

## Using NewsHour Extra Feature Stories

### STORY

#### **Court Weighs School's Right to Strip Search Students** 04/24/2009

[http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/us/jan-june09/scotuscase\\_04-24.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/us/jan-june09/scotuscase_04-24.html)

Estimated Time: One 45-minute class period with possible extension

[Student Worksheet](#) (reading comprehension and discussion questions without answers)

### PROCEDURE

#### 1. WARM UP

Use initiating questions to introduce the topic and find out how much your students know.

#### 2. MAIN ACTIVITY

Have students read NewsHour Extra's feature story and answer the reading comprehension and discussion questions on the student handout.

#### 3. DISCUSSION

Use discussion questions to encourage students to think about how the issues outlined in the story affect their lives and express and debate different opinions.]

### INITIATING QUESTIONS

1. How many members are on the Supreme Court?

2. What is the role of the Supreme Court?

3. Name as many rights in the Bill of Rights as you can.

READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS – [Student Worksheet](#)

1. Who is Savana Redding?

#### ANSWER

Savana Redding is the student involved in the strip search case before the Supreme Court. In 2003, when she was 13 officials at her school, searched her backpack and then made her take off her clothes so they could check her underwear for ibuprofen pain pills.

2. Why did the school officials search Ms. Redding?

#### ANSWER

The officials said they had a "reasonable suspicion" for the search because one of her friends said she had the pills. The school district has a ban on all types of medication.

3. Why did Ms. Redding's mother sue the school district?

#### ANSWER

Redding's mother sued the school district, claiming they violated her daughter's Fourth Amendment right against an unreasonable search.

4. What are the two arguments the lawyers made?

#### ANSWER

The question in this case is what circumstances justify a strip search of a student.

The school district's lawyer argued that if a school official has a "reasonable suspicion" that a student possesses drugs, then any search where that drug or contraband may reasonably be is constitutional. Ms. Redding's attorneys argued that school districts need enough evidence that drugs are in a student's underwear before they make a student take their clothes off for a search.

**5. What do studies conclude about the psychological effects of strip searches on young people?**

**ANSWER**

"Studies have shown that [a strip search], particularly with teenagers, causes trauma and long-lasting damage." Marcia Coyle of the National Law Journal said.

**6. What is precedent?**

**ANSWER**

An important part of the Supreme Court's decision-making process is taking into account past cases, also known as precedent.

**7. Name and explain one of the two Supreme Court cases involving students that could have precedent in this case.**

**ANSWER**

One of those cases is Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District. The Court ruled the First Amendment guaranteeing freedom of speech applies in school, as long as the speech is not disruptive.

Another is New Jersey v T.L.O. The Court ruled that the Fourth Amendment ban on unreasonable searches and seizures partly applies to searches of students by school officials, but that they only need a "reasonable suspicion" to provide a search.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (more research might be needed)

**1. In this case the justices must balance the rights of students with the responsibilities of school districts, how should the justices balance this?**

**2. Do you think students deserve the same rights as adults? Why or why not?**

**3. Can you think of a situation where individuals have no rights in the United States? Why is that?**

**4. Do you think school officials should have the right to strip search students? What is your reasoning? Do you think it is necessary?**

**Extension Activity**

Have students write a 300-500 word essay on this topic providing clear examples. Send your completed editorial to NewsHour Extra (extra@newshour.org). Exceptional essays might be published on our Web site.