

Grades: 9-12

A More or Less Perfect Union, A Personal Exploration by Judge Douglas Ginsburg, “A Constitution at Risk”

A More or Less Perfect Union, A Personal Exploration by Judge Douglas Ginsburg, explores the foundational document that governs those who govern us – the American Constitution. Hosted by Judge Douglas H. Ginsburg, a constitutional expert with 30 years of experience on the Federal Court of Appeals in Washington, DC, this thought-provoking, three-part, three-hour series looks at past, present and future struggles for liberty through the lens of the U.S. Constitution. Firsthand perspectives, including those of direct descendants of slaves and of those involved in pivotal civil rights cases, historians, legal scholars, small business owners, judges, and ordinary American citizens, provide captivating context to the shaping of American governance. Discover how the Constitution is under assault today and how all three branches of government - and we the people - are contributing to the problem. See how Americans have fought for more than two centuries to establish, expand and preserve liberty.

After watching this episode, choose from the following questions and/or tasks to extend your learning

Question Box 1

- Who is Judge Douglas Ginsburg? What qualifies him to speak on this topic?
- How did the framers put freedom into writing? What nouns, verbs, and adjectives did they use to pen these words?
- According to Ginsburg, why is the Constitution under assault today?
- How did freedom spread over more than two centuries to all of “we the people”?
- According to Ginsburg how do we risk freedom by ignoring the words of the framers?
- How do past intentions come into conflict with present realities?
- How did having the voices of direct descendants of slaves and of those involved in pivotal civil rights cases, historians, legal scholars, small business owners, judges, and ordinary American citizens, provide captivating context to the shaping of American governance?

Question Box 2

- What did you enjoy about this program?
- If someone else were looking at this program, what might they learn?
- How does the Bill of Rights affect our everyday lives as well as the momentous issues surrounding the freedom of speech, religion, press, and assembly, the Second Amendment, eminent domain, the separation of powers, and civil rights?
- Do the “stay at home” orders because of COVID-19 violate our constitutional freedoms? Why or why not?

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Box 3 (Tasks)

- Validate, if true, the statement that “over half of the people in the United States are subject to “stay at home” orders. Use mathematics to justify your reasoning.
- Validate, if true, the statement, “today’s federal government is made up of either two branches or one, depending on how you do the math”. What math is the speaker referencing? How would you ‘do the math’? Use mathematics to justify your reasoning.

Box 4 (Enrichment)

- Dig deeper into the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Research how the U.S. Supreme Court interprets the constitution and how these interpretations evolve over time.

Box 5 (Extend/Real-Life)

- Imagine you were starting a business.
- What would you name your business?
- What product/service would you offer?
- Now check out the legal requirements for new businesses at: <https://mashable.com/2012/02/08/legal-steps-start-business/>
- With your business idea in mind, review each of the 8 steps listed and research where and how you could meet those requirements if they apply to you. For example, if you will hire employees, what does the law require you to pay them?
- Do all of the requirements pertain to your business idea? If not, why not?
- Do you know anyone who owns their own business? Ask them which of the 8 legal requirements pertained to them and how they met those requirements.