How to analyze a case.

1. **Title**
   The title of the case is usually found at top of the opinion. It usually consists of the name of the first (usually listed in alphabetical order) plaintiff and the first defendant.

2. **Plaintiff**
   This is the party that started the lawsuit. There may be one or more plaintiffs.

3. **Defendant**
   This is the party that the plaintiff is suing. There may be one or more defendants.

4. **Court**
   This is the name of the court that wrote the opinion. The complete name of the court should be included. Example: "United State Court of Appeals, Eleventh Circuit". All of this information is needed to properly identify the court. "United States" indicates that this is a federal court (not a state court). "Court of Appeals" means that this is an appellate court (not a trial court). "Eleventh Circuit" identifies the geographic region from which the court has jurisdiction to hear cases. North Carolina is in the Fourth Circuit, which also includes Maryland, South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia.

5. **Statement of the Facts**
   This should be about a paragraph long and should succinctly summarize the facts of the case that bear on the issue and the holding in the case.

6. **Issue**
   This is the issue that will be decided in the opinion. It is not always the issue to be decided in the case. There may be more than one issue.

7. **Procedural posture**
   This describes how the court came to the issue. For example, a case could be an appeal by the losing party in a jury trial, or the case could be the published opinion of the trial court. Cases must be read carefully to determine how the case came to the court.

8. **Disposition**
   This describes what the court did with the case. For example, did the court send the case back to a trial court for a new trial, or did it uphold the trial court's decision to dismiss the case.

9. **Holding**
   This is the mirror image of the issue. It answers the question that was raised in the issue. It is this part of the opinion that makes new law.

Each case analysis should be double-spaced (handwritten is acceptable) and submitted on or before the date in the schedule. Campus students should submit their case analyses in class. Online students should submit case analyses via e-mail, by the due date. Each of the above 9 headings should be carefully delineated. In general case analyses will require only the front side of a single sheet of paper; no extra points are awarded for length! Case analyses should be prepared before class and corrected in class as the case is discussed. Online students may discuss case analyses through the forum.