Chapter 18 in Brief

SECTION 1

The National Judiciary (pp. 506–511)

★ The Framers created a national judiciary consisting of a Supreme Court and inferior courts to be created by Congress.
★ The federal courts have exclusive or concurrent and original or appellate jurisdiction over the cases they hear.
★ Federal judges are appointed by the President, subject to confirmation by the Senate.
★ Supreme Court and inferior court judges serve for life, removable only by impeachment, while special court judges serve 15-year terms; Congress sets the salaries of federal judges.
★ Federal court officers, such as magistrates, U.S. attorneys, bailiffs, and clerks, serve in administrative and judicial roles.

SECTION 2

The Inferior Courts (pp. 512–515)

★ The 94 U.S. district courts handle about 80 percent of the federal caseload; they have original jurisdiction over most federal criminal and civil cases.
★ The 12 federal appeals courts have appellate jurisdiction only.
★ The Court of International Trade hears tariff and trade cases; the Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit has nationwide appellate jurisdiction from various federal courts.

SECTION 3

The Supreme Court (pp. 517–522)

★ All federal and most State courts have the power of judicial review, deciding the constitutionality of an act of government.
★ The U.S. Supreme Court has both original and appellate jurisdiction, but usually hears cases on appeal; the Court decides only a handful of cases each year.
★ The Supreme Court is in session from October through June; it hears oral arguments, studies written briefs, meets in conference to discuss the cases, and renders majority, concurring, and dissenting opinions.

SECTION 4

The Special Courts (pp. 524–526)

★ The U.S. government may not be sued without its consent; those who seek damages must take their cases to the U.S. Court of Federal Claims.
★ Congress has created federal courts for U.S. territories, as well as for the District of Columbia.
★ The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces is a civilian tribunal that hears appeals of court-martial cases.
★ The U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims hears claims regarding veterans’ benefits.
★ The U.S. Tax Court hears civil cases concerning tax law.

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