Checks and Balances in Action

Section 2: The Lilly Ledbetter Law, A Case Study

Student Materials
Before You Read

A. Discussion Questions

1. Should everyone be paid the same amount of money for doing the same job?
2. When would you pay someone more than another person to do the same job? Would you pay someone less?
3. If someone thinks they are being paid less than someone else because of gender, race, religion, or national origin, what should that person do?
4. If you knew that a co-worker was making less money because of gender, race, religion, or national origin, would you tell them? If you would, how would you tell them? If not, why not?
5. What role does the government have in protecting equal pay?

Guiding Question: What role did each branch of the government have in passing the Lily Ledbetter law?
B. Vocabulary Sort and Connections
Your instructor will give you a set of vocabulary words from this unit. First, set aside any words you don't know. Then, sort the words you know into groups of connected words. There are many correct ways to group the words, and you can make as many groups as you want. Finally, explain to another student why you think those words are connected.
C. Pre-reading: First Sentences
You will read an article about the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. The first sentence from each paragraph in the article is below. Read each sentence and make predictions. It's not important whether you're right or wrong. The important thing is to start thinking about the ideas in the text before you read it.

Answer at least one of these questions for each sentence:
a. What questions might the paragraph answer?
b. What details or examples might be in this paragraph?
c. What other ideas does this sentence make you think about?

1. "Lily Ledbetter began working at the Goodyear Tire company in Alabama in 1979."

2. "She felt that this was unfair pay, and that she was being paid significantly less for her work just because she was a woman."

3. "However, in 2007, the Supreme Court disagreed."

4. "Not all of the judges on the Supreme Court agreed with the decision."

5. "A federal law to do that was proposed, but Congress didn't approve it."
The Lilly Ledbetter Law: A Case Study

1) Lily Ledbetter began working at the Goodyear Tire company in Alabama in 1979. Although most of the other women there worked as secretaries, Ledbetter became a manager. She was an excellent employee, and even won an award for her outstanding work. In 1998, after she had worked there for 19 years, she found an anonymous note in her office mail. The note listed her monthly rate of pay, and that of two men who worked in the same position. One of the men made $500 more each month than she did, and the other made $1500 more each month than Ledbetter.

2) She felt that this was unfair pay, and that she was being paid significantly less for her work just because she was a woman. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 is most famous for ending legal segregation, but it also protects people from discrimination based on gender. When she sued and went to court, the jury agreed with her and awarded her several million dollars.

3) However, the Goodyear Tire company appealed the case and eventually the case went to the Supreme Court. In 2007, the Supreme Court disagreed with the lower court. The Supreme Court said that Ledbetter had sued too late. The law says that, if someone files a complaint about discrimination, it has to be filed within 180 days of the problem. The Supreme Court ruled that the clock started ticking when Ledbetter received her first paycheck, not when she found out about the unequal pay. Since Ledbetter didn’t file her complaint within 180 days of receiving her first paycheck, the company didn’t have to pay her any money.
4) Not all of the judges on the Supreme Court agreed with the decision. There are nine justices on the Supreme Court. Five of the judges agreed that Goodyear didn’t owe Ledbetter anything. Four of the justices disagreed. The four dissenting judges felt that the 180 days should have started when Ledbetter discovered the unfair pay. They wrote what is called a dissenting opinion. This lets judges who disagree with the official opinion of the court to explain why they disagree. Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg read the opinion out loud to the courtroom, which is very unusual. She asked Congress to find a way to correct the situation.

5) A federal law to do that was proposed, but Congress didn’t approve it. Barack Obama, who was a U.S. Senator at the time, promised that he would make the Fair Pay Act a priority if he were elected president. Another law was proposed. This time, both parts of Congress approved it. In January of 2009, shortly after becoming president, Barack Obama signed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. Ledbetter was standing next to him, watching, as he signed the federal law named after her. It was the first law he signed as President of the United States.

References
http://www.lillyledbetter.com/about.html
http://theusconstitution.org/text-history/485
https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2015/04/14/day-history-equal-pay-trailblazer-lilly-ledbetter-turns-77
Read Closely

A. First Reading and Self-Evaluation
Read the text quickly the first time. Don’t write on it or stop for any new words. Push through to the end. Reading this way is a good strategy to get a main idea quickly.

After you read, think about how much you understand. Your instructor will give you an Evaluation Scale. At the top of your text, write your rating for Reading 1.

B. Author’s Purpose or “What does the author want me to think about?”
Skim, or read the text quickly, to answer this question:

1. Is the author:
   a. entertaining the reader with an interesting story about how strong and resourceful Lilly Ledbetter was
   b. comparing the Supreme Court’s role to the President’s role
   c. warning the reader to always watch for unfair business practices
   d. explaining the steps that led to creation of the Fair Pay Act

2. Why did you choose your answer? What made it the best match? __________________________________________

3. Why weren’t the other answers the best match?
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
C. Analyze the Structure
Your instructor will give you a set of topic strips. Each strip of paper has the topic of one paragraph on it. Compare the topics to the paragraphs in the text. Put each topic in the correct place on the chart. Once your instructor checks your answers, copy the topics into the chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paragraph Number</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paragraph 1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Paragraph 2</td>
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<td>Paragraph 3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Paragraph 4</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Paragraph 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

D. Order Sequences of Events
Put the following events from the text in order. Copy each event into the correct box on the next page. The box on top is the first event that happened.

Ledbetter received an anonymous note telling her that men were being paid much more for doing the same job.

Ledbetter received her first paycheck at Goodyear.

Congress passed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act.

The Civil Rights Act was passed.

The President signed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act.

The Supreme Court decided against Ledbetter.

Congress did not pass a fair pay act.
E. Evaluate Your Understanding. Re-read the text, then think about how much you understand. At the top of the text, rate your understanding for Reading 2 using the Evaluation Scale.
F. Finding Definitions within a Text
Find the definitions, examples, or clues that can help you understand the meaning of the underlined words. Some will be easy to identify, and you will have to make an educated guess about others.

1. Highlight the definition of discrimination based on gender.
   "She felt that this was unfair pay, and that she was being paid significantly less for her work just because she was a woman. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 is most famous for ending legal segregation, but it also protects people from discrimination based on gender."

2. What is another way to say awarded that matches the meaning in this sentence?
   "When she sued and went to court, the jury agreed with her and awarded her several million dollars."

3. Using the information in the paragraph, make an educated guess about what the word appeal means when it is used about a court case.
   "When she sued and went to court, the jury agreed with her and awarded her several million dollars... However, the Goodyear Tire company appealed the case and eventually the case went to the Supreme Court. In 2007, the Supreme Court disagreed with the lower court."

4. What is another word for justices?
   "Not all of the judges on the Supreme Court agreed with the decision. There are nine justices on the Supreme Court. Five of the judges agreed that Goodyear didn’t owe Ledbetter anything. Four of the justices disagreed."

5. Highlight the sentence that gives the definition of “dissenting.” What does dissenting mean?
   "There are nine justices on the Supreme Court. Five of the judges agreed that Goodyear didn’t owe Ledbetter anything. Four of the justices disagreed. The four dissenting judges felt that the 180 days should have started when Ledbetter discovered the unfair pay."

6. Using the information in the paragraph, make an educated guess about what the word proposed means when it is used in connection with a law.
   "A federal law to do that was proposed, but Congress didn’t approve it. Barack Obama, who was a U.S. Senator at the time, promised that he would make the Fair Pay Act a priority if he were elected president. Another law was proposed. This time, both parts of Congress approved it."
Show Your Understanding

1. In Paragraph 2, the author tells us that a jury found in favor of Ledbetter and awarded her millions of dollars. What information in Paragraph 3 lets the reader infer that Goodyear did not agree with the original result?

2. What information in paragraph 4 lets the reader infer that Justice Ginsberg felt very strongly that the court's opinion was wrong, and that something unusual needed to be done to correct the situation?

3. In paragraph 5, the author includes information about who witnessed Obama sign the law. Why is this information included?

4. Lilly Ledbetter's case was clearly very important and sparked a lot of debate in the U.S. government. What evidence from the text shows that people had very different ideas about how to decide the case and how to create a law supporting fair pay?

5. Did Ledbetter get what she wanted? Why or why not? Use evidence from the text to support your claim.
Rock the Test

Refer to your text to find the best answer for each question.

1. Which sentence in paragraph 1 allows the reader to infer that women did not have equal opportunities in the workplace in 1979?
   a. Lilly Ledbetter began working at the Goodyear Tire company in Alabama in 1979.
   b. Although most of the other women there worked as secretaries, Ledbetter became a manager.
   c. She was an excellent employee, and even won an award for her outstanding work.
   d. In 1998, after she had worked there for 19 years, she found an anonymous note in her office mail.

2. What can the reader infer about why the author included the fact that Ledbetter “even won an award for her outstanding work” in paragraph 1?
   a. To show the reader that Ledbetter should have earned as much or more money than other people in her position, because an award means someone is doing an outstanding job.
   b. To show the reader that Ledbetter’s performance was improving after a difficult beginning with the company.
   c. To convince the reader that Ledbetter was the best manager at Goodyear because none of the other managers won awards.
   d. To highlight the importance of always doing your best at work; you might win an award.

3. Which sentence has the same meaning as “The Supreme Court said that the clock started ticking when Ledbetter received her first paycheck” in paragraph 3?
   a. The Supreme Court said that Ledbetter should have bought a clock when she received her first paycheck.
   b. The Supreme Court said that the 180-day limit started when Ledbetter received her first paycheck.
   c. Ledbetter worked in a factory that made tires and clocks, which was illegal, according to the Supreme Court.
   d. The Supreme Court said that there was nothing Ledbetter could do after receiving her first paycheck.

4. One word has been changed in the sentences below. How is the tone, or feeling, of the new sentence different than the original?

   Original: “She asked Congress to find a way to correct the situation.”
   New: “She demanded that Congress find a way to correct the situation.”

   a. No change, both sentences have the same tone.
b. The new sentence is gentler because demanded is more polite than asked.
c. The new sentence is stronger because demanded means that she told them they had to correct the situation, rather than asking them to do something.
d. The new sentence is stronger because demanded means that she made them do it immediately, rather than waiting for them to do it at their own pace.

5. One word has been changed in the sentences below. How does this change affect the meaning of the sentence?

Original: “She was being paid significantly less for her work because she was a woman.”
New: “She was being paid slightly less for her work because she was a woman.”

a. The new sentence means that Ledbetter’s pay was only a little bit less than that of the men.
b. The new sentence means that Ledbetter’s pay was extremely different from the men’s pay.
c. The new sentence and the original sentence have the same meaning.
d. The new sentence means that Ledbetter and the men were being paid the same amount of money.
Writing Assignment

A. Guided Writing Focus: Analyze how each branch of the U.S. government contributed to the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. Provide examples of specific checks and balances that were used.

1. Analyze the involvement of the judicial branch
How was the judicial branch involved? What did the different parts of that branch do? Refer to the “Checks and Balances” text if you need to review information about the judicial branch.

2. Analyze the involvement of the legislative branch
How was the legislative branch involved? What did the different parts of that branch do? Refer to the “Checks and Balances” text if you need to review information about the legislative branch.

3. Analyze the involvement of the executive branch
How was the executive branch involved? Refer to the “Checks and Balances” text if you need to review information about the executive branch.

B. Essay

Option A: paragraph
Write one body paragraph for an essay that explains how the three branches of government work together or against each other. First, choose to write about either how the branches can work together, or how they can work against each other. Then, review your notes and both texts from this module to find examples of how specific checks and balanced were used.

Remember that a paragraph is a group of sentences that support a main idea. Write a topic sentence about the branches working together or against each other and then support it with one or more examples. Explain the example(s) with relevant details.

Option B: essay
Write an essay explaining how the three branches of government can work together or against each other. Provide examples from both texts of specific checks and balances that were used. Include all the parts listed below.
**Introductory paragraph:** Introduce the three branches of government and how they can work together or against each other.

**Body paragraph 1:** Explain how the three branches can work together. Give one specific example with relevant details.

**Body paragraph 2:** Explain how the three branches can work against each other. Give one specific example with relevant details.

**Conclusion:** Explain the importance of checks and balances and re-state how the branches sometimes work together and sometimes work against each other.
Checks and Balances in Action

Section 2: The Lilly Ledbetter Law, A Case Study

Instructor Notes
**Before You Read**

B. Vocabulary Sort and Connections Directions
Copy and cut the vocabulary cards on the next page. Circulate and ask students why they grouped particular words together. Some surprising connections may come to light. If there is an error in understanding, try to keep explanations short. Avoid defining new words and instead emphasize that students will learn more through the process of reading.

Depending on the level and size of your class, it might be helpful to pair students or have them work in small groups.

C. Pre-reading: First Sentences Suggested Activity
Before beginning the activity, share the title with the students and ask them to make predictions about what they’ll read.

C. Pre-reading: First Sentences Instructor Notes
The First Sentences activity can be challenging for students, especially at first. Asking students to circle key words in the first sentences may help. Encourage them to play with ideas. Students who are struggling could make a few predictions, rather than complete all of them.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>award</th>
<th>anonymous</th>
<th>rate of pay</th>
<th>significantly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>discrimination</td>
<td>sued</td>
<td>judge</td>
<td>jury</td>
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<tr>
<td>must be filed within 180 days</td>
<td>discover</td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>official</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>propose</td>
<td>federal</td>
<td>Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act</td>
<td>Civil Rights Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supreme Court</td>
<td>U.S. Senator</td>
<td>Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg</td>
<td>Congress</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Read Closely

B. Author’s Purpose Answer Key
1. Is the author:
   a. entertaining the reader with an interesting story about how strong and resourceful Lilly Ledbetter was
   b. comparing the Supreme Court’s role to the President’s role
   c. warning the reader to always watch for unfair business practices
   d. explaining the steps that led to creation of the Fair Pay Act

C. Analyze the Structure Directions
Copy, cut, and shuffle the strips.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ledbetter’s start at Goodyear and discovery of unequal pay</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The beginning of her legal case, which centered on the Civil Rights Act</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Supreme Court reverses the decision of the lower court</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissenting opinion of four justices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congress approves the law and the President signs it</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

C. Analyze the Structure Answer Key

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paragraph Number</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paragraph 1</td>
<td>Ledbetter’s start at Goodyear and discovery of unequal pay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paragraph 2</td>
<td>The beginning of her legal case, which centered on the Civil Rights Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paragraph 3</td>
<td>Supreme Court reverses the decision of the lower court</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
D. Order Sequences of Events Answer Key

1. The Civil Rights Act was passed.
2. Ledbetter received her first paycheck at Goodyear.
3. Ledbetter received an anonymous note telling her that men were being paid much more for doing the same job.
4. The Supreme Court decided against Ledbetter.
5. Congress did not pass a fair pay act.
6. Congress passed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act.
7. The President signed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act.

F. Finding Definitions within a Text Answer Key

1. Highlight the definition of “discrimination based on gender”:
   “She felt that this was unfair pay, that she was being paid significantly less for her work just because she was a woman. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 is most famous for ending legal segregation, but it also protects people from discrimination based on gender.”

2. What is another way to say “awarded” that matches the meaning in this sentence?
   “When she sued and went to court, the jury agreed with her and awarded her several million dollars.”

   gave (other answers are possible)

3. Using the information in the paragraph, make an educated guess about what the word appeal means when it is used about a court case.
   “When she sued and went to court, the jury agreed with her and awarded her several million dollars... However, the Goodyear Tire company appealed the case and eventually the case went to the Supreme Court. In 2007, the Supreme Court disagreed with the lower court.”

   disagree with a court decision and take the case to a higher court

4. What is another word for “justices”?
“Not all of the judges on the Supreme Court agreed with the decision. There are nine justices on the Supreme Court. Five of the judges agreed that Goodyear didn’t owe Ledbetter anything. Four of the justices disagreed.”

judges

5. Highlight the sentence that gives the definition of “dissenting.” What does “dissenting” mean?

There are nine justices on the Supreme Court. Five of the judges agreed that Goodyear didn’t owe Ledbetter anything. Four of the justices disagreed. The four dissenting judges felt that the 180 days should have started when Ledbetter discovered the unfair pay.

dissenting

6. Using the information in the paragraph, make an educated guess about what the word “proposed” means when it is used in connection with a law.

“A federal law to do that was proposed, but Congress didn’t approve it. Barack Obama, who was a U.S. Senator at the time, promised that he would make the Fair Pay Act a priority if he were elected president. Another law was proposed. This time, both parts of Congress approved it.”

proposed, Congress tried to pass a law, etc.

Show Your Understanding Answer Key
Answers will vary.

1. In Paragraph 2, the author tells us that a jury found in favor of Ledbetter and awarded her millions of dollars. What information in Paragraph 3 lets the reader infer that Goodyear did not agree with the original result? The case was heard by the Supreme Court, which changed the ruling of the lower court.

2. What information in Paragraph 4 lets the reader infer that Justice Ginsberg felt very strongly that the court’s opinion was wrong, and that something unusual needed to be done to correct the situation? She read the opinion out loud to the court, which was very unusual.

3. In Paragraph 5, the author includes information about who witnessed Obama sign the law. Why is this information included? Answers should include some of the following elements: To show that Ledbetter got justice for herself and for other women, even though she didn’t get the money she was owed.
4. Lilly Ledbetter’s case was clearly very important and sparked a lot of debate in the U.S. government. What evidence from the text shows that people had very different ideas about how to decide the case and how to create a law supporting fair pay? 

**Answers should include some of the following elements:** It went from a lower court to the Supreme Court, which means that people disagreed about the outcome; during his campaign, Obama promised to make it a priority, which means it was important to many people in the country; Congress tried once to pass a law about it and failed, which means that many members of Congress were against it; Congress thought it was so important that they tried to pass it again, it passed; Obama chose this as the first law to sign as president, which means he placed great importance on it.

5. Did Ledbetter get what she wanted? Why or why not? Use evidence from the text to support your claim.

**Answers saying yes should include the fact that she got justice, even if she didn’t get money. Answers saying no should include the fact that she never received the money she was owed.**
**Rock the Test Answer Key**

1. Which sentence in paragraph 1 allows the reader to infer that women did not have equal opportunities in the workplace in 1979?
   a. Lilly Ledbetter began working at the Goodyear Tire company in Alabama in 1979.
   b. **Although most of the other women there worked as secretaries, Ledbetter became a manager.**
   c. She was an excellent employee, and even won an award for her outstanding work.
   d. In 1998, after she had worked there for 19 years, she found an anonymous note in her office mail.

2. What can the reader infer about why the author included the fact that Ledbetter “even won an award for her outstanding work” in paragraph 1?
   a. **To show the reader that Ledbetter should have earned as much or more money than other people in her position, because an award means someone is doing an outstanding job.**
   b. To show the reader that Ledbetter’s performance was improving after a difficult beginning with the company.
   c. To convince the reader that Ledbetter was the best manager at Goodyear because none of the other managers won awards.
   d. To highlight the importance of always doing your best at work; you might win an award.

3. Which sentence has the same meaning as “The Supreme Court said that the clock started ticking when Ledbetter received her first paycheck” in paragraph 3?
   a. The Supreme Court said that Ledbetter should have bought a clock when she received her first paycheck.
   b. **The Supreme Court said that the 180-day limit started when Ledbetter received her first paycheck.**
   c. Ledbetter worked in a factory that made tires and clocks, which was illegal, according to the Supreme Court.
   d. The Supreme Court said that there was nothing Ledbetter could do after receiving her first paycheck.

4. One word has been changed in the sentences below. How is the tone, or feeling, of the new sentence different than the original?

   Original: “She asked Congress to find a way to correct the situation.”

   New: “She **demanded** that Congress find a way to correct the situation.”

   a. No change, both sentences have the same tone.
   b. The new sentence is gentler because **demanded** is more polite than **asked**.
   c. **The new sentence is stronger because **demanded** means that she told them they had to correct the situation, rather than asking them to do something.**
d. The new sentence is stronger because *demanded* means that she made them do it immediately, rather than waiting for them to do it at their own pace.

5. One word has been changed in the sentences below. How does this change affect the meaning of the sentence?

Original: "She was being paid *significantly* less for her work because she was a woman."

New: "She was being paid *slightly* less for her work because she was a woman."

a. The new sentence means that Ledbetter's pay was only a little bit less than that of the men.
b. The new sentence means that Ledbetter's pay was extremely different from the men's pay.
c. The new sentence and the original sentence have the same meaning.
d. The new sentence means that Ledbetter and the men were being paid the same amount of money.