T.L.O. was a high school student. School officials searched her purse suspecting she had cigarettes. The officials discovered cigarettes, a small amount of marijuana, and a list containing the names of students who owed T.L.O. money. T.L.O. was charged with possession of marijuana. Before trial, T.L.O. moved to suppress evidence discovered in the search, but the Court denied her motion. The Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court of New Jersey, Middlesex County found her guilty and sentenced her to probation for one year. On appeal, the Superior Court of New Jersey, Appellate Division affirmed the denial of the motion to suppress evidence. The New Jersey Supreme Court reversed, holding that the exclusionary rule of the Fourth Amendment applies to searches and seizures conducted by school officials in public schools.

**Does the exclusionary rule apply to searches conducted by school officials in public schools?**

6–3 DECISION FOR NEW JERSEY  MAJORITY OPINION BY BYRON R. WHITE

The search resulting in the discovery of the evidence of marijuana dealing by the student was reasonable. After the original oral argument in March of 1984, the Supreme Court restored the case to the calendar for re-argument. In addition to the previously argued question, the Court requested that the parties brief and argue the additional question of whether the assistant principal violated the Fourth Amendment in opening T.L.O's purse. The Court heard re-argument on October 02, 1984. The Court held that while the Fourth Amendment's prohibition on unreasonable searches and seizures applies to public school officials, they may conduct reasonable warrantless searches of students under their authority notwithstanding the probable cause standard that would normally apply to searches under the Fourth Amendment. The Court held that the search of T.L.O.'s purse was reasonable under the circumstances.

**4th Amendment**: The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

1. What amendment does this case deal with?
2. What is a special factor in the decision of this case?
3. What surprised you the most about this case?
4. Do you agree with Justice Byron White or would you be one of the dissenting opinions? Why?
5. What is another element to the case that should be considered?
6. If you were VP Choplick, what would you have done?