

Miranda v. Arizona / Background •

As you read the background summary of the case below, look for the **important vocabulary terms**. You can find definitions for these terms on the separate vocabulary handout.

Ernesto Miranda was a poor man who lived in Arizona. In 1963, a woman **accused** Miranda of committing a violent crime against her. The police arrested Miranda and **interrogated** him about the crime for two hours.

In the United States, people who are accused of crimes have certain rights granted by the Constitution. The Fifth Amendment to the Constitution says that they have the right to be silent and not to **incriminate** themselves. The Sixth Amendment to the Constitution says that they have the right to have a lawyer to help defend themselves.

The police did not tell Miranda that he had these rights when they arrested him. After the police were finished asking Miranda questions, he signed a **confession**. The police used his confession in the trial, and Miranda was found guilty of the crime. The judge decided he should serve 20–30 years in prison for each crime.

Miranda **appealed** his case to the highest court in Arizona, called the Arizona Supreme Court. His attorney argued that his confession should not have been used as evidence in his trial because Miranda was not informed of his rights. He also had no attorney present to help him during his **interrogation**. The government argued that since Miranda was found guilty of crimes before, he should have known his rights. The Arizona Supreme Court denied his appeal and upheld Miranda's conviction.

The Supreme Court of the United States agreed to hear Miranda's case. The decision in *Miranda v. Arizona* was handed down in 1966.

Questions to Consider

1. What rights of the accused does the Fifth Amendment protect?

2. What rights of the accused does the Sixth Amendment protect?

