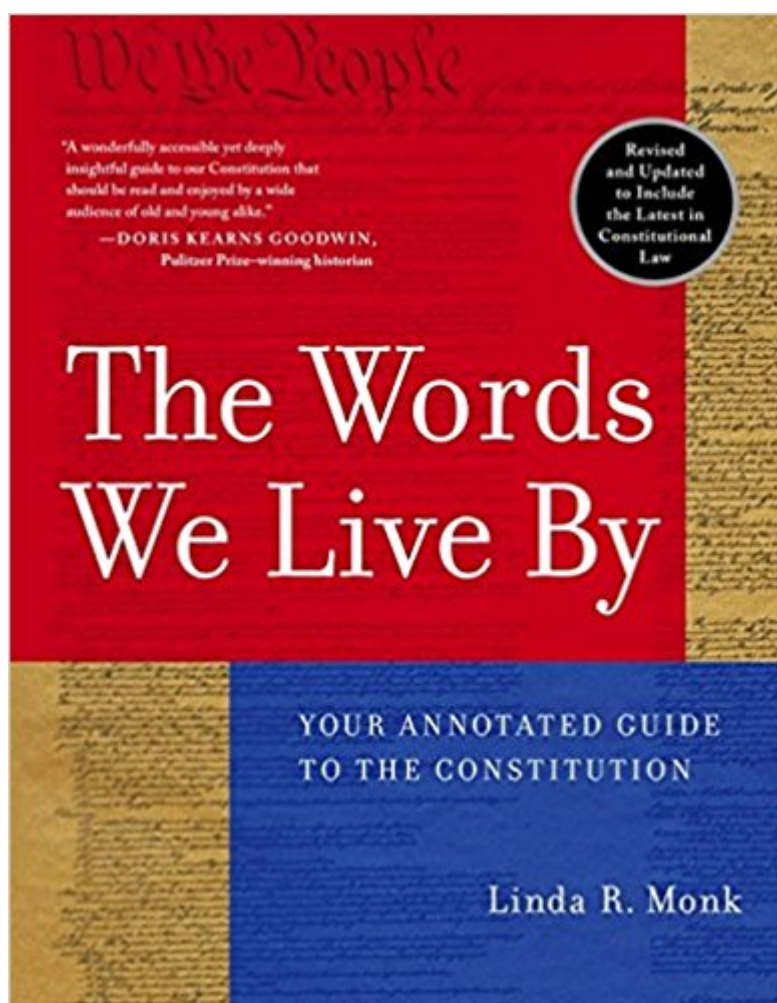


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# The Words We Live By: Your Annotated Guide To The Constitution (Stonesong Press Books)



## Synopsis

UPDATED FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 10 YEARS, *The Words We Live By* takes an entertaining and informative look at America's most important historical document, now with discussions about new rulings on hot-button issues such as immigration, gay marriage, the right to bear arms, and affirmative action. In *The Words We Live By*, award-winning author and journalist Linda R. Monk explores the many interpretations of the Constitution's text in a balanced manner. *The Words We Live By* presents a new way of looking at the Constitution through entertaining and informative annotations--filled with the stories of the people behind the Supreme Court cases and historical perspective, along with enough surprises and fascinating facts and illustrations to prove that the Constitution is every bit as relevant today as it was in 1787.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 18 and up

Grade Level: 06 - 08

## Customer Reviews

The U.S. Constitution gets a comprehensive overview in this engaging blend of history and commentary. Monk, author of *The Bill of Rights: A User's Guide*, traces the history and consequences of each part of this vital document in a line-by-line analysis of the original seven articles and the 27 amendments. Drawing on the writings of constitutional scholars, Supreme Court Justices and concerned citizens like Charlton Heston, playwright Arthur Miller and rock star Ted

Nugent, she also gives even-handed but lively accounts of the debates over such Constitutional controversies as the right to bear arms, the right to privacy, church-state separation and capital punishment. The portrait of the Constitution that emerges is a mixture of the sublime and the ridiculous. Some parts, like the Civil War amendments that defined citizenship and equality in granting them to African-Americans, are terse milestones in our evolving understanding of freedom, while elsewhere the Constitution seems like a scratch-pad for ill-considered ideas like the hastily repealed Prohibition Amendment. Monk avoids comparisons with other countries' charters that might have illuminated the Constitution's idiosyncrasies, and skirts deeper critiques, like Daniel Lazare's argument that the Constitution's overall structure of states' rights, separation of powers and checks and balances hobbles rather than effectuates the will of the people. Still, this is a fine introduction to Constitutional history for a general readership laid out rather like a good social studies textbook. Illus. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Marching methodically through the Constitution, Monk partitions the parchment's text and appends brief historical or legal background to each clause. Upon arrival at the Twenty-seventh Amendment, the reader should be able to sling around such phrases as "original intent" and "implied powers" like a law scholar. On the other hand, Monk's analysis does not pretend to profundity: her aim is to be as populist as possible. To this end, photos abound that are symbolic of various rights (actor Charlton Heston with his musket; civil rights demonstrators in Selma), as do sidebars quoting founders, jurists, and individuals significant to constitutional development, such as Clarence Earl Gideon. His petition to the Supreme Court resulted in the guarantee of a lawyer to criminal defendants. Monk's illustrations of the expansion of rights--the original Constitution protected few personal liberties--will remind readers how the document really is a "living" entity. Also showing the constitutional basis for the expansion of government power, Monk readily explains the constitutional phrases that imbue American political discourse. Gilbert Taylor Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Our book club read and had a lively discussion of this book recently. The concepts that Monk discusses in easy-to-understand language are so important right now. The simple but not simplistic discussions of each section are accompanied by plenty of illustrations, anecdotes and stories to make it all come alive. I read the news differently as a result - when I hear discussions of whether something is Constitutional it's not an abstract concept anymore. Update: I also decided to give

copies to the history and law teachers at my daughter's high school - it's a great teacher's resource. BTW, did not have any ordering problems -- that issue seems to be resolved as long as you order the one with the black circle in the top right corner, which is actually the new edition, not 2004 as listed on the site.

An outstanding review of our Constitution! Very even-handed with lots of historical references and Supreme Court citations of cases about how the Constitution is interpreted and applied. Lots of interesting quotes from famous historical figures (some very recent) on both sides of the political spectrum. Lots of really good historical context as well. This is well worth reading and re-reading from time to time. This would make a fine textbook for high school level American History/Constitution or even college level Constitutional Law.

This is a book that every American citizen should own. Monk literally goes line by line through the Constitution explaining the origin, history, and changing interpretation of our governing document. I never felt as though the author took sides as she instead outlined the main tenets of the differing viewpoints when it came to hot button issues such as gun control, immigration, etc. My only advice would be to make sure you are getting the newest edition possible as it will include discussions of the most recent court cases and issues facing our nation today.

I'm in grad school and this book wasn't required reading. However, as a teacher it looked interesting and IT IS WONDERFUL! The Constitution is broken down, explained, elaborated upon and in depth. This is a great resource tool!!

This book is a great way to re-familiarize myself with the Constitution a task probably more important now than it has been in my lifetime. I found it nourishing to have the history laid out so clearly. It has always been a struggle to keep this Republic. Wonderful intermittent anecdotes throughout and great photos. I wish I'd had this on the shelf when my oldest took AP gov, as it is a great reference for that as well.

Essential reading for these times. A wonderful gift for a millennial who doesn't know what we have lost. Very highly recommended.

I had a hard copy of this book and used it quite a bit while I was studying Law. Somehow it got lost,

and I missed having a copy. I would recommend this book, not as a book on The Constitution but to explain in more detail what the clauses mean. This seller was excellent and delivery was quick. I would use the seller again. Thank you.

Everyone should have a copy of this (hand)book. With all of the talk about the constitution these days, it would be nice if most of the people actually knew what it is.

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