



# Book of the Month

Presented by ADL's Education Division

**About the Book of the Month:** This collection of featured books is from Books Matter: The Best Kid Lit on Bias, Diversity and Social Justice. The books teach about bias and prejudice, promote respect for diversity, encourage social action and reinforce themes addressed in education programs of [A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE® Institute](#), ADL's international anti-bias education and diversity training provider. For educators, adult family members and other caregivers of children, reading the books listed on this site with your children and incorporating them into instruction are excellent ways to talk about these important concepts at home and in the classroom.

## I Dissent

Debbie Levy (Author), Elizabeth Baddeley (Illustrator)

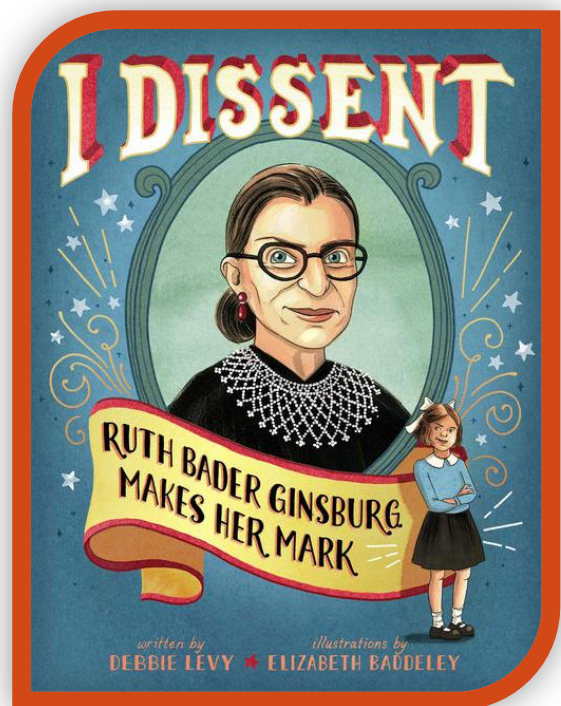
Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg has spent a lifetime disagreeing: disagreeing with inequality, arguing against unfair treatment, and standing up for what's right for people everywhere. This biographical picture book about the Notorious RBG, tells the justice's story through the lens of her many famous dissents or disagreements.

ISBN: 978-1481465595

Publisher: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers

Year Published: 2016

Age Range: 6–10



## Book Themes

Gender, Sexism, Women's history, Dissent, Social justice

## Key Words

Discuss and define these words with children prior to reading the book. Do not focus on students' retention of all the words; instead make sure they understand the words enough to follow the story and remind children of their meanings as they come up in the book. You can also post the words and point out to students when they appear in the story. See also ADL's [Definitions Related to Bias, Injustice and Bullying for Elementary Age Children](#).

- concur
- conflicting
- convincing
- cultures

- disagreement
- disapproved
- dissent
- equality
- excluded
- graduation
- immigrants
- independent
- judge
- objected
- opinion
- penmanship
- persistence
- prejudice
- protested
- rejected
- Supreme Court
- unfairness

### Discussion Questions

Before reading the book aloud, ask pre-reading questions:

- What is the title of the book? (If students don't know what dissent means, provide the definition: "a difference of opinion, sometimes stated publicly")
- Who and what do you see on the cover of the book?
- What do you think the book might be about?

As you read the book aloud, ask a few discussion questions periodically throughout the reading to check comprehension and keep the students engaged:

- In Ruth's neighborhood, what parts of the world did people come from? (page 5)
- What important event was Ruth unable to participate in because her mother unexpectedly died? (page 15)
- How was Ruth Bader Ginsburg's family unique (or "strange") for that time period? (page 25)

After reading the book aloud, ask some or all of the following discussion questions:

- Have you ever heard of Ruth Bader Ginsburg? What do you know about her?
- What happens in the story?
- How would you describe Ruth Bader Ginsburg's personality? What words describe her best?
- What was it like growing up for Ruth in her neighborhood? How did that influence her?
- What was it like to be a girl in the 1940's when she was growing up? How was it different than it is today?
- What kind of prejudice did Ruth see around her and experience herself? How do you know?
- What happened in elementary school when Ruth was told she had to write with her right hand? Has something like that ever happened to you? What did you do?
- What was it like for a young woman to go to college in the 1950s?
- When Ruth Bader Ginsburg was in law school, what was her life like? What were the expectations others had for her and how did she respond to those expectations?
- What did Ruth Bader Ginsburg do when she learned that women were excluded from certain jobs and got paid less than men?

- What do you think you would do in this situation? When you have experienced or witnessed unfairness or prejudice, how did you feel and how did you respond?
- How did prejudice against women also affect men and the expectations people had of men?
- How does the theme of dissent take place during the time Justice Ginsburg serves on the Supreme Court?
- On what kinds of decisions does Justice Ginsburg dissent? Why does she dissent in those cases?
- How would you describe the relationship between Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Antonin Scalia? Have you ever had a friend that you disagreed with about a lot of things?
- How did you feel when the book ended?
- What do you think is the message of the book?

### Extension Activities

Below are activities that you can do with children in order to extend the learning from the book.

#### 1. Make a Timeline

Have students work in pairs or groups of three to create a timeline of Ruth Bader Ginsburg's life. Students should create the timeline by marking important milestones in her life and highlighting the times she dissented or disagreed, since that is a theme of the book. For each mark on the timeline, students should: (1) create an illustration (picture, photo or symbol), (2) write 2–3 sentences about what was significant about that time and (3) highlight how she dissented. Examples of milestones include her early years living in a neighborhood of immigrants, seeing signs about prejudice ("No dogs or Jews allowed"), when she protested about having to use her right hand, when her mother died the day before her graduation, when she went to law school, when she stood before the Supreme Court to fight for equal treatment of women, when she became a Supreme Court Justice.

An alternative strategy is to make a large timeline for the wall or bulletin board and assign each pair/small group one part of the timeline; then put them all together in order.

#### 2. I Dissent!

Ask students: *What does the word dissent mean?* Define **dissent** as a difference of opinion, sometimes stated publicly. Then ask: *Throughout her life, what are some ways that Ruth Bader Ginsburg dissented when it came to injustice?* Then brainstorm with students a list of issues and situations they think are unfair either in their school, neighborhood/community or world. Create a list on the board/smart board for each (school, neighborhood/community, world). Then ask students: *How would you express dissent, as Ruth Bader Ginsburg did, about issues, laws and situations for which you disagree?* Next, have each student pick one of those items and consider different ways they can make their dissent public. Remind students that Ruth Bader Ginsburg always expressed her dissent in respectful ways and they should do the same. Students should then choose a way to illustrate their dissent. Some ideas include the following: make a speech, create a sign or poster, write a social media post, make a video, take a picture of themselves with a sign stating their opinion/dissent, write a letter. Have students present these to the class and consider inviting parents/family members for the presentations.

### 3. Learn More about Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Other Women Who Broke Barriers

Read aloud (or have students take turns reading aloud) the back of the book (on pages 37 and 38) in order for students to learn more about Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Remind students the way in which she “broke barriers” and stood out as a woman (being one of nine women in a class of 500 men in law school, second woman and first Jewish woman to be appointed to the Supreme Court). Ask students: *What barriers did Ruth have to break?* Brainstorm other women in history who broke a barrier or made history (e.g. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Shirley Chisholm, Hillary Clinton, Sonia Sotomayor, Dolores Huerta, Amelia Earhart, Indira Gandhi, Carol Moseley Braun, Sally Ride, Billie Jean King, Malala Yousafzai, Toni Stone). After brainstorming a list, divide up the list and assign for homework that each student learns something about one of the women and come back to class to share the information with classmates. Based on that information, have students choose one of the women and conduct research on her, culminating in one of the following projects to present to the class: essay/research report, PowerPoint, timeline of her life, speech they create that she would have given, portrait of her doing something remarkable, sample journal entries about her life. Have students present their project to the class and consider creating a Remarkable Women bulletin board or webpage.

### ADL Resources

The following are curriculum and resources on gender, sexism and social justice.

#### Curriculum Resources

“Mo’Ne Davis and Gender Stereotypes,” *Current Events Classroom*, [www.adl.org/education-outreach/lesson-plans/c/mone-davis-and-gender-stereotypes.html](http://www.adl.org/education-outreach/lesson-plans/c/mone-davis-and-gender-stereotypes.html).

“Stereotypes of Girls and Women in the Media,” *Current Events Classroom*, [www.adl.org/education-outreach/lesson-plans/c/stereotypes-of-girls-and-women-in-the-media.html](http://www.adl.org/education-outreach/lesson-plans/c/stereotypes-of-girls-and-women-in-the-media.html).

“Who Am I? Identity Poems,” *Current Events Classroom*, [www.adl.org/education-outreach/lesson-plans/c/who-am-i-identity-poems.html](http://www.adl.org/education-outreach/lesson-plans/c/who-am-i-identity-poems.html).

“Who is Malala Yousafzai?,” *Current Events Classroom*, [www.adl.org/education-outreach/lesson-plans/c/who-is-malala-yousafzai.html](http://www.adl.org/education-outreach/lesson-plans/c/who-is-malala-yousafzai.html).

#### Websites

9 Ways to Teach about the Election: A Social Justice Approach

[www.adl.org/education-outreach/curriculum-resources/c/9-ways-to-teach-about-the-election.html](http://www.adl.org/education-outreach/curriculum-resources/c/9-ways-to-teach-about-the-election.html)

Suggested strategies and activities teachers can undertake with students in order to help them analyze issues of bias, discrimination, diversity, civil rights and justice in when teaching about the election.

10 Ways Youth Can Engage in Activism

[www.adl.org/education-outreach/curriculum-resources/c/10-ways-youth-can-engage-in.html](http://www.adl.org/education-outreach/curriculum-resources/c/10-ways-youth-can-engage-in.html)

A list of ideas for bringing social activism into the classroom and outside of the school walls. These strategies can be acted upon individually, organized together as a group and young people can join with a larger effort that is taking place locally or nationally.

### Anti-Bias Education

[www.adl.org/education-outreach/anti-bias-education](http://www.adl.org/education-outreach/anti-bias-education)

Provides training program offerings for pre-K through 12th grade school communities—educators, administrators, youth and families—which focus on the development of an inclusive culture and respectful school climate by addressing issues of bias and bullying.

### Toward Communication Free of Gender Bias

[www.adl.org/education-outreach/curriculum-resources/c/toward-communication-free-of.html](http://www.adl.org/education-outreach/curriculum-resources/c/toward-communication-free-of.html)

Guidelines to help transition toward a more inclusive and less gender-biased language.

### Women's History Month Resources

[www.adl.org/education-outreach/curriculum-resources/c/womens-history-month.html](http://www.adl.org/education-outreach/curriculum-resources/c/womens-history-month.html)

A list of ADL PreK-12 curriculum and other educational resources to bring Women's History Month to the classroom and schools.

### Children's Books

Below are links to lists of recommended anti-bias and multicultural books for the indicated category.

Gender and Sexism, [www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/gender-sexism.html](http://www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/gender-sexism.html)

Social Justice, [www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/social-justice.html](http://www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/social-justice.html)