



I Want to be The First Person To _____

Turning Pages: My Life Story by Sonia Sotomayor

Sonia Sotomayor is an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. She was nominated to serve on the Supreme Court by President Barack Obama, and has served on the Court since August, 2009. Sonia Sotomayor is the first Hispanic and Latina member of the Court. In her book *Turning Pages*, Judge Sotomayor shares with the reader what inspired her to reach for her dreams.

Sonia Sotomayor's parents came to the United States from Puerto Rico. Her mother worked as a practical nurse, her father, with only a third-grade education and no English, was a tool maker. The Sotomayor family lived first in a tenement and then in housing projects in the Borough of the Bronx, New York City. Sonia Sotomayor writes, however, that she knew, "I was going to college and I was going to become an attorney". Amazingly, she proudly states that she knew all this by the time she was ten years old.

In *Turning Pages*, the reader discovers what inspired Sonia Sotomayor to not only dream about what she wanted to be, but to actually work to achieve that dream. Her book reveals her personal inspiration as it also encourages each reader to have his/her own dream and to find what inspires him/her to achieve that dream.

1. The Rendell Center embraces the idea that *reading is our first freedom*. In **Turning Pages**, we learn that Sonia Sotomayor feels the same way. What do you think that means? Do you agree or disagree that reading is our first freedom? Be prepared to support your answer.

(This question could lead to a conversation about the First Amendment in the Bill of Rights.)

The 1st Amendment to the Bill of Rights lists out freedoms.

- Freedom of Speech...Do you have the right to hold any opinion you want as long as you express that opinion in a responsible manner?
- Freedom of Religion...Do you and your family have the right to practice any religion that you choose?
- Freedom of the Press...Do you read a newspaper or listen to the news on TV or on your phone? Do you think that the Government controls what is written in the press?
- Freedom to Assemble...Do we have the freedom to gather/assemble to protest something we do not think is right? Can you give an example that you might have seen or heard about recently?
- Freedom to Petition the Government – No matter your age, do you have the freedom to go to someone in city government and ask for something for your school or neighborhood?

2. Sonia Sotomayor, diagnosed at seven-years-old with diabetes, faced the fact that she would have to take a needle every day of her life in order to stay alive. She writes that she found the courage to give herself a needle every day by reading superhero comic books. Why do you think comic books about super heroes inspired her to be brave?

3. Do you think all heroes are superheroes who, in Sonia Sotomayor's words, are brave and powerful? Why or why not? Do you have someone in your life who you see as a hero, someone who has inspired you in your journey to reach your dream?

4. Sonia Sotomayor writes, "Books were my loyal friends. They made it so I never felt lonely." In these challenging times, we all feel lonely some of the time. Have you read anything while we have been spending so much time in our homes that you feel, "made it so you did not feel lonely"?

5. Like Sonia Sotomayor, have you found a character in a book in whose shoes you picture yourself? Be prepared to share.

6. Why do we have laws? Do our laws as stated in the Constitution ever need to change? Why or why not?

7. Sonia Sotomayor writes that she feels it is important to know what you do not know. Do you think it is important to know what you don't know? Why or why not?

8. Sonia Sotomayor defined the word "justice" as "treating people fairly under the law". How would you define the word "justice"?

9. *Turning Pages* highlights the importance of words. From your point of view, in what way(s) are words important?

10. Sonia Sotomayor was the first Hispanic and Latina member of the Supreme Court of the United States. What would you like to be the first to do?