



## Viewing Guide for *Grutter v. Bollinger* 2003

The Background of *Grutter v. Bollinger* (00:00 to 3:55)

1. Who was Barbara Grutter and what did she attempt to do in 1996?
2. What were Grutter's qualifications for admission to the university's law school?
3. When Grutter's application for admission was first placed on a wait list and then later denied, what did she believe was the reason for this decision?
4. At this time how did the University justify using race as one factor in its law school admissions policy?

**Stop and Think:** What is your opinion of the University of Michigan's admissions policy?

5. When Barbara Grutter filed suit against the President of the University of Michigan, Lee Bollinger, what was the basis of her claim?

**Lower Court Decisions: (3:55 to 5:04)**

**6. How did the U.S. District Court rule in the case, and on what did it base its decision?**

**7. How did the Court of Appeals rule in the case?**

**The U.S. Supreme Court Case: (5:04 to 10:00)**

**8. What was the issue to be answered by the U.S. Supreme Court?**

**9. How did the arguments differ?**

**10. What did the Supreme Court decide in *Grutter v. Bollinger*?**

**11. Who authored the opinion of the Court and what was basis of the opinion?**

**12. What did Justice O'Connor mean when she wrote the following in her opinion?**

**“We take the law school at its word that it would like nothing better than to find a race-neutral admissions formula as soon as practical...We expect that 25 years from now, the use of racial preferences will no longer be necessary to further the interest we approve today.”**

**Stop and Think: Do you agree or disagree with the Supreme Court's decision? Explain your answer.**

**Does the fact that the percentage of minority students admitted to the law school remained relatively consistent from year to year lead you to change your opinion? (This fact was used as evidence that the admissions policy was like a quota system in the dissenting opinion in the Grutter case written by Chief Justice William Rehnquist.) Why or why not?**

**Do you agree or disagree with Justice Clarence Thomas who wrote the following in his dissenting opinion in the Grutter case? Explain your answer.**

**“Our Constitution is color blind and neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens. It has been 140 years since Frederick Douglas asked the intellectual ancestors of the Law School to ‘do nothing with us!’ and the nation adopted the Fourteenth Amendment. Now we must wait another 25 years to see this principle of equality vindicated.”**

**Conclusion: (10:00 to the end)**

**13. What is the most recent U.S. Supreme case dealing with the use of race in state university undergraduate admissions decisions?**

**14. Justice O’Connor mentioned that the use of race as a factor in state university admissions decisions could probably be eliminated within twenty-five years of the Supreme Court’s decision in the Grutter case. That case was decided in 2003. With this date in mind answer the following questions:**

- Do you feel that it will be possible to do away with any references to race in state university admissions decisions within that time period? Why or why not?**
  
- How do you feel the nation is progressing in achieving the idea of equality as stated in the “equal protection of the laws” clause of the Fourteenth Amendment? Explain your opinion.**