involve the construction or the constitutionality of legislative enactments or other issues of general importance.

Membership of the Supreme Court, as specified by the establishing act, consisted of a Chief Justice and five Associate Justices. Congress made frequent changes in the number of Associate Justices until in 1869 it fixed the number at eight.

The date set for the Court's convening has also changed frequently. The act that established the Court provided that two annual sessions be held, one to begin the first Monday in February and the other the first Monday in August. In 1801 an act provided that the Court should meet on the first Monday in June and December of each year. In the following year this legislation was repealed and the times for convening were restored as set forth in the act of 1789. Later in 1802 an act abolished the August term except for the receipt of motions and other routine business. As a result of these changes there was no session of the Court from December 1801 to February 1803. By an act effective in 1827 the annual term was set to begin on the second Monday in January; and effective in 1845, the day was changed to the first Monday in December. Again in 1873 the day was changed to the second Monday in October, and in 1916 to the first Monday in October, which remains as the day for convening the annual term. The Supreme Court may also hold special terms when necessary for the despatch of its business.

The volumes reproduced in this microcopy are arranged chronologically and within each volume the cases are entered chronologically according to the dates they were docketed. Each volume contains a register of the proceedings in each case, which may also be referred to as a docket of the case. The entries consist of a dated notation of the filing of each paper and of each action of the Court. Typical entries show the receiving and filing of the record of the case brought from the lower court, continuation of the case from one term to another, argument of the case, judgment, and issuance of a mandate to the lower court, or stipulation to dismiss the case and the dismissal. Beginning with the docket for the October Term, 1905, appellate cases are indexed at the front of each volume by names of parties to each case.

Most of the cases in the engrossed dockets that are reproduced on Rolls 1-11 of this microcopy are appellate cases, numbered continuously from 1 to 19782, that were docketed from 1792 to 1905. A few unnumbered original-jurisdiction cases, docketed from 1791 to 1801, are in volume A on Roll 1, and the last part of Roll 11 shows the sections from the rough dockets that contain entries for original cases docketed from 1829 to 1905. These original cases were not copied into the engrossed dockets as were the appellate cases.