide.

### **Evaluation**

Collect students' essays at the end of class. Give students up to 14 points:

- 2 points for a clear thesis statement
- 3 points each for three body paragraphs with well-reasoned arguments supporting the student's position
- 2 points for a clear concluding paragraph
- 1 point for writing that is relatively free of grammatical and spelling errors

### **Standards**

This lesson may be used to address the Common Core State Standards' reading standards for informational text, grade 5 (RI 5.1, 5.2), writing standards, grade 5 (W 5.1), and speaking and listening standards, grade 5 (SL 5.4), and the National Council for the Social Studies standards 5 and 6.