

# Comparing Federal and State Courts

*Simplified*



This is a teaching tool that simplifies key points for students. Find detailed information at [uscourts.gov](http://uscourts.gov) Educational Resources.

## Federal Courts

The structure of the federal court system is relatively the same across the nation.



## State Courts

The structure of state court systems varies from state to state.

### Created by

U.S. Constitution



State Constitution

### Structure

#### U.S Supreme Court

13 Circuit Courts of Appeals

94 District Trial Courts



52 Courts of Last Resort

~46 Intermediate Courts of Appeals

~16,000 Trial Courts

### Judge Selection

President Nominates

Senate Confirms



*Combinations of:*  
Governor Appoints  
Legislature Confirms  
Voters Elect

### Term of Service

Typically Lifetime Appointment



Different Tenure Lengths

### Types of Cases

U.S. Constitution  
■  
Cross State/Country Lines  
■  
Federal Crimes  
■  
Bankruptcy



State Constitution  
■  
In the Same State  
■  
State Crimes  
■  
Family Law