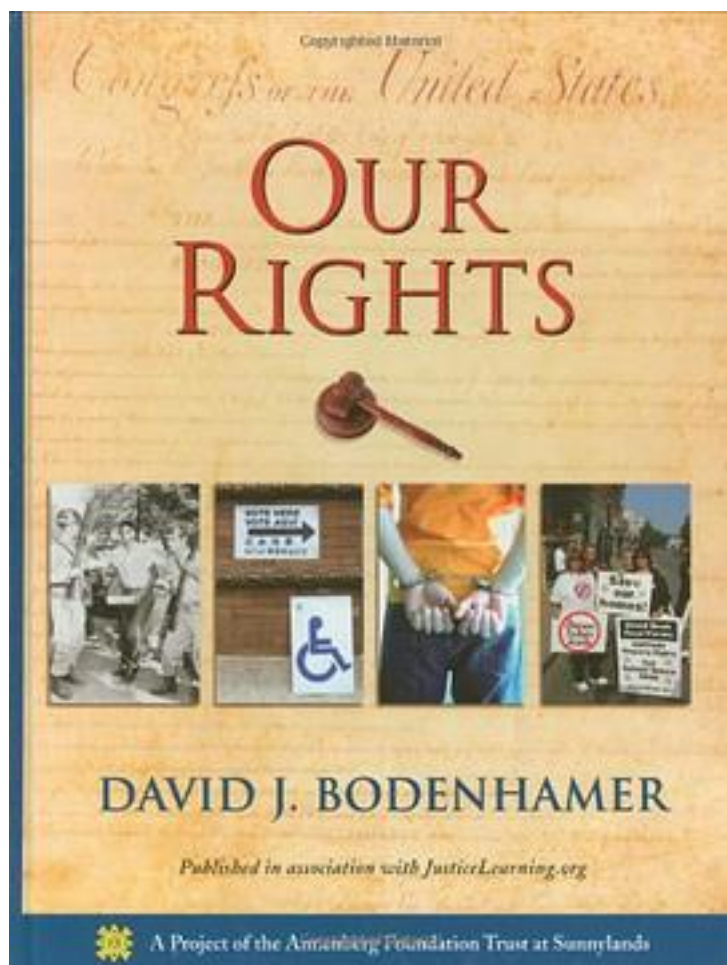


Our Rights



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Our Rights explores twenty-three major rights of U.S. citizens guaranteed by the Constitution. Each chapter traces how a particular right--freedom of speech, the right to trial by jury, the right to bear arms, or the right to privacy, for example--has evolved

as a result of legislation, social changes, and landmark Supreme Court cases. When Marie Barnette, a Jehovah's Witness, refused to say the Pledge of Allegiance at school because it contradicted her religious beliefs, the Supreme Court upheld her right to religious freedom, as guaranteed by the First Amendment. When a prominent Cleveland doctor named Sam Sheppard was accused of murdering his wife, the publicity surrounding the trial was so pervasive and prejudicial that the Supreme Court declared it violated his right to a fair trial. At the center of each chapter is a story of how citizens fought for rights they believed were lawfully theirs. They were young and old, well-known and obscure, middle-class and poor, respectable and disreputable. But they made history when they stood up for their rights—the rights of all of us. Each chapter ends with a look at how that right applies today and how courts and lawmakers seek to balance individual liberties with important social concerns. For example, does the right to free speech give us the right to burn the U.S. flag? Does freedom of the press protect confidential sources of journalists? Because the definition of rights is always evolving, a concluding chapter discusses the future of our rights and the possibility of new guarantees, such as the right to health care, that may result from current political and social movements.

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