

Democracy 10 Dahl on How Democratic is the American Constitution?

Please read the excerpt from Robert Dahl's *How Democratic is the American Constitution?* After reading the selection, answer the questions that follow.

1. Why should we *not* assume today that the US Constitution is the best possible design for a democratic government? What does it have to do with knowledge?
2. Why might developments coming after the framing of the Constitution in 1787 be relevant for those who want to design a good constitution?
3. Which developments since 1787 does Dahl suggest might provide lessons for constitutional designers? Using whatever knowledge you have of these developments, what do you think designers might learn from them?
4. What immovable constraints did the framers face when writing the Constitution according to Dahl?
5. What are the undemocratic features of the Constitution highlighted by Dahl? Are there any others you can think of? Which of these do you think is the problematic and why?
6. How, according to Dahl, does judicial power threaten democracy? What do you think of his argument here? Do you agree or disagree? Why?