

U.S. Supreme Court Decision-Making Process

Follow through the process U.S. Supreme Court justices take to finalize opinions.



1

Conference

The Conference holds a preliminary vote to determine where justices initially stand on the matter.

2

Sharing

Each justice gets uninterrupted time to make their arguments, reasoning, questions, & concerns about the case to the other justices.

3

Voting

Once everyone shares a vote is taken to determine the majority and dissenting opinions.

4

Drafting

Next, the majority and dissenting opinions must be drafted. This is done by the senior most justice in each opinion. These individuals may draft it themselves or assign it to another justice.

5

Edits

During this drafting process there is constant communication with the other justices. This editing process can sometimes even lead to justices changing their minds.

6

Switching Sides

In rare cases, enough justices have changed their minds that the majority becomes the dissenting opinion.

7

Concurring Opinions

Sometimes, justices can still agree with the outcome but not with the rationale behind it. When this happens, justices will draft a concurring opinion where they'll get to share the rationale behind their opinion.

8

Finalized

In the end, justices sign on to the opinion to finalize their decision, and they can be released to the public.

