# US SUPREME COURT

Supreme court is the highest federal court in America. It was established in 1789 under the provision made by Article -3, section-I of the constitution. The seat of the Supreme Court is at Washington DC.

**Composition of the supreme court**:- The strength of the Judges of the Supreme Court is fixed by the Congress. In 1789 the strength was fixed at One Chief Justice and five other judges, at present there are 9 judges which include one Chief Justice and eight other judges. Judges are appointed by the President with the approval of the Senate. Judges can be removed from office by the method of impeachment on the charges of corruption, misconduct and a serious offence.

**Salary of the Judges**:- It has been provided by the constitution judges would be paid compensation in lieu of service which cannot be reduced during their tenure. This compensation is fixed by the Congress. At present Chief Justice gets an annual salary of $255,500 and other judges get an annual salary of $244,400. The judges of Supreme Court get full salary as pension for life on retiring after completing service of 15 years and on attaining an age of 65 years or after completing 10 years of service and attaining an age of 70 years.

**Working of Supreme Court**:- Regular session of the Supreme Court begins on the first Monday of October every year and continues till mid June next year. If necessary Chief Justice can convene special session. Judges hear cases on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, hold consultations among themselves on Saturday and write judgements and deliver judgements on Monday. Quorum of six judges has been fixed for the meeting of the Supreme Court.

**Jurisdiction and Powers of the Supreme Court:-**

**1.Original Jurisdiction**: Original Jurisdiction includes cases which can be taken directly to the Supreme Court. For example (i) cases involving ambassadors, consuls and secretaries, (ii) cases involving federal govt. on the one hand and one or more state govt. on the other, (iii) cases involving two or more states, (iv) cases involving USA on one hand and foreign govt. on the other, (v) cases involving a state govt. on one hand and the citizens of the a state on the other.

**2.Appellate Jurisdiction**: (i) If a state law is challenged in the state court on the ground that the concerned law violated the federal constitution or federal law, then the appeal against the judgement delivered by state court can be filed in the Supreme Court.

(ii) Appeals against decisions of District Courts: If a District Court declares a federal law ultra-vires of the constitution, then the appeal against such judgments can be filed in the Supreme Court.

(iii)Appeals against the decisions of the Circuit Court of Appeals: In many cases the decisions given by Circuit Court of Appeals are final. However, an appeal against the decision of Circuit Court of Appeals can be filed in the Supreme Court in a case involving the question of interpretation of the constitution.

**3. Protection and Interpretation of the constitution:-** By the power of Judicial Review, Supreme Court examines laws passed by the Congress, executive orders and treaties arrived at with other countries and in case they violate the constitution, can declare them ultra-vires of the constitution. By exercising this power, Supreme Court has assumed the role of the protector and final interpreter of the constitution.

**4.Protection of the Rights of the citizens**:- Supreme Court is the watch dog of the rights of the citizens incorporated in the constitution and if necessary, can issue Writs for protecting rights.

**5.Role in Law making**:- While interpreting Constitution and laws Supreme Court creates new principles which assumed the form of new laws for the future. Thus Supreme Court plays positive role in the legislative sphere and Prof. Laski has called Supreme Court as the Third Chamber of American Congress.

Supreme Court is the highest court in America and its decisions cannot be challenged anywhere. Congress cannot reject the interpretations of the constitution given by the Supreme Court and President cannot veto over the laws made by the Supreme Court.