



Mary Sarah Bilder

The Blessings of Liberty and Bill of Rights

OPENING THE CONVERSATION

1. Bilder explores the origins and purpose of the Bill of Rights. What stood out most to you in her account?
2. What idea or argument from this essay stayed with you after reading?

CLOSE READING AND INTERPRETATION

3. How does Bilder describe the debates surrounding the inclusion of a Bill of Rights in the Constitution?
4. Why were some Founders initially skeptical of adding a Bill of Rights?
5. How does the Bill of Rights reflect concerns about protecting individual liberties against government power?

EXPLORING TENSIONS

6. What tensions does Bilder highlight between federal authority and individual rights?
7. How did differing views about the necessity of a Bill of Rights shape the final document?

REFLECTION AND APPLICATION

8. Which protections in the Bill of Rights feel most relevant today, and why?
9. How has the meaning and application of the Bill of Rights evolved over time?

CLOSING REFLECTION

10. What does Bilder's essay suggest about the ongoing role of the Bill of Rights in American constitutional democracy?