

# YOU & the LAW



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## How the United States selects federal judges

The highest court in our nation is the U. S. Supreme Court, established by Article III of the Constitution. Federal judges who serve on the Supreme Court are called justices. There are nine justices on the Supreme Court — one chief justice and eight associate justices.

In addition, there are 94 district trial courts across the country and 13 appellate courts that hear appeals of cases decided in the district court. The president of the United States appoints and the U.S. Senate confirms all judges serving on these courts, as well as the nine Supreme Court justices.

When there is a vacancy in a federal judgeship, the president nominates someone to fill that spot. Recommendations can come from members of Congress, other judges, and lawyers and other people or groups supportive of a particular candidate.

Once the president considers prospective nominations and makes a decision on appointment, that individual's name is forwarded to the Senate Judiciary Committee.

The committee gathers information about the nominee's qualifications, including previous judicial decisions



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if the nominee was a judge on another court. The FBI also does a background check.

The American Bar Association Standing Committee on the Judiciary evaluates all prospective nominees for judicial appointment and reports to the president and the Senate Judiciary Committee on the candidate's professional qualifications of integrity, professional competence and judicial temperament.

If the Senate Judiciary Committee decides to move the nomination forward, it holds a hearing. Witnesses can present testimony and committee members question the nominee. Following the hearing, the committee votes on whether to move the nomination to a vote by the full Senate.

The committee can report the nomination favorably, unfavorably or without a recommendation. The committee can also refuse to hold a hearing on a nominee or refuse to move the nomination forward following a hearing.

After the committee reports a nomination, it goes to the full Senate for debate. Once debate ends, the Senate votes on the nomination. If the Senate votes to approve the nomination, that person is confirmed and becomes a federal judge.

Federal judges are appointed for life and most judges serve for many years. As a result, the judges and Supreme Court justices serving today include many people who were appointed by former presidents from both political parties.

The Constitution does not require that a justice be a lawyer or a law school graduate, but all justices have been trained in the law. When there were fewer law schools and lawyers could train by studying with an experienced lawyer, a few lawyers went on to become Supreme Court justices, but since 1941 all those appointed to the Supreme Court have been law school graduates.



## When reading the news, consider the source

Not that long ago people got news from a local newspaper or radio station or from a national television network, and it was easier to know the reliability of the source.

Today, anyone can spread news stories quickly and easily by posting on social media or forwarding an email. Each person who reads that post or email can forward it to friends, family and co-workers. In no time, a story can circulate to millions of people.

But not all stories that appear to be “news” are true. Some stories are made up.

Others are partially true, but with important facts omitted or changed.

### What can you do?

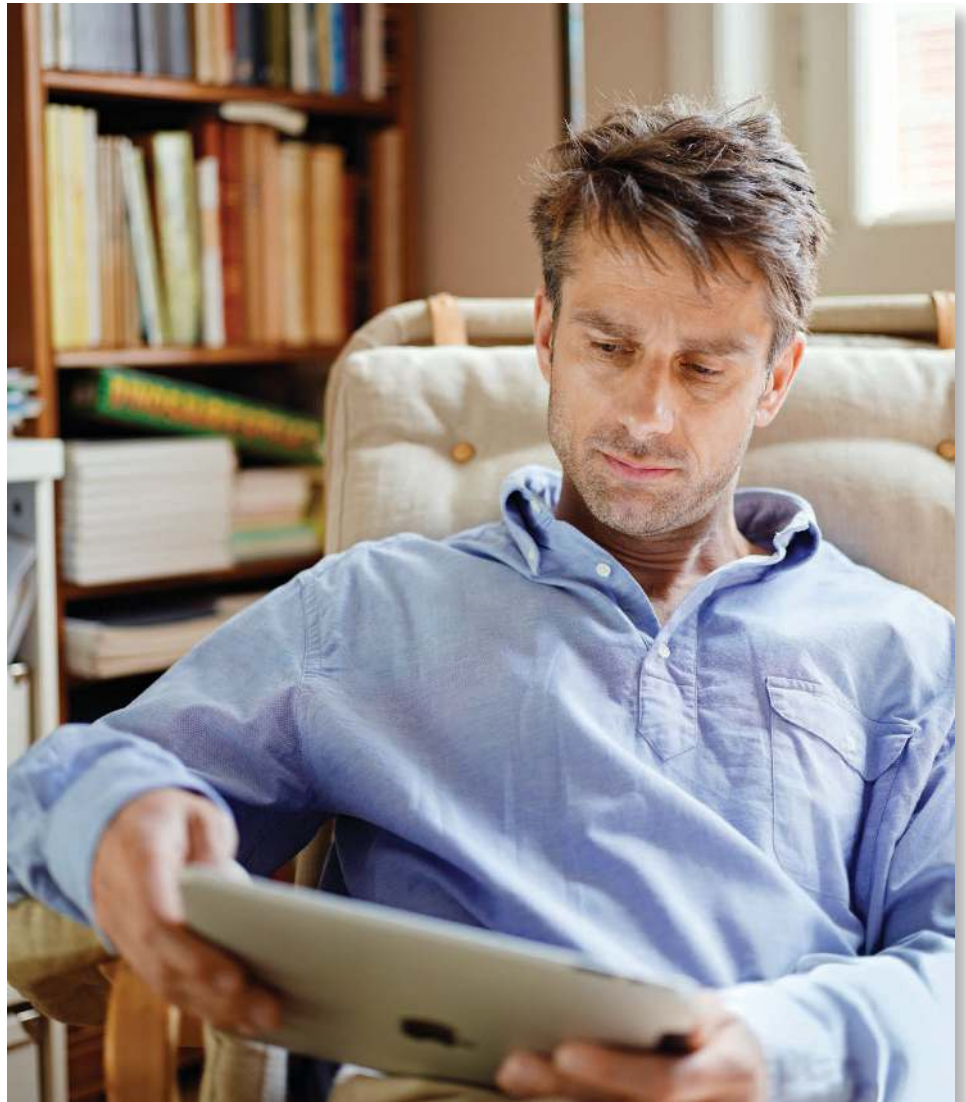
How can we tell whether a news story is true, partially true or entirely false? First, consider the source. Is it a well-known, reputable newspaper, TV news broadcaster, or internet news site? Some false news sources use names that sound like legitimate newspapers or TV stations. Others use the name of a legitimate news source, but have a different web address.

Check the website of any questionable news source. Does the site link to other reputable sources?

Some websites clearly state that its articles are meant to be satire. Without careful reading, these can appear to be actual news.

Visit national news sites and other sources you know to be reliable to see if they report the same or a similar story. A breaking news story should appear in other newspapers and internet news sites. Does your local or regional newspaper mention this story?

Research the author if you do not know from reliable sources that this person provides trustworthy



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information. Do other, reputable websites mention the author? Does the author’s work appear in reliable publications?

If the author has a website, does the information about the author’s qualifications on that site indicate he or she is likely to be knowledgeable on the subject?

Does the news story cite any research or outside sources to support the opinion or information in the article? If so, look for independent confirmation on the internet that the research exists and says what the author reports.

What is the date on the article? Sometimes old news is recycled to make it appear to be something happening now. There are websites that check the accuracy of news articles and internet rumors.

One of the oldest internet fact checking sites is *snopes.com*. Others are *factcheck.org* and *politifact.com*.

It is tempting to share unbelievably good news or warn others of an imminent threat. But before you spread news that seems too good to be true or too awful to believe, check it out first.



# A guide to hybrid cars

Hybrid cars have two power sources: a battery-powered electric motor and a gasoline-powered internal combustion engine. They achieve better fuel economy and pollute less than standard vehicles. With two power sources, a hybrid costs more to buy than a comparable gas-powered car. However, better gas mileage reduces overall operating costs.

Maintenance costs for hybrid cars are similar to that for gasoline-powered cars, except for the more costly battery in a hybrid. However, most states require a warranty of eight to 10 years on the battery.

Electric cars are quieter and accelerate quickly from a complete stop,

but all-electric cars cannot go long distances without being recharged.

Hybrid electric vehicles can operate in a variety of ways. Parallel design hybrids run on gas power, electric power or both. The electric motor and the gasoline engine both connect to the transmission.

In series design hybrids, the electric motor drives the car and the gasoline motor recharges the battery. Power-split hybrids use series design operation at lower speeds and parallel design at higher speeds.

A full, or strong, hybrid runs on the gasoline engine, the electric battery or a combination of both. It operates

on electric power at low speeds and uses the gasoline engine at higher speeds.

A mild hybrid has some fuel-saving electrical features, but does not run solely on electrical power. An example is the start-stop feature that turns the engine off when the car is coasting or stopped and restarts it quickly to begin acceleration. Plug-in hybrids have a battery that recharges from an electric socket. They operate on battery power for short trips of 10-35 miles, using the gasoline engine for longer drives.

To select the best design for you, consider mileage, fuel savings, availability of charging stations and budget.

## Study habits help reduce student stress

If you want to reduce the stress of being a student and increase the likelihood that you will do better in your classes, try incorporating these study habits into your routine:

**Don't wait until the last minute to cram for a test.** Consistent, shorter study periods accomplish more than all-night sessions before an exam.

**Set a routine.** Sit down to study at the same time each day. You are more mentally ready for the task when you've made study time a habit.

**Find a quiet place where you won't be distracted by television, background music, machinery or conversation.** Some people do better with soft background noise instead of total quiet. Know what environment is right for you.

**Don't procrastinate, even when the subject is difficult or uninteresting.** Delaying studying will not make it easier or more enjoyable. Last-minute pressure leads to mistakes and makes learning more difficult.

**Tackle the difficult subject first, when you are fresh.**

**Take good notes** in class and review your notes before starting an assignment to reinforce what you learned in class.

**Outline and rewrite notes.** Restating ideas in your own words helps you remember. Rewrite borrowed notes or a study guide in your own words to improve comprehension.

**Choose good study partners.** Study with those who are motivated to work, committed to good study habits and willing to do their part to help the group learn.

**Take breaks.** A few minutes spent stretching, walking outdoors, closing your eyes and allowing your mind and body to rest can leave you refreshed and ready to return to your studies.



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## Good choices for heart-healthy eating

Poor eating habits can increase the risk of heart disease. Over 600,000 people die yearly of heart disease, and it is the nation's leading cause of death. These guidelines will help you make good choices for heart-healthy eating:

**Eat vegetables and fruits.** They are low in calories and provide important nutrients. Keep fruit handy for an easy, nutritious, low-calorie snack. Add chopped fresh vegetables to salads.

**Select whole grains.** Whole grain breads and baked goods provide fiber and nutrients that help regulate blood pressure.

**Limit sugar.** Sweetened drinks and snacks are a major source of added sugar. Avoid products made

with corn syrup, dextrose, fructose or high-fructose corn syrup.

**Reduce unhealthy solid fats.**

Instead of butter, margarine or shortening, use olive oil or canola oil. Avocados, nuts and such cold-water fish as salmon, mackerel and herring are other good sources of healthy fats.

**Choose low-fat protein,** such as skinless chicken breasts, fish, eggs and lean cuts of meat. Beans, peas and lentils provide low-fat protein with no cholesterol.

**Reduce salt intake.** Too much salt can contribute to high blood pressure, a risk factor for heart disease. Limit added salt when cooking or eating.

**Avoid refined, processed and fast foods** containing sugar, salt and unhealthy fats.

**Plan ahead.** Avoid the temptation of high-calorie, high-fat foods by planning meals for the week, focusing on fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat protein.

**Enjoy a treat.** Indulging in a “forbidden” food occasionally will not destroy your heart-healthy diet.

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