

Danielle Allen

The Declaration, the Constitution, and the Idea of Equality

OPENING THE CONVERSATION

1. Allen argues that the principle of equality was present at the founding but was built over time. How do you interpret that claim?
2. What idea or argument from this essay stood out most to you?

CLOSE READING AND INTERPRETATION

3. How does Allen describe the role of ordinary people in shaping the meaning of equality?
4. What examples does she offer of equality being expanded across generations?
5. How does her interpretation compare to views that emphasize inequality at the founding?

EXPLORING TENSIONS

6. Should equality be understood primarily through the Founders' words or through later movements that expanded its meaning?
7. Does it matter whether equality or inequality is seen as more foundational to the American story?

REFLECTION AND APPLICATION

8. Where do you see the ongoing work of equality today?
9. What responsibilities come with inheriting this principle?

CLOSING REFLECTION

10. What does Allen's essay suggest about the future of equality in America?