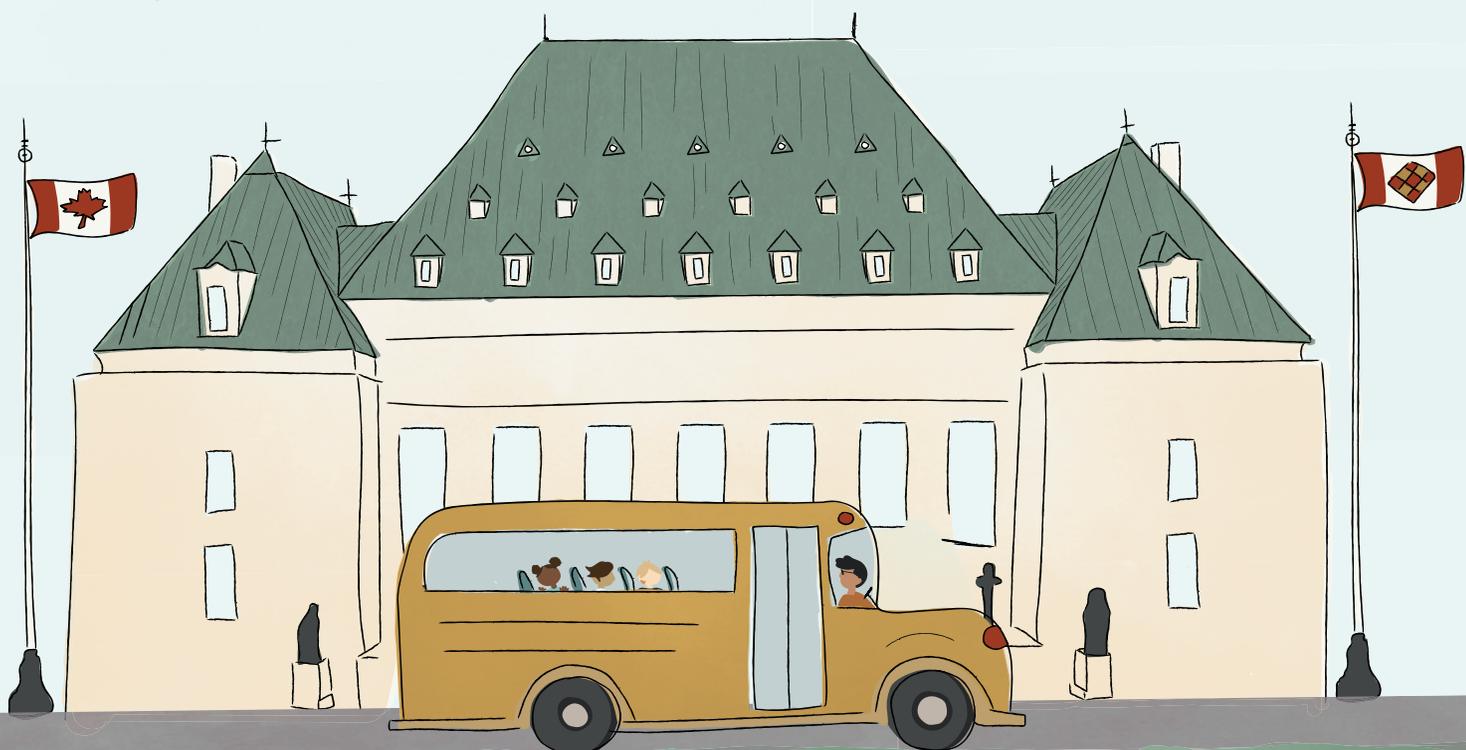




Owl about the Court



Supreme Court
of Canada

Owl about the Court

This book
belongs to:



JU5-29/2025E-PDF
ISBN 978-0-660-76018-6

© Supreme Court of Canada (2025)

All rights reserved. This publication may not be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in whole or in part, in any form or by any means, without the prior written permission of the Office of the Registrar of the Supreme Court of Canada.

Printed in Canada



Mr. Simon's Grade 6 class had been looking forward to their field trip to the Supreme Court of Canada for weeks. They'd been learning all about the important decisions made there and how they affect the lives of everyone in Canada.

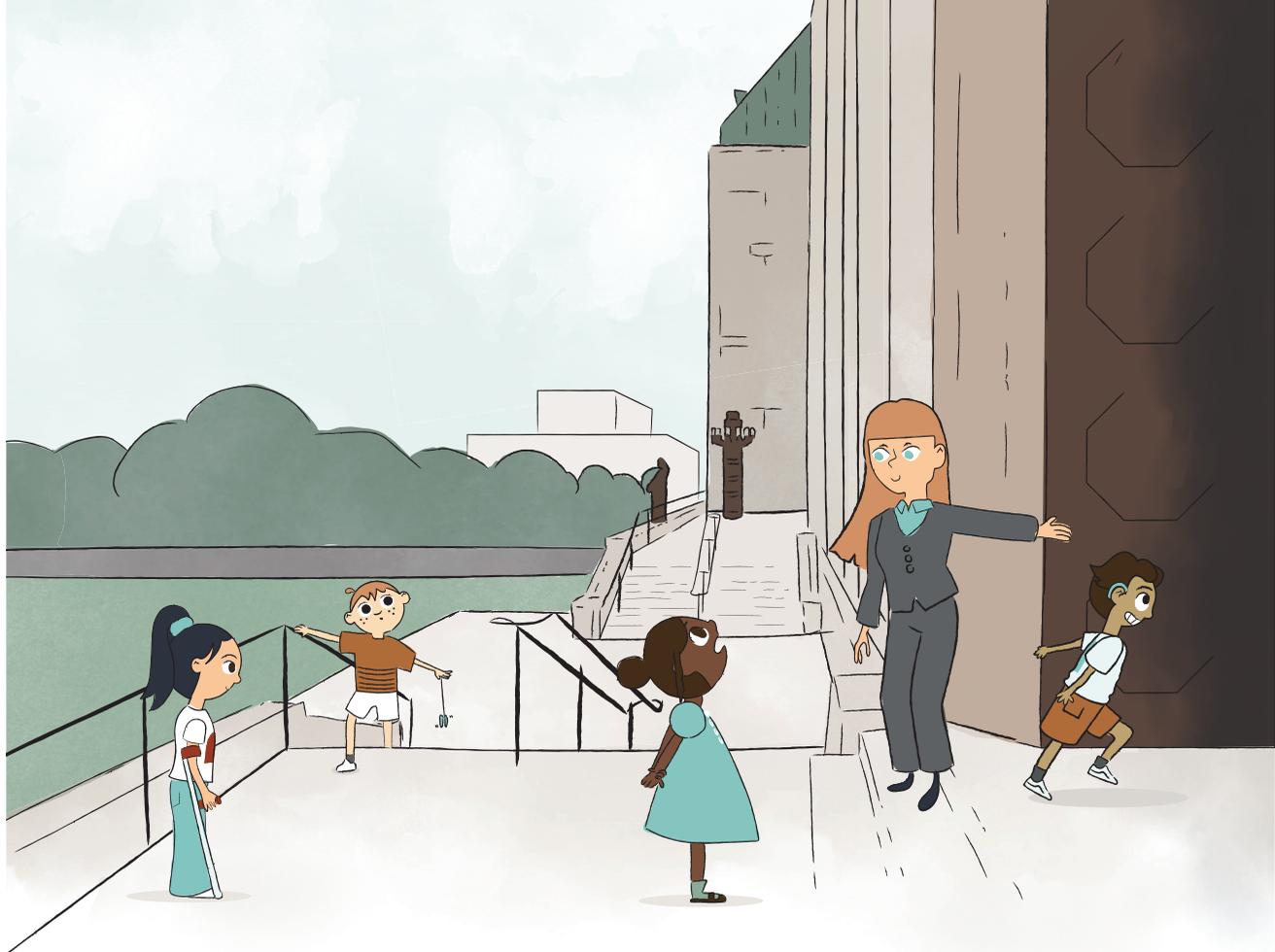
"Class, we'll be getting a tour of the Supreme Court of Canada. Please be on your best behaviour!" Mr. Simon shouted over the kids' excited chatting.

The students couldn't stay quiet for long when they saw who was waiting to greet them on the steps. Their tour guide was waving them over, standing next to an owl dressed in a fluffy red robe.

"Do you think that's one of the judges?" whispered Karim.

"I don't think birds can be judges," replied Alex.





“This is Amicus, the Court’s mascot, and I’m Julie, your tour guide for the day.”

Amicus the owl gave the kids a friendly wave of his wing.

“We’re so glad you’re here at the Supreme Court of Canada!” the tour guide announced to the class. “This is the highest court in the country—”

“It is pretty tall!” said Nadya, looking up at the building’s huge windows and impressive roof.



Julie laughed and said, “What I mean is that it’s at the very top of the Canadian justice system.”

Waving her arm at the enormous entrance hall, she added, “Decisions that affect all Canadians are made in this building.”

“Do you remember who makes those decisions?” Mr. Simon asked the class.

“Is it Amicus?” Toby chimed in.

Amicus shook his big head no and shrugged his wings.

“It must be the people in this picture!” exclaimed Alex, pointing to a large framed photo in the middle of the grand hall.

Julie brought them over to the photo. “That’s right! These are the judges of the Supreme Court. The person in the middle is the Chief Justice, the Right Honourable Richard Wagner.”

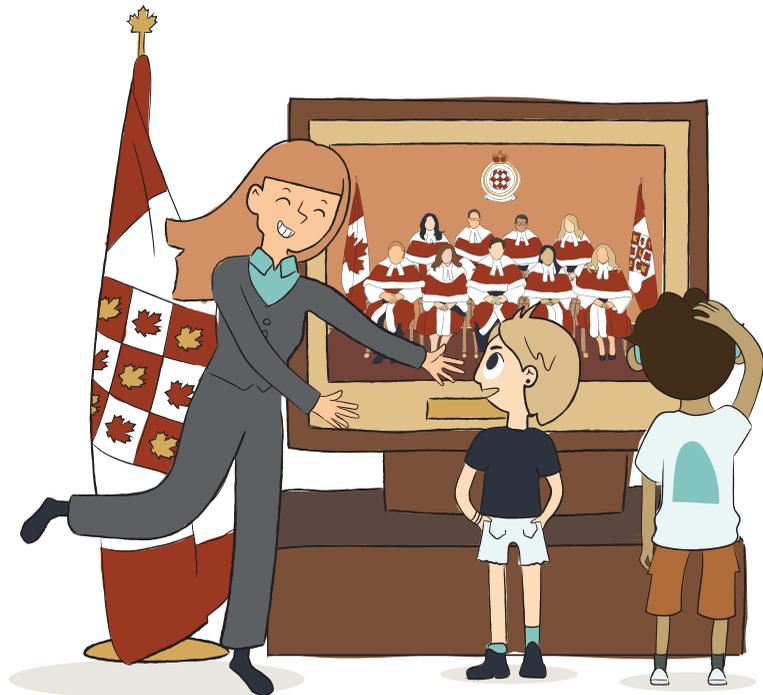
At that moment, the class heard a voice.

“Aren’t you going to introduce me to your friends, Amicus?”

The class was surprised to see the Chief Justice of Canada. Amicus raised his wing in a friendly wave.

“Hey, that’s a real-life judge!” exclaimed Karim.

The Chief Justice chuckled. “Welcome to the Court! We’ve just finished a hearing in the courtroom, why don’t I show you around?”





“Did anyone go to jail?” whispered Nadya, wide-eyed.

“No, hearings at the Supreme Court are a bit different than those you might’ve seen on television,” the Chief Justice said. “There are no witnesses or evidence presented. We debate big legal questions that impact all Canadians. Lawyers make their arguments and my fellow justices and I make a decision.”

“There are nine judges in total,” Julie added. “They’re chosen from across Canada.”

“That must be their chairs then!” said Alex, pointing to the front of the room.

“That’s right,” the Chief Justice answered. “When I hear a case, I sit in the middle chair.”

“We learned that anyone can come watch a Supreme Court hearing,” Mr. Simon reminded them.

“Yes, or you can watch hearings online!” Julie said. “Lawyers for each side sit at these tables and present their arguments from the podium. Journalists can also attend hearings, and they sit at the side.”





“In 2025, the Supreme Court is marking its 150th anniversary,” the Chief Justice explained as they made their way out of the courtroom. “When the Court was created in 1875, there were only six judges.”

“Can girls be Supreme Court judges, too?” Nadya asked.

“Of course! Anyone who’s been a superior court judge or a lawyer in Canada for at least ten years can be appointed as a Supreme Court judge.”

Julie added, “All the judges work in both French and English and they have experience in Canada’s two legal systems, common law and civil law.”



“Let me show you all the people who’ve been judges at the Supreme Court of Canada in the past 150 years,” said the Chief Justice.

“In this room, we have pictures of every Supreme Court judge from its beginning in 1875 to today,” Julie said.

“They’re all dressed like Amicus!” exclaimed Toby. “Why don’t you get to wear a red robe too?” he asked the Chief Justice.

“I do, but only on special occasions!” the Chief Justice answered.

“They’re a little warm and scratchy, so we wear simpler and lighter black robes when we hear cases.”

“I’ve had a great time showing you the Court!” the Chief Justice said with a smile. “It’s always fun to talk about our work with young Canadians, but I should head back to my office.”

“Thank you, Mr. Chief Justice,” Julie replied. “Your team must be wondering where you are!”

“You’re right, my fellow justices and I are working on writing our decision for a case.”

“Like working on a group project in class!” Karim interjected.

The Chief Justice nodded, “It’s very similar. We do a lot of research and talk together to come to a decision. If some of the judges disagree with the group’s decision, they write their own opinion, called dissenting reasons.”



“Maybe we’ll see some of you back here at the Court someday as lawyers or judges!” said Julie, concluding the tour.

“I think I’d be a good lawyer, I love arguing with my sister,” declared Nadya.

“I’m sure you’d do a great job representing people in court or making important decisions as a judge,” Julie told her.

“I just know our next class debate will be *supreme!*” Mr. Simon joked to a chorus of groans from the class.



