

KEY POINTS

JUDICIAL BRANCH

Judicial Branch: Structure & Function

- The judicial branch is comprised of the Supreme Court and inferior courts that Congress may establish
- The qualifications for judges, both of the supreme and inferior courts, is good behavior
- The key function of the judicial branch is to interpret laws.
- The federal courts will decide arguments over how to interpret the U.S. Constitution, all laws passed by Congress, arguments involving states, and in agreements with other nations.

Judicial Branch: Powers

The powers of the Supreme Court:

1. **Original Jurisdiction** - the power of a court to be the first to hear a case on a specific topic; for the U.S. Supreme Court this involves cases concerning conflicts between Congress and the president and in cases in which a state is a party
2. **Appellate Jurisdiction** – the power to hear appeals of cases which have been tried in lower courts; this applies to all cases not under original jurisdiction