

First Terms

In honor of Justice Kagan's first Term on the Court, we have taken a look at the first Term of other Justices in recent history. Several Justices joined the Court sometime after the first Monday in October, so we chose November 1 as the cutoff date for participation in a full Term. Those Justices who sat for a partial Term before their first full Term are noted with an asterisk. Justices Souter and Thomas joined the Court in October of the Terms listed, and therefore sat for a full Term for the purposes of this chart.

Opinions Authored in a Justice's First Full Term on the Court

	Term	Majority Opinions	Concurring Opinions	Dissenting Opinions	Total	Total Opinions as a Percentage of Cases Decided	Conc. and Dis. Authored as a Percentage of Cases Decided	Second Term
Kagan	2010	7	-	2	9	24%	5%	-
Sotomayor	2009	8	2	5	15	19%	9%	19 (+4)
Alito*	2006	7	4	4	15	21%	11%	19 (+4)
Roberts	2005	8	2	3	13	17%	6%	10 (-3)
Breyer	1994	8	2	6	16	20%	10%	19 (+3)
Ginsburg	1993	9	10	8	27	31%	21%	21 (-6)
Thomas	1991	9	6	7	22	26%	15%	23 (+1)
Souter	1990	8	2	2	12	11%	4%	21 (+9)
Kennedy*	1988	15	10	4	29	21%	10%	35 (+6)
Scalia	1986	12	17	13	42	28%	20%	42 (-0)
O'Connor	1981	13	12	10	35	21%	13%	34 (-1)
Stevens*	1976	13	17	27	57	41%	32%	45 (-12)
Rehnquist*	1973	17	4	15	36	23%	12%	33 (-3)
Powell*	1973	16	12	7	35	23%	13%	31 (-4)
Blackmun	1970	9	8	9	26	22%	14%	34 (+8)
Average						23%	13%	(+0)

Source: With the exception of data for Justice Kagan, the information on this page comes from the Harvard Law Review's annual Supreme Court issue. For more information on how the data is collected, see *The Supreme Court, 2004 Term - The Statistics*, 119 HARV. L. REV. 415, 415-19 (2005).

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(continued)

Opinions Authored in a Justice's First Term Compared to the Number of Opinions Authored by Other Justices

	Term	Opinions Authored	Average of the Other Justices
Kagan	2010	9	13 (+4)
Sotomayor	2009	15	23 (+8)
Alito*	2006	15	19 (+4)
Roberts	2005	13	19 (+6)
Breyer	1994	16	23 (+7)
Ginsburg	1993	27	26 (-1)
Thomas	1991	22	31 (+9)
Souter	1990	12	30 (+18)
Kennedy*	1988	29	39 (+10)
Scalia	1986	42	42 (-0)
O'Connor	1981	35	42 (+7)
Stevens*	1976	57	38 (-19)
Rehnquist*	1973	36	38 (+2)
Powell*	1973	35	38 (+3)
Blackmun	1970	26	35 (+9)
Average			(+4)

Frequency in the Majority in a Justice's First Full Term on the Court

	Term	Cases Decided	Dissenting Votes	Frequency in the Majority
Kagan	2010	38	5	87%
Sotomayor	2009	81	17	79%
Alito*	2006	73	9	88%
Roberts	2005	78	6	92%
Breyer	1994	82	12	85%
Ginsburg	1993	87	12	86%
Thomas*	1991	85	23	73%
Souter*	1990	108	8	93%
Kennedy*	1989	138	18	87%
Scalia	1986	148	29	80%
O'Connor	1981	163	27	83%
Stevens*	1976	139	29	79%
Rehnquist*	1973	155	26	83%
Powell*	1973	151	13	91%
Blackmun	1970	119	18	85%
Average				85%

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