

### TEXT SUMMARY

The special courts of the U.S. federal court system are also called legislative courts. Each has a narrow jurisdiction, usually connected to an expressed power of Congress, such as the power to tax.

The United States cannot be sued by anyone unless Congress agrees to the case. Congress established the Court of Federal Claims to hear such cases and to allow a citizen to secure **redress**, or satisfaction of the claim, usually through payment.

Congress created territorial courts to judge cases in U.S. territories, such as the Virgin Islands. The District of Columbia, which is neither a State nor a territory, also has its own court system.

Two courts hear cases from the military. The Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces is a **civilian tribunal**, meaning that its judges are civilians. This is the court of last resort for cases involving military law. It may review the decision of a **court-martial**, or a court composed of military personnel that puts on trial those accused of violating military law.

The Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims also hears cases that involve the military. It decides appeals regarding veterans' benefits.

The Tax Court hears civil cases that involve tax law. Most of its cases are generated by the Internal Revenue Service and other agencies of the Treasury Department.

### THE BIG IDEA

The special courts handle cases that are outside the mainstream judicial system.

### GRAPHIC SUMMARY: *The Special Courts*

Legislative Court	Jurisdiction
Court of Federal Claims	Suits against the United States
Territorial Court	Cases in U.S. territories
District of Columbia Court	Cases in the District of Columbia
Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces	Appeals from court-martial
Court-martial	Violations of military law
Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims	Veterans' benefits
Tax Court	Civil cases involving tax law

Each special court has very narrow jurisdiction.

### REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. On what condition may a person sue the United States?
2. **Diagram Skills** Which special court would hear an appeal from a court-martial?