



Landmark Decisions Part 1 (Before the Charter)

Student worksheet

Use this worksheet to guide your thinking before, during, and after the video that you will watch. As you watch, focus on how the Supreme Court of Canada made important decisions that shaped the rights and freedoms of Canadians before the Charter of Rights and Freedoms was adopted in 1982.

Before you watch

What makes a case “landmark”?

The video you are about to watch highlights several “landmark” decisions of the Supreme Court of Canada. In your own words, what makes a court decision “landmark”?

Many of the cases you will see highlighted in this video take place before the Charter existed. How could the Supreme Court of Canada protect rights without a written charter?

While you watch

As you watch the video, complete the chart below. Focus on what the case was about and why it mattered. The cases listed are in the order they appear in the video.

Case	What was the case about? (Big ideas/themes)	Why was it important?
Alberta Press Case (1938)		
Roncarelli v. Duplessis (1959)		

Case	What was the case about? (Big ideas/themes)	Why was it important?
Calder v. British Columbia (1973)		
Murdoch v. Murdoch (1973)		
Patriation Reference (1981)		

*Note: The dates above indicate the year the Supreme Court of Canada rendered a decision.

After you watch

In the video, legal expert Ken Roach states: “The Supreme Court is the place where the most disadvantaged and the most unpopular can seek justice.”

What does this quote mean in the context of the cases discussed in the video?

Choose one case from the chart above and explain how it supports (or challenges) this statement.
