

CONSTITUTION 101

Module 1: Constitutional Conversations and Civil Dialogue

1.5 Activity Guide

CONSTITUTIONAL INTERPRETATION METHOD IDENTIFICATION

In this activity, you will continue exploring the seven methods of constitutional interpretation.

Review the list of quotes from Supreme Court cases. Identify the constitutional methodology that connects to each quote.

Quote	Method
<p>1. “[I]t is clear that the Framers and ratifiers of the Fourteenth Amendment counted the right to keep and bear arms among those fundamental rights necessary to our system of ordered liberty.”</p> <p><i>McDonald v. City of Chicago</i> (2010) – Justice Samuel Alito (Opinion of the Court)</p>	
<p>2. “The legal doctrine of <i>stare decisis</i> requires us, absent special circumstances, to treat like cases alike. The Louisiana law imposes a burden on access to abortion just as severe as that imposed by the Texas law, for the same reasons. Therefore Louisiana’s law cannot stand under our precedents.”</p> <p><i>June Medical Services LLC v. Russo</i> (2016) – Chief Justice John Roberts (Concurrence)</p>	
<p>3. “The nature of injustice is that we may not always see it in our own times. The generations that wrote and ratified the Bill of Rights and the Fourteenth Amendment did not presume to know the extent of freedom in all of its dimensions, and so they entrusted to future generations a charter protecting the right of all persons to enjoy liberty as we learn its meaning. When new insight reveals discord between the Constitution’s central protections and a received legal stricture, a claim to liberty must be addressed.”</p> <p><i>Obergefell v. Hodges</i> (2015) – Justice Anthony Kennedy (Opinion of the Court)</p>	

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<p>4. “When the express terms of a statute give us one answer and extratextual considerations suggest another, it’s no contest. Only the written word is the law, and all persons are entitled to its benefit.”</p> <p><i>Bostock v. Clayton County</i> (2020) – Justice Neil Gorsuch (Opinion of the Court)</p>	
<p>5. “The Court’s inquiry, then, must be to determine whether the prayer practice in the town of Greece fits within the tradition long followed in Congress and the state legislatures.”</p> <p><i>Town of Greece v. Galloway</i> (2014) – Justice Anthony Kennedy (Opinion of the Court)</p>	
<p>6. “[The Constitution’s] nature, therefore, requires, that only its great outlines should be marked, its important objects designated, and the minor ingredients which compose those objects be deduced from the nature of the objects themselves. That this idea was entertained by the framers of the American constitution, is not only to be inferred from the nature of the instrument, but from the language.”</p> <p><i>McCulloch v. Maryland</i> (1819) – Chief Justice John Marshall (Opinion of the Court)</p>	
<p>7. “Far more important are the unfortunate consequences that today’s decision is likely to spawn. Not least of these, as I have said, is the fact that the decision threatens to throw into doubt the constitutionality of gun laws throughout the United States. I can find no sound legal basis for launching the courts on so formidable and potentially dangerous a mission. In my view, there simply is no untouchable constitutional right guaranteed by the Second Amendment to keep loaded handguns in the house in crime-ridden urban areas.”</p> <p><i>District of Columbia v. Heller</i> (2008) – Justice Stephen Breyer (Dissenting Opinion)</p>	