

Grades: 9-12

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

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. Judge Ginsburg skillfully weaves the story of how the Framers put freedom in writing in the summer of 1787; how freedom spread over more than two centuries to all of “we the people;” and how we may risk freedom today by ignoring the words of the Framers. Real-life stories from descendants and the director at Whitney Plantation, the Dred Scott Foundation, and The Plessy and Ferguson Foundation bring meaningful illustrations to the Constitution as past intentions come into conflict with present realities; business owners and American citizens relate stories both of protection and of overreach by the government – as with the USDA regulating the care of Hemingway’s cats! The Bill of Rights is explored with stories showing how our 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.

Delve into the Bill of Rights, which protects free speech, religious freedom and the rights of persons accused of a crime, and discover the Supreme Court decisions that set back racial justice for nearly a century after the Civil War.

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

Question Box 1

- What is the author trying to say through this episode? What from the text makes you believe this?
- Why does Judge Ginsberg believe that American’s take their liberty for granted?
- What comes to mind when you think of the Bill of Rights?
- What was missing from the Constitution when it was first seen by Thomas Jefferson?
- Who were some of the key figures featured in this episode? Why were they chosen?
- How might we risk freedom today?

Question Box 2

- What in the program made you curious? Explain.
- What did you learn from the program?
- What resources will you need to learn more about this topic?
- What is your opinion about the program? What evidence do you have to support your opinion?

Continued on the next page...

- What do you believe the director could have done differently to help you learn this topic easier?
- Do you think the Constitution has stood the test of time? Why or Why not?
- As you look at the Bill of Rights, is there anything that stands out to you? Why?

Box 3 (Tasks)

- If only white men had the right to vote in 1788 and the 15th Amendment allowed African Americans to vote. How did that change the number of voters? What impact did that have in politics? Women were allowed to vote in 1924. How did that change the numbers of those allowed to vote? What impact did that have on politics? Use mathematics to justify your reasoning.
- Create a PowerPoint (or other visual product) listing the Bill of Rights. *(ELD) Use an image to illustrate each amendment.* <https://billofrightsinstitute.org/founding-documents/bill-of-rights/>

Box 4 (Enrichment)

- Design a Bill of Rights for today's Teenagers. Write the Rights that can stand the test of time for future teenagers.
- Explore some of the cases discussed in this episode. What more did you learn? Share your findings with someone else.

Box 5 (Extend/Real-Life)

- The Supreme Court judges have made many decisions throughout the history of our country. Although the Constitution does not require a Justice to be a lawyer or a law school graduate, all Justices have been trained in the law.
- Explore possible law careers at: <https://legalcareerpath.com/legal-careers/>
 - Which of these areas would interest you the most? Why?
 - Choose one of the areas and determine:
 - What organizations typically hire these experts?
 - What percentage of growth is expected for this career area?
 - What level of education is required?
 - What is the average salary for these positions?
 - Does the salary vary by region of the country?
 - What skills/requirements are necessary for this career?
 - What classes/steps could you take in the next few years to develop or improve those skills?