*QUESTIONS*

1. Consider and comment:
   1. How can we reconcile powerful courts populated by unelected judges with American democracy?
   2. Do they pose a threat to majority rule?
   3. Do the federal courts actually function to protect the rights of minorities and, thus, maintain the type of open system necessary for democracy to flourish?
2. Discuss the important aspects of the federal court system, using both the text and the U.S. Courts [website](http://www.uscourts.gov/about.html).
3. Briefly explain the distinction between appellate and original jurisdiction.
4. Look at the U.S. Courts webpage dealing with [court fees](http://www.uscourts.gov/library/courtfees.html), look at each of the levels' respective costs, and comment on the expense for appealing cases.
5. Collect some brief biographical information on the current active judges of the U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals:
   1. R. Guy Cole Jr.
   2. Damon Keith
   3. Julio Fuentes
   4. Joseph A. Greenaway
   5. Thomas Hardiman
   6. Kent Jordan
   7. Theodore McKee
   8. Majorie Rendell
   9. Anthony Scirica
   10. Dolores Sloviter
   11. D. Brooks Smith
   12. Thomas I. Vanaskie
6. Collect some biographical information on the current judges for the Pennsylvania Supreme Court:
   1. Max Baer
   2. Ronald Castille
   3. J. Michael Eakin
   4. Seamus McCaffrey
   5. Joan Orie Melvin
   6. Thomas Saylor
   7. Debra Todd
7. Collect biographical information on the current Supreme Court of the United States justices:
   1. Samuel Alito
   2. Stephen Breyer
   3. Ruth Bader Ginsberg
   4. Elena Kagan
   5. Anthony Kennedy
   6. John Roberts
   7. Antonin Scalia
   8. Sonia Sotomayor
   9. Clarence Thomas
8. Comment on the section *Supreme Court Confirmation Politics*.
9. Discuss the backgrounds of judges and justices.
10. What role does and/or should ideology play in judicial decisions?
11. Do you side with the concept of judicial activism or judicial restraint; why?