



UNIVERSITY INTERSCHOLASTIC LEAGUE
Making a World of Difference

CURRENT ISSUES & EVENTS

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2022 • INVITATIONAL A

Prepared Dec. 5, 2021



Photo by Fred Schilling, Collection of the Supreme Court of the United States

THE SUPREME COURT (AS OF OCT. 27, 2020)

(Front) Associate Justice Samuel A. Alito, Jr., Associate Justice Clarence Thomas, Chief Justice John G. Roberts, Jr., Associate Justice Stephen G. Breyer, and Associate Justice Sonia Sotomayor; (Back) Associate Justice Brett M. Kavanaugh, Associate Justice Elena Kagan, Associate Justice Neil M. Gorsuch, and Associate Justice Amy Coney Barrett.

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- 1. William Shatner boldly went where no 90-year-old actor has gone before. Where?**
 - a. to space aboard a SpaceX Crew Dragon capsule
 - b. to the international space station aboard a Roscosmos rocket
 - c. to Earth orbit aboard the Space Shuttle for three days
 - d. to the edge of space for slightly more than 10 minutes in a Blue Origin rocket
- 2. Some say it's a blip in an otherwise strong economic recovery from the pandemic. Others cite the increased cost of beef, turkey, gas, electricity and rent as examples of its reality. Some say it's transitory. What?**
 - a. relatively low federal minimum wage
 - b. high national debt
 - c. inflation
 - d. exchange rate
- 3. The U.S. House of Representatives voted to censure Paul Gosar, R-Ariz. For what?**
 - a. providing financial support to the people who broke into the Capitol Jan. 6
 - b. posting a violent video that depicts him killing Rep. Alexandria Osasio-Cortez
 - c. ethics violations including improperly soliciting millions of dollars from corporate officials and lobbyists
 - d. failing to pay income tax
- 4. Scientists used the gene-editing tool Crispr-Cas9 to have what effect on mosquitoes?**
 - a. to make them unable to transmit malaria
 - b. to make humans invisible to the mosquitoes
 - c. to make the insects sterile
 - d. to cause them to transmit antibodies for various infections including COVID-19
- 5. President Biden issued a proclamation to observe Oct. 11 as a day to honor what group of people?**
 - a. Native Americans
 - b. Spanish Americans
 - c. people living in the American territories in the Caribbean, including the Bahamas
 - d. survivors of the Spanish-American War
- 6. It cost \$1 billion — a lot for a sandwich shop. Which company did Burger King acquire last fall?**
 - a. Subway
 - b. Schlotzsky's
 - c. Jersey Mike's
 - d. Firehouse Subs
- 7. Andrew Cuomo left office as governor of New York on Aug. 24. Kathy Hochul, the New York lieutenant governor, took his place. What was true about her?**
 - a. She is the first female governor of any state.
 - b. She is the first female governor of New York.
 - c. She is the first Democratic governor of New York since Nelson Rockefeller in 1959.
 - d. Born on Sept. 14, 1978, she will be the youngest serving governor.

8. **The Caldor Fire burned Aug. 14, 2021 until Oct. 24, 2021 and burned more than 221,775 acres, forcing the evacuation of what popular vacation destination?**
 - a. the Grand Canyon
 - b. Yosemite National Forest
 - c. Lake Mead National Recreation Area
 - d. South Lake Tahoe

9. **California held what kind of election to determine whether Gov. Gavin Newsom would stay in office?**
 - a. primary
 - b. recall
 - c. local (Sacramento County)
 - d. general, the first one held online due to pandemic

10. **The 4-inch, fat-tailed species of this creature rained down on Egypt attacking more than 500 people — none of whom died. What type of animal?**
 - a. cobra
 - b. locust
 - c. scorpion
 - d. scarab

11. **Missing were soap dispensers, mirrors, paper towel holders, fire alarms and even a teacher's desk, anything that could be swiped from school. What social media outlet hosted images for close to 94,200 similar items being stolen?**
 - a. TikTok
 - b. Instagram
 - c. Facebook
 - d. Pinterest

12. **Representatives from more than 40 countries meeting at COP26, the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference, pledged to phase out the use of coal. However, the deal did NOT include one of the following countries. Which one?**
 - a. the United States
 - b. Poland
 - c. Vietnam
 - d. Chile

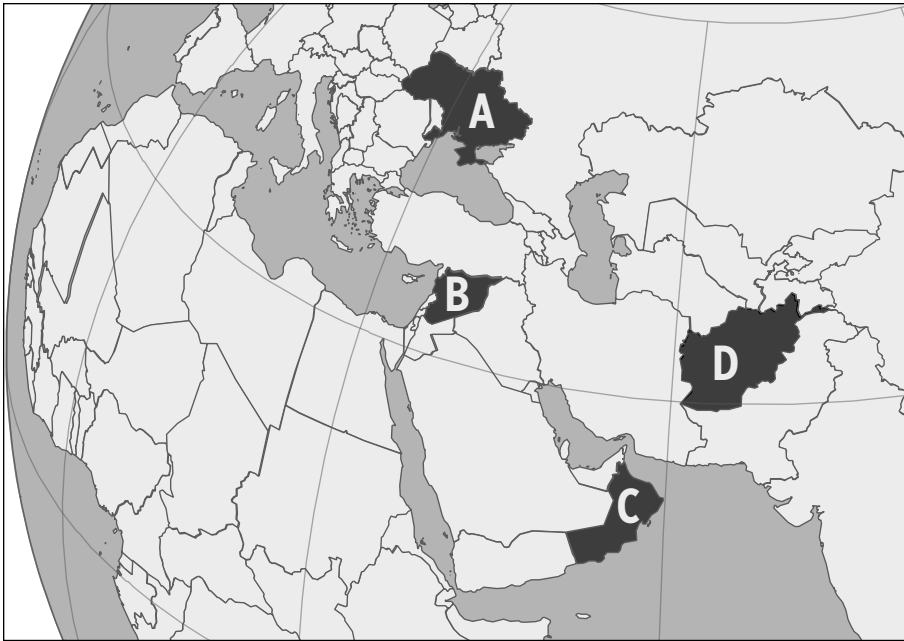
13. **Which is true about the Delta variant of the virus that causes COVID-19, lineage B.1.617.2?**
 - a. It was first detected in a lab in Wuhan, China, in late 2020.
 - b. The three vaccines in common use do not protect people from this variant.
 - c. It causes more infections and spreads faster than previous variants detected.
 - d. Although extremely lethal, it was only found in a few isolated populations.

14. **On Sept. 1 of last year, 666 new Texas laws went into effect, including SB8 related to abortion. Which of the following is true of SB8?**
 - a. It only allows abortions in the cases of rape or when the mother's life is in jeopardy.
 - b. It takes into account family income when determining whether a woman can have an abortion.
 - c. It prohibits abortions as early as six weeks into pregnancy when a fetal heartbeat can be detected.
 - d. It protects healthcare providers who participate in abortions from lawsuits.

- 15. Muhammad Aziz and Khalil Islam were exonerated by the Manhattan District Attorney for killing whom in 1965?**
- Ted Kennedy
 - Winston Churchill
 - Martin Luther King Jr.
 - Malcolm X
- 16. The centennial of what Washington, D.C., monument was marked on Veterans Day 2021 with a unique ceremony designed to model the original ceremony 100 years ago?**
- the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier
 - the Washington Monument
 - the Lincoln Memorial
 - the Lockkeeper's House
- 17. In addition to using the U.S. dollar, El Salvador adopted a new national currency. Which one?**
- the euro
 - the Mexican peso
 - Bitcoin
 - the Japanese yen
- 18. Minors in China will be allowed only an hour of play time between 8 p.m. and 9 p.m. on Fridays, weekends and public holidays according to the state news agency. What play activity is being limited?**
- hiking
 - watching television or videos on YouTube
 - playing video games
 - playing with imaginary friends
- 19. A statue of which Confederate leader was removed from its pedestal in Richmond, Virginia, where it had stood since 1890?**
- Jefferson Davis
 - Robert E. Lee
 - Stonewall Jackson
 - Matthew Fontaine Maury
- 20. The most significant rift in decades between the U.S. and France seemed on the mend after French President Emmanuel Macron and President Joe Biden got on the phone to smooth things over. What was the spat over?**
- The U.S. decided to sell nuclear-powered submarines to Australia.
 - The U.S. canceled a multibillion-dollar contract to sell diesel-electric submarines to France.
 - The U.S. encouraged, and ultimately got, France to cancel a multibillion-dollar deal to sell Australia submarines.
 - The U.S. condemned France for sending 1,000 military personnel to Afghanistan to stabilize the region.
- 21. Ivermectin made the news as a possible cure for COVID-19. However, it's supposed to be used primarily for what?**
- to treat lice, ticks and fleas in dogs
 - to treat malaria in humans
 - to treat COVID-19, but only in people younger than 12
 - to treat intestinal roundworms in livestock

- 22. Nearly 2,000 people were killed and more than 9,000 injured when what happened in Haiti in August of 2021?**
- Tropical Storm Grace
 - Hurricane Henri
 - a magnitude 7.2 earthquake
 - the country's president was assassinated in a terrorist attack
- 23. A jury in Virginia decided that a several white supremacist leaders and hate groups should pay more than \$25 million in damages to plaintiffs who said they suffered physical or emotional injuries when?**
- during the deadly "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville in 2017
 - during the Jan. 6 insurrection on the U.S. Capitol
 - during a June of 2021 clash of activists while a statue of Robert E. Lee was taken down
 - during a Sept. 18, 2021 rally at the state capitol in Richmond
- 24. In October, a production facility off the coast of what state leaked about 126,000 gallons of oil, creating a 13-square-mile slick and causing significant damage to wildlife?**
- Louisiana
 - California
 - Texas
 - Oregon
- 25. The Pandora Papers, a huge collection of documents released by a group of investigative journalists, are related to what?**
- the Jan. 6, 2021, attacks on the U.S. Capitol
 - the secret wealth and dealings of some rich and powerful people
 - the botched 2020 election in Arizona
 - the rapid development of a COVID-19 vaccine
- 26. Initial proposed maps for redistricting in Texas as a result of the 2020 Census would have which effect?**
- Collin County neighborhoods with more Asian Texans would get their own representative, thus increasing their voice.
 - The number of white voters increased right along with white representation in the Legislature.
 - Hispanic voters would move into larger, whiter districts around Dallas and Fort Worth, diluting their voice.
 - The new map puts all incumbent legislators' seats in jeopardy.
- 27. U.S. troops were scheduled to be out of Afghanistan by Sept. 1, 2021. What group took control of the country almost immediately?**
- an Islamic republic led by President Ashraf Ghani
 - the Afghan National Reconciliation Council and Abdullah Abdullah
 - Hamid Karzi, leader of the Popalzai Durrani tribe of Kandahar
 - the Taliban with main ruler Haibatullah Akhundzada
- 28. A self portrait has become the most expensive work by a Latin American artist ever to sell at auction, fetching \$34.9 million in New York. Who painted the portrait — "Diego y yo"?**
- Frida Kahlo
 - Diego Rivera
 - Rufino Tamayo
 - Fernando Botero

- 29. According to a report from the U.S. Office of Special Counsel, 11 senior Trump officials allegedly violated the Hatch Act by doing what?**
- participating in terrorist acts, the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection on the U.S. Capitol
 - soliciting funds from groups charged with past racist acts
 - addressing the 2020 Republican convention
 - campaigning on behalf of Trump’s reelection
- 30. A woman from New York is suing The Kellogg Company for \$5 million regarding the company’s Whole Grain Frosted Strawberry Pop-Tarts. Why?**
- She says the Pop-Tarts aren’t made of grain.
 - She got burned by the Pop-Tarts and says there is was no warning that the filling would be hot when the pastries came out of the oven.
 - She says she gained weight by eating only Pop-Tarts and was misled by the calorie count on the packaging.
 - She says the product doesn’t have enough strawberries in its filling.
- 31. A 6-year-old Sesame Street character tweeted — “[C]oming over to vaccinate your kids.” After COVID-19 vaccines became available for Americans between the ages of 5 and 11, Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, labeled the tweet from which character as “government propaganda”?**
- Cookie Monster
 - Elmo
 - Big Bird
 - Kermit
- 32. While Texas Gov. Greg Abbott issued an executive order banning school districts from requiring masks, school districts such as Paris ISD and Texas City ISD required them anyway. What did they do?**
- They appealed to the United States Supreme Court.
 - They amended the dress code to include masks.
 - They simply ignored the ban and suspended any students not wearing masks.
 - They put the issue on the Nov. 3 ballot.
- 33. Effectively demoting Facebook’s namesake service to being just one of the company’s subsidiaries, alongside Instagram and WhatsApp, rather than the overarching brand, Facebook changed its name to what?**
- The Whistleblowers
 - Meta
 - Reality Squared
 - Data
- 34. Health officials in Michigan are advising residents in the city of Benton Harbor to rely on bottled water instead of tap water because the city’s water supply contained what?**
- lead
 - cholera bacteria
 - hydrogen sulfite
 - fecal coliform



35. The war in Afghanistan officially ended in August and was the longest war in U.S. history. Which country labeled on the map above is Afghanistan?
36. At least nine people died and some 25 were treated at hospitals at a performance by Travis Scott at Astroworld in Houston. What happened?
- an active shooter
 - a set fell on the crowd
 - a crowd surge
 - a truck's brakes failed, and the truck ran into the crowd
37. Michelle Wu became the first person of color and the first woman to be elected mayor of what city?
- Park City, Utah
 - Little Rock, Arkansas
 - Argonia, Kansas
 - Boston, Massachusetts
38. Which company announced it will split into three companies focusing on health care, energy and aviation?
- General Electric
 - Johnson & Johnson
 - American Airlines
 - Blue Cross and Blue Shield
39. Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland formally declared a word to be a derogatory term and ordered a task force to find replacement names for valleys, lakes, creeks and other sites on federal lands that use what word?
- redskin
 - squaw
 - tribe
 - yanacona

- 40. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in November of 2021, for the first time, deaths in the U.S. from what cause surpassed 100,000 in a 12-month period?**
- gunshots
 - overdoses
 - traffic accidents
 - Alzheimer's disease

ESSAY PROMPT

NOTE: *Contestants who do not write an essay will be disqualified.* **Essay length is not a major grading factor as long as the essay is substantial and demonstrates a sincere effort to discuss the assigned topic. Cover as many corners of the issue as practical, including historical, political, economic, social and cultural, when relevant. Avoid including your personal opinions, as more than enough information on the subject has been published. A focused, concise and specific essay beats a vague and rambling essay.**

TOPIC

The courts, from the local courts to the United States Supreme Court, have been busy so far this academic year discussing and deciding up on issues of societal importance. Pick any two cases and discuss the specifics of the case and their societal significance, how they reflect society as it exists now and how the cases might change society in the future — or not.

DO NOT DISTRIBUTE TO STUDENTS BEFORE OR DURING THE CONTEST!

ANSWER KEY

ESSAY PROMPT

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- | | |
|-------|-------|
| 1. D | 21. D |
| 2. C | 22. C |
| 3. B | 23. A |
| 4. B | 24. B |
| 5. A | 25. B |
| 6. D | 26. C |
| 7. B | 27. D |
| 8. D | 28. A |
| 9. B | 29. D |
| 10. C | 30. D |
| 11. A | 31. C |
| 12. A | 32. B |
| 13. C | 33. B |
| 14. C | 34. A |
| 15. D | 35. D |
| 16. A | 36. C |
| 17. C | 37. D |
| 18. C | 38. A |
| 19. B | 39. B |
| 20. A | 40. B |

POTENTIAL DISCUSSION POINTS PREPARED Dec. 1, 2021 might include, but should not be limited to...

- *Wisconsin shooting* — A jury acquitted teenager Kyle Rittenhouse in a decision that re-ignited fierce debate about gun rights and the boundaries of self defense. Jurors unanimously found Rittenhouse, 18, not guilty on all charges: two counts of homicide, one count of attempted homicide for wounding a third man, and two counts of recklessly endangering safety in protests marred by arson, rioting and looting on Aug. 25, 2020, in Kenosha, Wisconsin. The issue of race also hung over the case, although Rittenhouse and the men he shot were all white. Some Black activists said the U.S. police and courts would have treated the teenager more harshly if he had been Black. Conservatives saw the verdict as a validation of the Second Amendment, which grants Americans the right to bear arms.
- *South Georgia shooting* — At first, the killing of Ahmaud Arbery in February 2020 went largely unnoticed outside the South Georgia community where the 25-year-old lived and died. It wasn't until a video of the shooting surfaced May 5, 2020, that the Black man's death drew nationwide attention, prompting outrage and protests — harbingers of the demonstrations against racial injustice that would follow. Three white men are now set to stand trial for Arbery's murder: Gregory McMichael, his son Travis McMichael and William "Roddie" Bryan Jr. All three have pleaded not guilty, and their attorneys have previously said their clients committed no wrongdoing. It was yet another case involving race and concepts such as self defense and citizens' arrests.
- *Abortion at Supreme Court* — The high court considered separate bids by abortion providers and the Justice Department to block the Texas law, the strictest in effect in the nation. The Supreme Court let the measure take effect Sept. 1 on a 5-4 vote, pointing to an unusual mechanism that puts enforcement entirely in the hands of private parties. During arguments Nov. 1, 2021, a majority of the nine justices suggested they were wary of letting states use private enforcement as a way to keep federal courts from reviewing laws.
- *Abortion at Supreme Court* — The Supreme Court heard a case concerning a Mississippi abortion law on Dec. 1, 2021, a case — the most important set of abortion-related oral arguments the court has heard since 1992 — that could overturn *Roe v. Wade*. Mississippi's Gestational Age Act, passed in 2018 but blocked by two federal courts, allows abortion after 15 weeks "only in medical emergencies or for severe fetal abnormality" and has no exception for rape or incest.
- *Vaccine* — Texas Republicans claimed an early victory after a U.S. federal appeals court temporarily blocked the Biden administration from mandating that companies with more than 100 employees require workers to get coronavirus vaccines or submit to weekly testing. In a two-page order, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit cited "grave statutory and constitutional issues" with the federal COVID-19 vaccine rule developed by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. The court did not provide details. The vaccine requirement would apply to about 84 million workers across the country and go into effect Jan. 4. The reaction to this order is just one more example of how the pandemic has been politicized. The decision followed a joint petition filed by a handful of states, including Texas, plus several businesses and advocacy groups that argued government overreach. The safety measures could, in some cases, preempt state and local laws, including Gov. Greg Abbott's ban on vaccine mandates.