



NAME: _____

CLASSROOM LAW PROJECT

THE DEBATE OVER REFORMING THE SUPREME COURT

VOCABULARY

Directions: Frontload (introduce and review) these vocabulary words with your students to facilitate their understanding of the topic and coinciding resources:

1. **Checks and balances-** the systems within government that ensure that no one branch of government becomes too powerful; in the case of seating a new Supreme Court justice, the Judiciary is not involved in the formal process for naming a new justice; the Executive nominates a justice; and Senators “advise and consent” in the confirmation of new Supreme Court justices.
2. **Confirmation-** the formal process by which the Senate accepts the President’s nomination of a justice. The Senate Judiciary Committee holds hearings to interview individual nominees.. A nominee is confirmed when a majority of Senators votes in favor of the nominee’s confirmation.
3. **Gavel Gap-** a term used to describe the disparity of representation of women and people of color in the judiciary compared to the percentage of women and people of color in the general population.
4. **Nomination-** the formal action a President takes to advance a preferred replacement for a vacancy on the Supreme Court to the U.S. Senate.
5. **Polarization-** division into two sharply contrasting groups or sets of opinions or beliefs
6. **Politicization-** the action of causing an activity, event, or group to become political in nature

CURRENT EVENT ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

Directions: As you read through news and other resources about TOPIC, consider the following questions:

- In the United States, how are justices confirmed to the Supreme Court?
- In what ways does the confirmation of Supreme Court justices exemplify the idea of “checks and balances”?
- Why do some people argue that the judiciary has become more politicized in recent years?
- What are the best arguments for and against expanding the number of justices on the Supreme Court?
- In your opinion, do you think the Supreme Court has recently become polarized and politicized? If so, is that a problem? Explain.
- What kinds of reforms do you think would help lead to less polarization and politicization of the Judiciary?