**LAW CLASS**

**The Seventh Amendment**

The Seventh Amendment states:

*“In Suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury, shall be otherwise re-examined in any Court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.”*

Vocabulary

suits: legal cases

exceed: more than

preserved: kept

**A Guide to the Seventh Amendment**

The Seventh Amendment of the United States Constitution is the section of the Bill of Rights that guarantees a jury trial for civil cases in the federal courts. However, this type of case is usually not heard anymore in the federal court system.

**History of the Seventh Amendment**

Before 1688, English judges were servants under the King of England. These judges were often biased towards the King, and because of this, their rulings were not always fair.

During the Act of Settlement 1701, English judges won their independence from the king, but judges in the American colonies were still biased towards the king.

King George III got rid of trials by juries in the Colonies, which made colonists very upset and fueled the fire that led to the American Revolution.

When the Framers wrote the Bill of Rights, they understood how important it was to have a fair court system, so they made sure that the right to have a trial by jury was a fundamental law of the country.

**Understanding the Seventh Amendment Line by Line**

Here are some good explanations to make the Seventh Amendment easier to understand:

“In suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved”

*When the Seventh Amendment was written in the 1700s, $20 was considered a lot of money. Today, any disputes that involve amounts less than $75000 will not be handled in a federal court.*

“And no fact tried by a jury, shall be otherwise reexamined in any court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law”

*It is against United States law to setting up your own court system. If a person goes to court, he will always go to a court recognized by the government. These courts are often city, country, state, or national courts*.

Questions to Consider:

1. What was the problem with judges in England before 1688?”
2. How did English judges act here in the colonies?
3. Why do YOU think the finding fathers wanted a guarantee of trials by jury?
4. Why was “$20 chosen as the amount requiring a jury?
5. Can you set up your own court?