



## Viewing Guide for *Baker v. Carr* 1962

1. What does the Tennessee Constitution require to take place after the census is taken every ten years?
2. In 1960, how long had it been since redrawing of the districts of the state had been completed in the state of Tennessee? What had happened to the population of the state in those years?
3. What was the result of the fact that the districts had not be redrawn in so many years?
4. What was the major reason given for the fact that it had been so long since redistricting had occurred?
5. Why did Charles Baker, the mayor of Nashville, and others file a lawsuit in a U.S. District Court against Tennessee Secretary of State, Joe Carr?
6. What was the result of the lawsuit and what was the major reason given for the District Court's decision?

**Stop and Think:** What dangers could there be for the courts to get involved in political questions such as redistricting?



**Stop and Think:** Do you agree or disagree with Justice John Marshall Harlan II when he wrote in his dissent, “I can find nothing in the equal protection clause or elsewhere in the Federal Constitution which expressly or implied supports the view that state legislatures must be so structured as to reflect with approximate equality the voice of every voter. Not only is that proposition refuted by history, but it strikes deep into the heart of our federal system.” Explain your opinion.

**Impact of the Baker Decision: (10:00 to the end)**

14. Why do some say there has been a negative effect as a result of the Supreme Court’s decision?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
15. Why did Chief Justice Earl Warren say that *Baker v Carr* was the most important case decided in his 16 years as Chief Justice?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
16. What were the results of two more Supreme Court cases in 1964 dealing with this issue?  
*Wesberry v. Sanders-*

*Reynolds v. Sims-*

**Conclusion—**Answer the following the question using information from the analysis of *Baker v. Carr* before turning in the viewing guide.

1. Two different philosophies about the role of the Supreme Court were raised in *Baker v. Carr*, judicial activism and judicial restraint, which continue to be a controversy today. Explain which side in *Baker v. Carr* supported judicial activism, and which side supported judicial restraint. With which philosophy do you now agree, and why do you feel this way?