Scholarly

Case brief worksheet

Use this page with an assigned opinion. Include a printed page number beside each answer. For practice, read Nix v. Hedden, 149 U.S. 304 (1893), before turning the page.

Case and citation

Parties, court, year and first reporter page.

Material facts

Who wanted what, and which fact made the difference?

Procedural history

Who won below? Who asked this court to review the result?

Issue

Frame the question around the legal text and these facts.

Holding and disposition

Answer the issue. Then state what happened to the judgment below.

Reasoning and limit

Identify one step in the reasoning and one question the court left open.

Scholarly

Nix v. Hedden

Compare the scope of your holding with this model. All references below use printed pages in volume 149 of the United States Reports.

Material facts / p. 305

Importers sought a refund of a duty paid under protest on tomatoes. The 1883 tariff imposed a 10% duty on qualifying vegetables and exempted qualifying fruits.

Procedural history / p. 306

The trial court directed a verdict for the customs collector. The importers sought Supreme Court review.

Issue / pp. 305–306

Were the imported tomatoes vegetables subject to the duty, or fruits within the exemption, under this particular tariff?

Holding and disposition / pp. 306–307

The tomatoes fell under the vegetable provision. The judgment for the collector was affirmed.

Reasoning / pp. 306–307

The record showed no special trade meaning. The Court used ordinary meaning, drawing on how tomatoes were served while recognizing their botanical classification.

Check the boundary / pp. 304 and 307

The reversal printed above the Nix caption on p. 304 ends a different case. Read the last line on p. 307 to find the result in Nix.

Primary source: Library of Congress, U.S. Reports, 149 U.S. 304 (click to open)