**CASE BRIEF**

**How to Write a Case Brief**   
To prepare one, you must distill the case's most important parts and restate them in your own words. The effort will provide a variety of important benefits.

**Case**:   
Name of the case, (and year of the decision).

**Facts**:   
Who are the parties to the lawsuit, what is their dispute, and how did they get to the Supreme Court?  In your own words, only include the few important facts necessary to understand the case; e.g. the time of day a defendant was arrested is usually not important, etc.

**Issue**:    
What is the basic legal *question* regarding what specific provision of law that is to be decided in the case?

**Holding:**   
What is the majority’s basic *answer* to the basic legal question in the case. Also include the vote count: majority/plurality—concurrence(s)—dissent(s)

**Majority Opinion Reasoning:**    
What is the majority’s *explanation why* it reached its holding?  You will want to create a summarized, condensed, paraphrased outline of the court’s reasoning.  The reasoning simply consists of two things: the RULE and the APPLICATION (of the rule to the facts of the case):

1. **Rule:**

*What* rule of law is announced in the case?

1. **Application:**

*How* does the rule of law specifically apply given the specific facts of the case at issue?  In other words, given the rule of law that should apply, which party wins according to that rule given the facts of the case being heard?

**Concurring Opinion(s) Reasoning**:   
What is the reasoning of each separate concurrence (justices who agreed with the majority’s holding but disagreed with the majority’s reasoning)?  How do they differ in their proposed rule or application (or both)?

**Dissenting Opinion(s) Reasoning:**   
What is the reasoning of each separate dissent (justices who disagreed with both the majority’s holding and its reasoning)? How do they differ in their proposed rule or application (or both)?