

A Dual Court System



Chapter 5

Jurisdiction



- Power/authority given to a court to hear a case and make a judgment

Federal Courts



Jurisdiction over

- Actions where US is a party
- Cases raising a FEDERAL question(federal law or interpretation of the constitution)
- Diversity of citizenship-- citizens of different states over \$50,000
- Admiralty, patents, copyright & bankruptcy

Levels of Federal Courts

- District Courts
- Court of Appeals
- Supreme Court



District Court

- Right to try case for first time
- Civil or criminal
- 95 district courts
- At least 1 court in every state



Court of Appeals



- Appellate Court
- Hear appeals/review cases
- “Appellate jurisdiction”
- 13 judicial courts
- Panel of 3 judges
- No evidence, witnesses or juries!
- Only questions of law!


Supreme Court



- Highest court in the land
- Original jurisdiction over ambassadors, public ministers, cases where state is a party
- Constitutionality of a federal law
- 9 justices (4 of 9 which cases will be heard)



STATE

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- Local trial
 - General trial
 - Special courts
 - Appellate courts
 - Supreme court

LOCAL



- Limited jurisdiction--small matters, misdemeanors, small amounts of \$.
 - Traffic courts
 - Justice of Peace

General Courts

- General jurisdiction--
 - county court
 - superior court
 - circuit court
- Major crimes
- Large amounts of \$
- Criminal & civil cases



Special Courts



- Limited to a particular subject
- Family court
- Probate court

Appellate Court



- Only questions of law, not questions of fact
- Do NOT have witnesses, trial, etc.

Supreme Court



- Make final decisions
- Only decide if an error was made in lower courts