

The Supreme Court is the final court of appeal in the United States. Don't be fooled by the marble columns and velvet drapes—the Court is a political institution. Power is injected into the process when the justices decide which cases to hear, when they decide cases, and in the impact that those cases have on American lives. This is the political process by which a case gets to the Court.



**Anthony Kennedy**

**Reagan**

**1988**

**2.037**

(Median Justice)



**John Roberts**

**GW Bush**

**2005**

**2.943**



**Antonin Scalia**

**Reagan**

**1986**

**3.822**



**Samuel Alito**

**GW Bush**

**2005**

**3.874**



**Clarence Thomas**

**GHW Bush**

**1991**

**5.566**

**Opinion**  
(majority, concurring,  
dissenting) published  
Approx. 80 signed  
opinions/year

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(majority, concurring, dissenting)  
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#### How frequently the justices voted with each other in 2013

	AS	AK	CT	RBG	SB	SA	SS	EK
JR	90%	92%	88%	77%	85%	85%	79%	83%
AS		85%	95%	81%	78%	90%	78%	85%
AK			82%	79%	85%	88%	79%	86%
CT				75%	78%	96%	75%	79%
RBG					89%	75%	90%	94%
SB						77%	89%	90%
SA							75%	79%
SS								91%
EK								

Written briefs  
presented to  
the court

**The docket is  
established**  
Approx. 100 cases  
accepted/year

Justices'  
personal  
beliefs and  
attitudes

Error  
correction &  
lower court  
disputes

Amicus  
curiae briefs  
filed by  
interest  
groups

Law and  
precedent

**"Discuss list"**  
is reviewed  
in conference  
Rule of Four

Sources: Administrative Office of the United States Courts.