



Role of the Supreme Court of Canada

Student worksheet

Use this worksheet to guide your thinking before, during, and after the video that you will watch. As you watch, focus on the role of the Supreme Court of Canada within Canada's legal system.

Before you watch

1. Below is a list of the unique functions of a country's highest court. Select the FIVE you think are most important.
 - Protecting constitutional rights
 - Interpreting laws
 - Providing government with advice on the legality of their proposed actions
 - Reflecting public values
 - Resolving conflicts between governments
 - Providing legal certainty
 - Acting independently of politics
 - Ensuring fairness in the justice system
2. Write ONE or TWO questions you have about the role or function of the Supreme Court of Canada.

While you watch

As you watch the video, you will notice that the Supreme Court of Canada has many functions. Answer the questions under each function below.

1. The Supreme Court as a guardian of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms
 - a. According to the video, how did the Charter of Rights and Freedoms change the role of the Supreme Court?
 - b. Why was interpreting the Charter challenging for the Court when it was first adopted?

2. The Supreme Court as a decision-maker of last resort

- a. What kinds of cases does the Supreme Court usually hear?

- b. Why does Robert Schertzer compare the Court to a “parent”?

3. The Supreme Court as a reviewer of government power

- a. What is “constitutional judicial review,” as described in the video?

- b. What can the Court do if a law violates the Constitution?

4. The Supreme Court as a unique institution

- a. How is the Supreme Court of Canada different from other high courts around the world?

After you watch

Revisit the questions you wrote down before you watched the video. Were your questions answered? If so, write down what you learned.

The video presents several functions of the Supreme Court. Which do you think is most important? Explain your choice using an example from the video or ideas discussed in class.

Protecting rights | Reviewing government action | Resolving major conflicts | Providing clarity in the law
