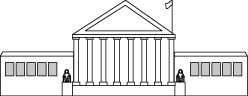
# **Judicial Branch**

The judicial branch of government is made up of the court system. The Supreme Court is the highest court in the land. Article III of the Constitution established this Court and all other Federal courts were created by Congress. Courts decide arguments about the meaning of laws, how they are applied, and whether they break the rules of the Constitution.

# **The Supreme Court**

****The Supreme Court is the highest court in the United States. The Supreme Court hears cases that have made their way through the court system, but of the more than 7,500 cases that are sent to the Supreme Court each year, only about 80 to 100 cases are actually accepted. Once the Supreme Court makes a decision, it can only be changed by another Supreme Court decision or by amending (changing) the Constitution. This is a very important power that can affect the lives of a lot of people. Also, since the main power of the Supreme Court is to decide cases that challenge the Constitution, the Court must decide if the case they receive really challenges the Constitution.

The Supreme Court is made up of nine Justices. One of these is the Chief Justice. They are appointed by the President and must be approved by the Senate. Justices have their jobs for life, unless they resign, retire, or are impeached by the House and convicted by the Senate (the removal process as described by the Constitution).

There are no requirements in order to be appointed a Justice, but all have been trained in the law. Many Justices served as members of Congress, governors, or members of the President's Cabinet. One president, William Howard Taft, was later appointed Chief Justice.