

Icivics Marbury V Madison Answer Key

Marbury v. Madison (1803)

Name: _____

"But the President Said I Could Be a Judge!"

In 1800, President John Adams ran to be re-elected as president, but he lost to Thomas Jefferson. During his last weeks in office, Adams appointed a bunch of men to be justices of the peace in the District of Columbia. Each man would receive a paper commission that was signed and sealed. The commissions were prepared, but they were not sent before Adams left office. When President Jefferson took over, he refused to send them.

One man, William Marbury, was upset. He wanted to be a judge! So he asked the United States Supreme Court to issue a legal order called a writ of mandamus (man-DAY-mus). In this case, the writ would have required Marbury's commission to be delivered.



James Madison was Jefferson's Secretary of State. He was told not to deliver the commissions.

ISSUE

Does the Supreme Court have the power to hear more types of cases than just those the Constitution says it can hear?

DECISION

No. The Supreme Court only has the power to do what the Constitution says.

The Argument

Did you notice that Marbury didn't start in a regular, local court? He started at the Supreme Court. Normally, that would be backwards. But in 1789, Congress had passed a law saying people could start at the Supreme Court if all they wanted was a writ of mandamus. Marbury argued that he was entitled to the writ because his commission had already been created. He also argued that the Supreme Court had the power to issue the writ.

The Decision

The Supreme Court agreed that Marbury had a right to receive his commission, but disagreed that the Court had the power to issue the writ. Why? Because the Supreme Court gets its power directly from the Constitution, and the Constitution says only certain kinds of cases can start at the Supreme Court. That meant the 1789 law passed by Congress was unconstitutional. Congress did not have the power to allow more kinds of cases to start at the Supreme Court. Therefore, the Supreme Court said it could not help Marbury get his commission.

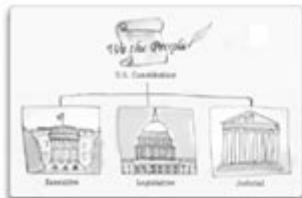


William Marbury never did receive his commission. Photo courtesy of Maryland Historical Society.

So What?

Believe it or not, this is considered one of the most important cases the Supreme Court has ever decided. That's because it was the first time the Supreme Court struck down an act of Congress for being unconstitutional. The idea that the Supreme Court has the final say about what is constitutional is called **judicial review**. Judicial review lets the judicial branch do two things: 1) interpret the Constitution and decide what it means, and 2) stop the executive and legislative branches from doing things that go against the Constitution.

The decision in *Marbury v. Madison* helped cement the judicial branch as equal with the other two branches of government by giving it equal power.



Thanks to *Marbury v. Madison*, today the three branches of government are equal.

iCivics

Reading

iCivics **Marbury v. Madison Answer Key** is a crucial resource for educators and students studying one of the most significant cases in American constitutional law. *Marbury v. Madison*, decided in 1803, established the principle of judicial review, empowering the Supreme Court to invalidate laws and executive actions that are contrary to the Constitution. This article will provide a comprehensive overview of the case, its implications, and how iCivics resources can aid in understanding this landmark decision.

The Background of Marbury v. Madison

To fully appreciate the importance of *Marbury v. Madison*, it's essential to understand the historical context surrounding the case. The events leading to the Supreme Court's decision were rooted in the political

tensions of the early 19th century.

The Political Landscape

The early 1800s were marked by a fierce rivalry between the Federalists, led by John Adams, and the Democratic-Republicans, led by Thomas Jefferson. In the election of 1800, Jefferson's party won the presidency, and Adams' administration sought to secure its influence by appointing a number of Federalist judges in the final hours of his presidency. This move was known as the "midnight appointments."

The Conflict

William Marbury was one of the appointed justices of the peace whose commission was not delivered before Jefferson took office. Upon assuming the presidency, Jefferson ordered his Secretary of State, James Madison, to withhold the commissions. Marbury, seeking to secure his position, petitioned the Supreme Court for a writ of mandamus, compelling Madison to deliver the commission.

The Supreme Court's Decision

The case reached the Supreme Court, where Chief Justice John Marshall presided. The Court faced the challenge of deciding whether it had the authority to issue the writ requested by Marbury.

Key Questions Addressed

In deciding *Marbury v. Madison*, the Court addressed several pivotal questions:

1. Did Marbury have a right to his commission?
2. If he had a right, and his commission was unlawfully withheld, did the law provide him a remedy?
3. Did the Supreme Court have the authority to review acts of Congress and determine their constitutionality?

The Ruling

The Supreme Court ruled in favor of Marbury, stating that he was entitled to his commission. However, the Court concluded that it did not have the authority to issue a writ of mandamus because the section of the Judiciary Act of 1789 that granted the Supreme Court this power was unconstitutional. This marked

the first time the Supreme Court struck down a law passed by Congress, establishing the principle of judicial review.

The Importance of Judicial Review

The outcome of *Marbury v. Madison* had profound implications for the American legal system and the balance of power among the branches of government.

Establishing Judicial Review

Judicial review allows the judiciary to interpret the Constitution and ensures that legislative and executive actions conform to constitutional principles. This power serves as a critical check on the other branches of government, preventing any potential abuse of power.

Impact on Future Cases

The principles established in *Marbury v. Madison* have been cited in numerous landmark cases throughout American history, reinforcing the judiciary's role as a guardian of the Constitution. Notable cases influenced by this decision include:

- *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954): Addressed racial segregation in schools.
- *Roe v. Wade* (1973): Dealt with abortion rights and privacy issues.
- *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015): Affirmed same-sex marriage rights.

Utilizing iCivics Resources

iCivics, founded by former Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, provides engaging educational resources aimed at helping students understand the principles of democracy and the workings of the government. The iCivics *Marbury v. Madison* resources are particularly valuable for educators and students.

Benefits of iCivics Resources

Using iCivics resources offers several advantages:

1. **Interactive Learning:** iCivics provides games, simulations, and lesson plans that engage students in active learning.
2. **Comprehensive Coverage:** The resources cover not only *Marbury v. Madison* but also the broader context of judicial review and the role of the Supreme Court.
3. **Critical Thinking Skills:** iCivics encourages students to analyze historical events, fostering critical thinking and discussion.

Accessing the Marbury v. Madison Answer Key

Instructors can find the answer key for the iCivics *Marbury v. Madison* lesson in the following ways:

- **Official iCivics Website:** The answer key is typically available for educators who register on the platform. This provides access to additional teaching resources and materials.
- **Teacher Guides:** Many lesson plans come with detailed guides that include answers to questions related to the case, helping educators facilitate discussions in the classroom.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the iCivics *Marbury v. Madison* answer key is an essential tool for understanding one of the most significant Supreme Court cases in American history. By exploring the case's background, the Supreme Court's ruling, and its lasting impact on judicial review, students can gain valuable insights into the workings of the U.S. government. Utilizing iCivics' interactive resources enhances this learning experience, helping to cultivate informed and engaged citizens prepared to uphold democratic principles. As students delve into the intricacies of *Marbury v. Madison*, they not only learn about the past but also become equipped to engage with the present and future of American governance.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the significance of the Marbury v. Madison case in U.S. history?

Marbury v. Madison established the principle of judicial review, allowing the Supreme Court to declare laws unconstitutional.

How did the Marbury v. Madison decision affect the balance of power among the branches of government?

The decision reinforced the judiciary's role as a check on the legislative and executive branches, ensuring that no law could violate the Constitution.

What was the main legal question addressed in Marbury v. Madison?

The main legal question was whether William Marbury had a right to his commission and whether the Supreme Court had the authority to issue a writ of mandamus to compel delivery of the commission.

Which Chief Justice presided over the Marbury v. Madison case?

Chief Justice John Marshall presided over the case and authored the opinion that established the foundation for judicial review.

What was the outcome for William Marbury in the case of Marbury v. Madison?

William Marbury did not receive his commission, as the Supreme Court ruled that it did not have the jurisdiction to hear the case, but the decision laid the groundwork for future judicial authority.

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