

STATISTICAL TABLES

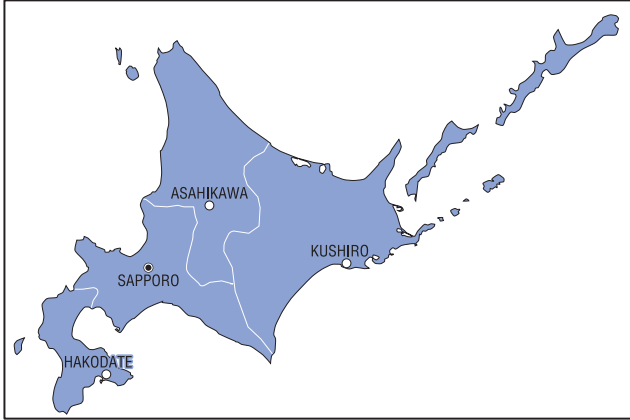
Civil Cases (include administrative cases) and Criminal Cases Before the Supreme Court, High Courts, District Courts, and Summary Courts of Japan

Type of Court	Year	Civil Cases			Criminal Cases		
		Commenced	Terminated	Pending	Commenced	Terminated	Pending
Supreme Court	2019	4,634	4,595	1,237	2,061	2,092	455
	2020	4,068	4,262	1,043	1,849	1,882	422
	2021	4,457	4,257	1,243	1,816	1,852	386
	2022	5,019	4,951	1,311	1,670	1,685	372
	2023	5,419	5,132	1,598	1,606	1,614	364
High Courts	2019	19,628	19,419	7,388	5,814	5,828	1,400
	2020	16,718	16,565	7,541	5,398	5,332	1,466
	2021	20,156	18,943	8,754	5,205	5,331	1,340
	2022	21,141	20,998	8,897	4,759	4,820	1,279
	2023	21,396	21,639	8,654	4,663	4,639	1,303
District Courts	2019	153,191	149,889	109,142	67,554	67,221	21,987
	2020	149,702	138,826	120,018	66,939	65,561	23,365
	2021	150,060	158,171	111,907	65,151	66,020	22,496
	2022	146,150	151,537	106,520	59,503	59,838	22,161
	2023	154,739	156,853	104,406	64,987	62,032	25,116
Summary Courts	2019	356,627	350,398	81,018	204,894	205,308	5,453
	2020	320,953	306,694	95,277	176,302	176,340	5,415
	2021	333,945	339,697	89,525	169,509	170,428	4,496
	2022	337,049	338,802	87,772	159,295	159,353	4,438
	2023	387,725	375,311	100,186	163,536	163,647	4,327

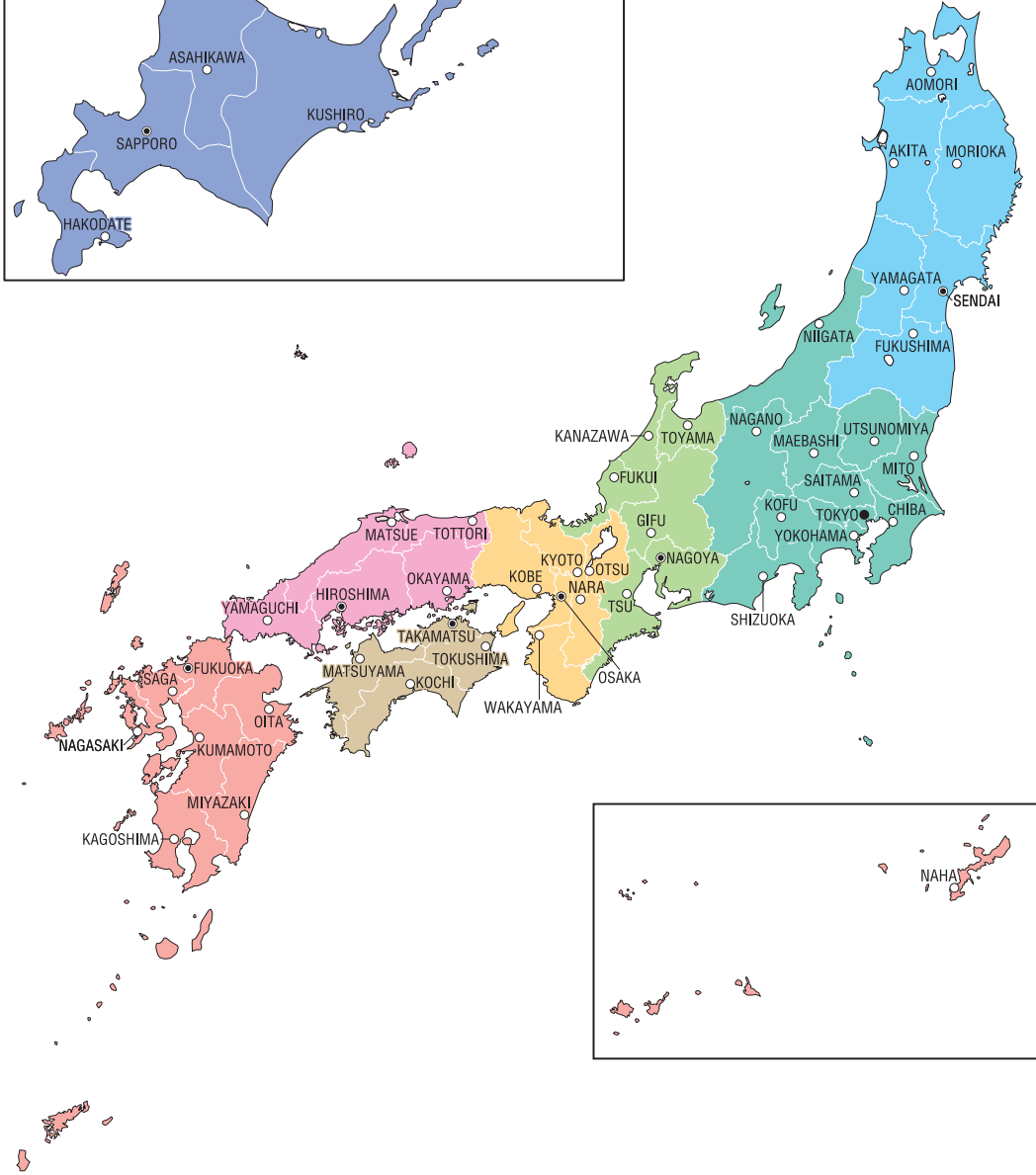
Cases Before the Family Courts							
Type of Court	Year	Domestic Relations Cases			Juvenile Cases		
		Commenced	Terminated	Pending	Commenced	Terminated	Pending
Family Courts	2019	1,091,804	1,082,431	145,885	57,718	58,272	9,112
	2020	1,105,379	1,092,000	159,264	52,765	53,905	7,972
	2021	1,150,372	1,155,625	154,011	46,978	47,637	7,313
	2022	1,147,681	1,146,499	155,193	45,740	44,966	8,087
	2023	1,182,508	1,179,313	158,388	53,361	51,902	9,546

Note:The statistics for civil and domestic relations cases show the number of cases; those for criminal cases show the number of persons accused and those for juvenile cases show the number of juveniles.

Location of Courts in Japan



- Supreme Court, High Court, District Court, Family Court
 - High Court, District Court, Family Court
 - District Court, Family Court
- IP High Court is located in Tokyo.
There are many branch offices and summary courts all over the country.



(As of 2024)

5. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

- Q: What is the procedure through which a lower court judge is appointed?
- A: The judges of the lower courts are appointed by the Cabinet from the list of candidates nominated by the Supreme Court. In the nomination process, the Supreme Court must consult the Advisory Committee for the Nomination of Lower-Court Judges, in principle, about whether the candidates should be nominated or not. After that, they will be assigned to positions in lower courts all over the country.

- Q: How many judges are there all over the country?
- A: When all the judges of various types of courts are combined, there are about 3,400 judges nationwide (as of December 2023).



- Q: How long does a trial take?
- A: The time taken for a trial varies depending on the case. In general, the average period from the commencement of a civil case to its conclusion is 9.8 months in district courts and 3.1 months in summary courts. In a criminal case, the average period is 3.9 months in district courts, and 2.5 months in summary courts (according to the judicial statistics of 2023).



<https://www.courts.go.jp/english/index.html>



COURTS *in* JAPAN

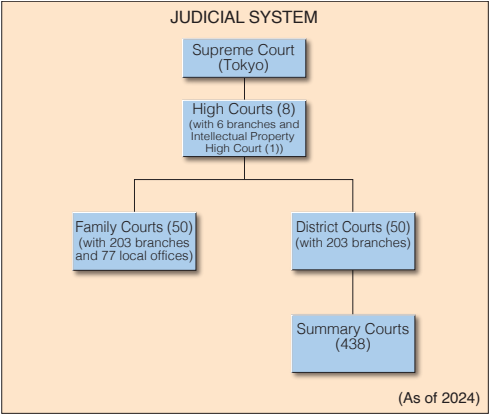
Supreme Court of Japan



1. Constitution of Japan

The Constitution of Japan was promulgated on November 3, 1946, and came into effect on May 3, 1947. In the Constitution of Japan, a system of separation of powers into three branches was established based on the principles of respect for fundamental human rights and the sovereignty of the people. The Court became the body of judicial power completely independent of the Diet and the Cabinet. Furthermore, the Court was given the power of judicial review to judge whether laws, etc. violate the Constitution.

2. Outline of the Court System of Japan



(1) Supreme Court
The Supreme Court is the highest court in the country. It has jurisdiction to decide on final appeals and on appeals against rulings brought under procedural laws. The Supreme Court is vested with the power to judge the constitutionality when making a judgment on a specific dispute as the court of appellate instance, although it is not authorized to judge the constitutionality of a particular law separately from a specific, individual case.
The Supreme Court is composed of a Chief Justice and fourteen other Justices. They are members of the Grand Bench, and every five of them constitute a Petty Bench, respectively. Most appeal cases are adjudicated by one of three Petty Benches.

(2) High Courts
High courts are located in eight major cities in the country. Branches—six in all—are attached to some of the high courts. In addition, in April 2005, the Intellectual Property High Court was established as a special branch of the Tokyo High Court.
In general, the high courts have jurisdiction over appeals against judgments by the district and family courts and judgments on criminal cases by summary courts. They also hear appeals against lower-court rulings.
In principle, cases in a high court are handled by a three-judge panel.



(3) District Courts
District courts are located in 50 cities—one in every prefecture except for Hokkaido, which is divided into four districts—and there are 203 branches throughout the country.
District courts are normally the courts of first instance for civil, administrative and criminal cases, except for litigations specifically vested in other courts exclusive jurisdiction. District courts also have jurisdiction over appeals against summary court judgments, rulings and orders in civil cases.
While usually a single judge presides over the trial in a district court, there are also cases that need to be handled by a panel of three judges. All district courts and some of their branches hold criminal trials with the participation of *Saiban-in* (lay judges) in certain serious cases. Under this system, a panel consisting of six *Saiban-in* and three professional judges handle such cases.

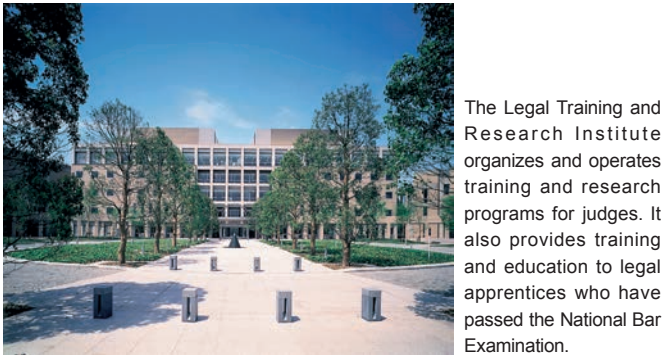
(4) Family Courts
Family courts are located at the same places as the district courts and their branches. In addition, there are 77 local offices at the same locations as summary courts. They have exclusive jurisdiction over cases involving domestic relations and juvenile delinquency.
Domestic relations cases are cases brought to court to solve disputes concerning relationships between husband and wife, parents and children, and relatives as well as disputes over inheritance. There are two types of domestic relations cases, adjudication and conciliation, both of which are handled by proceedings closed to the public. Family courts also have jurisdiction over personal status litigation, which is open to the public. Pursuant to the Act for Implementation of the Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction, which entered into force on April 1, 2014, the Tokyo Family Court and Osaka Family Court handle cases seeking the return of a child under the Act.

Family courts also deal with juvenile cases. They have jurisdiction over cases involving juveniles aged 14 to 19 who have committed a crime, juveniles aged 14 to 17 who are likely to commit a crime, and juveniles under 14 years old who have violated or are likely to violate penal provisions. The measures taken with regard to such juveniles are not punitive, but rather protective and educational in nature.
Cases brought before the family court are handled by a single judge or a panel of three judges fully utilizing reports prepared by family court investigating officers, as well as the diagnosis of medical technical officials of courts (doctors) versed in psychiatry.

(5) Summary Courts
There are 438 summary courts in the country, and these are the most accessible to the people.
Summary courts have jurisdiction over civil cases in which the disputed sum does not exceed 1,400,000 yen, and over crimes punishable by fines or lighter punishment and certain crimes specified by law such as theft and embezzlement. Summary courts are not vested with the power to impose a term of imprisonment without work or heavier in principle.
All cases in summary court are handled by a single judge.

3. Judges and Court Officials

(1) Judges
In order to be appointed as a judge, it is first necessary to pass the National Bar Examination and train as a legal apprentice for a certain period of time. Only after completing this training and passing the final qualifying examination, a legal apprentice will be eligible to become a judge, public prosecutor, or lawyer. A judge will be appointed from among those qualified persons. A judge of the summary court may be appointed from among those persons who have the necessary academic knowledge. Ten out of the 15 Supreme Court Justices must be legal professionals. Those who are knowledgeable about and familiar with the law can also be appointed even if they are not legal professionals.



The Legal Training and Research Institute organizes and operates training and research programs for judges. It also provides training and education to legal apprentices who have passed the National Bar Examination.

(2) Courts Officials other than Judges
As of 2024, the total number of court officials other than judges is about 22,000. Among these, about 9,900 are Court Clerks, about 1,600 are Family Court Investigating Officers, about 200 are Court Stenographers, and about 9,400 are Court Secretaries.

(i) Judicial Research Officials
The judicial research official's duty is to conduct research regarding procedure and decisions in specific cases as ordered by the Supreme Court Justices or lower court judges. They are recruited from among jurists as well as specialists in the field of intellectual property and other specialized fields.

(ii) Court Clerks
Court Clerks have duties such as attending court proceedings, preparing trial records and testimony records, investigating laws and precedents, and meeting with lawyers, public prosecutors, and parties to ensure smooth court proceedings.

(iii) Family Court Investigating Officers
Family Court Investigating Officers contribute to reaching appropriate decisions on cases handled by the family court by investigating facts, coordinating interpersonal relationships and submitting a report to a judge, all of which are based on behavioral sciences.

(iv) Court Stenographers
Court Stenographers are in charge of making stenographic records of court proceedings.

(v) Court Secretaries
Court Secretaries assist in work related to handling cases. They are also in charge of the judicial administrative work such as personal relations, accounting, and others.

In addition to those mentioned above, there are court execution officers, technical advisors, conciliation commissioners, judicial commissioners, counselors and labor tribunal commissioners, etc.

4. Citizen Participation in the Judicial Process

Citizen participation in the judiciary has been a key concept of the judicial reforms in the 21st century. Although there had been a system before for the participation of citizens in the judiciary such as conciliation commissioners, the lay judge system was put into operation on May 21, 2009. As a result of this, in combination with the introduction of the technical advisors' system and expansion of other systems, opportunities for the people to have their opinions reflected in the judiciary have increased.

Saiban-in (Lay Judges)

***Saiban-in* Courtroom** 1 Judges 2 *Saiban-in* 3 Court Clerk
4 Public Prosecutor(s) 5 Defense Counsel
6 The Accused 7 Court Stenographer 8 Court Secretary

Persons eligible to be *Saiban-in* are Japanese nationals aged 18 and over who are selected at random from among those registered in the list of voters for the members of the House of Representatives. *Saiban-in* participate in criminal trials in the district court, trying serious cases such as those involving offenses punishable with the death penalty or life imprisonment with or without work, or involving offenses that have caused a victim to die by intentional criminal acts.
Six *Saiban-in* are selected to form a panel together with three professional judges. The nine panel members decide whether the accused is guilty or not, as well as the sentence, by a majority vote. The majority opinion of the *Saiban-in* alone cannot form the basis for a conviction, but must be supported by at least one professional judge.