

**U.S. HISTORY AND GOVERNMENT  
HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS  
DUE FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2008**

**I. The Executive Branch – The President’s Cabinet**

The *cabinet* is a group of people that advise the president. It is made up of the vice president, heads of departments, and other top officials. The heads of most cabinet departments have the title of *secretary* of their department.

<b>State</b> (foreign affairs)	<b>Labor</b> (workers, working conditions)	<b>Homeland Security</b> (protection against terrorism)
<b>Treasury</b> (money, taxes)	<b>Transportation</b> (roads, transportation systems)	
<b>Education</b> (public schools)	<b>Energy</b> (research on energy, energy use)	
<b>Defense</b> (armed forces)	<b>Veterans Affairs</b> (services for war veterans)	
<b>Commerce</b> (business, trade)	<b>Justice</b> (court system, legal issues)	
<b>Agriculture</b> (farming)	<b>Health and Human Services</b> (health, welfare)	
<b>Interior</b> (U.S. lands)	<b>Housing and Urban Development</b> (housing, cities)	

The Department of Homeland Security is the most recent addition to the president's cabinet. It was approved by Congress in 2003.

**Cabinet  
Departments**

**Agencies  
and  
Organizations**

Over two hundred different agencies or organizations make up the executive branch. Here are a few of the many agencies that administer programs which touch many areas of American life.

- NASA (*National Aeronautic Space Administration*) – oversees space research
- IRS (*Internal Revenue Service*) – collects taxes
- FBI (*Federal Bureau of Investigation*) – investigates crimes against U.S. government
- CIA (*Central Intelligence Agency*) – gathers clues about international crimes
- FTC (*Federal Trade Commission*) – regulates trade and commerce
- FHA (*Federal Highway Administration*) – plans and builds interstate highways
- BIA (*Bureau of Indian Affairs*) – oversees matters to do with Native Americans
- BLM (*Bureau of Land Management*) – manages national lands
- FDA (*Food and Drug Administration*) – regulates quality and safety of food and drugs
- FAA (*Federal Aviation Administration*) – ensures safety in air travel and at airports
- DEQ (*Department of Environmental Quality*) – oversees environmental clean-up
- INS (*Immigration and Naturalization Service*) – oversees immigrants and those who become citizens

## II. The Judicial Branch – Historic Supreme Court Decisions

Some court decisions stand out in history because of their impact on the society. These are a few of the better-known cases that have come before the Supreme Court.

**Marbury v. Madison** (1803) – This ruling stated that the Supreme Court can overrule a law of Congress. It was the first time the court struck down an act of Congress.

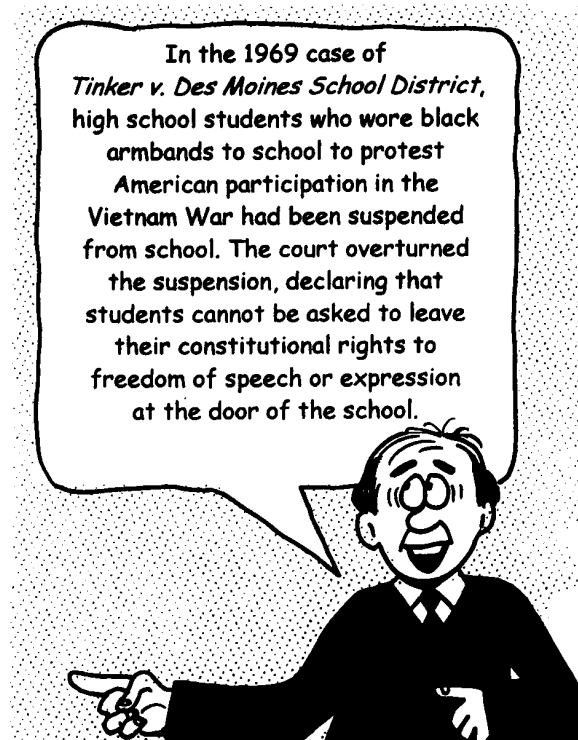
**Dred Scott v. Sandford** (1857) – The Supreme Court ruled that, whether slave or free, an African-American person had no right to bring a lawsuit.

**Plessy v. Ferguson** (1896) – The Supreme Court declared that requiring African Americans to ride in separate railroad cars did not deprive black people of their rights under the 14<sup>th</sup> amendment, so long as the facilities were equal. This was called the “separate but equal” ruling.

**Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka** (1954) – The Supreme Court ruled that school segregation is unconstitutional. This overturned the previous Supreme Court decision of *Plessy v. Ferguson*.

**Engel v. Vitale** (1962) – This case ended with a Supreme Court decision to forbid prayer in public schools.

**Miranda v. Arizona** (1966) – The Supreme Court ruled that anyone arrested must be read a statement of their rights before being questioned, or their statements can't be used as evidence against them. These rights have come to be known as *Miranda rights*.



**Roe v. Wade** (1973) – This ruling by the Supreme Court protects a woman's right to end a pregnancy with an abortion.

**U.S. v. Nixon** (1974) – The Supreme Court ruled that executive privilege for the president has limits. President Nixon was ordered to turn over tapes of personal conversations as evidence in the Watergate investigation.

**Board of Education v. Pico** (1982) – The Supreme Court ruled that a public school board couldn't ban a book from a school library because someone doesn't agree with the ideas in the book.

**Texas v. Johnson** (1989) – The Supreme Court ruled that a state government couldn't stop a person from a dissenting view or action because it finds it offensive. In this case, the offensive action was desecration (burning) of an American flag in Texas.

**Bush v. Palm Beach County Canvassing Board** – (2000) The Supreme Court refused to rule on issues related to the Florida recount of votes in the 2000 presidential election. This decision led to the victory of George W. Bush in the election.

## III. Written Assignment

Answer the following prompt in two complete *paragraphs* on a separate sheet of loose-leaf paper.

- Write one paragraph explaining the function of the executive branch's departments and agencies.
- Write another paragraph summarizing the importance of the three Supreme Court cases that you find the most interesting. Explain why they are interesting.