

# FIRST AMENDMENT



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Video Page



# ***First Amendment*** **Teacher's Guide**

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# *First Amendment*

## Suggested Lesson Plan

*These materials may be used in a variety of ways. For maximum benefit, we suggest the following lesson plan:*

- As a class, discuss the Preview Questions & Key Terms
- Distribute copies of the Viewing Guide for students to use as a note-taking tool during the video.
- Play the video, pausing if needed to facilitate understanding and note-taking.
- Review and discuss answers to the Viewing Guide using Answer Key as a guide.
- Use Discussion Questions to spark class discussion, or assign these questions as homework.
- As a class or in small groups, complete the *Who Chooses Activity*
- Replay the video as preparation for the Quiz.
- Administer and grade the Quiz using Answer Key as a guide.
- Optional: Assign one or more Enrichment Activities as homework.

If you'd like to explore the First Amendment in slightly more depth with your students, consider using our **free, online Learning Module** on the First Amendment. (Visit [https://izzit.org/learning\\_modules](https://izzit.org/learning_modules) to see all of our online Learning Modules.)

# ***First Amendment***

## **Preview Questions**

1. What are "natural rights?"
2. Does the First Amendment's right to free speech protect offensive speech?  
Explain your thoughts.
3. Why is freedom of the press important?
4. What is the "Marketplace of Ideas?"

# *First Amendment*

## Key Terms & Definitions

**Abridged:** Curtailed, limited

**Alien and Sedition Acts:** A series of four laws passed by the U.S. Congress in 1798 which greatly restricted freedom of speech and the press

**Amendment:** A change or addition to a piece of legislation

**Bulwark:** A person, institution, or principle that acts as a defense

**Censorship:** The suppression or prohibition of books, films, news, (or parts thereof) etc. that are considered obscene, politically unacceptable, or a threat to security

**Collectively:** As a whole

**Corruption:** Dishonest behavior often by powerful people

**Counter:** To act in opposition to

**Counterintuitive:** Contrary to what one would normally expect

**Deliberately:** Done consciously and intentionally

**Despotic:** A government using oppressive, absolute power and authority over the people

**Dictatorship:** A form of government in which absolute power is concentrated in a dictator or a small clique

**Dissent:** To disagree with

**Expressly:** Clearly

**Fiendishly:** Extremely bad, unpleasant, or difficult

**Forbidden:** Not allowed

**Founded:** To establish or originate

**Founders:** The people who signed the Declaration of Independence and were involved in the Revolutionary War

**Framers:** The people who attended the Constitutional Convention and structured the U.S. government

**Fundamental:** Of central importance

**Grievances:** A real or imagined wrong or other cause for protest

**Guarantee:** An assurance for the fulfillment of a condition

**Inalienable:** Unable to be taken away or given away. Absolute

**Indecent:** Grossly improper or offensive

**Invariably:** In every case or on every occasion; always

**Lifeblood:** The indispensable factor or influence that gives something its strength and vitality

**Marketplace of Ideas:** The concept that all ideas should be openly discussed and debated  
**Offended:** Resentful or annoyed as the result of a real or perceived insult

**Peaceably:** Without violence or harm to others or their property

**Petition:** Make or present a formal request to (an authority) with respect to a cause

**Principles:** Rules or code of conduct

**Prohibited:** Banned, not allowed

**Pure democracy:** A form of democracy in which the laws and policies are made directly by the citizens rather than by representatives and in which the majority always rules (as opposed to being constrained by rule of law.)

**Puritan:** A member of a group of English Protestants of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries who regarded the Reformation of the Church of England under Elizabeth as incomplete and wanted to "purify" it of any remnants of Catholicism.

**Ratify/Ratification:** To sign and make official

**Redress:** Compensation for an injustice or a wrong

**Refugee:** A person who has been forced to leave their country to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster

**Siege:** A persistent or serious attack

**Suppress:** Prevent the spread or distribution of

**Tolerate:** To allow something to continue or exist even if you do not agree with something

**Totalitarian:** Relating to a system of government that is centralized and dictatorial and requires complete subservience of the people to the state

**Trifecta:** A series of three

**Tyranny:** Rule by a cruel and oppressive government, often without legal right

**Unprecedented:** Something new, never known or done before

**Venerate:** To regard with great respect

**Vicious:** Deliberately cruel or violent

**Valid:** Having a sound basis in logic or fact

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# ***First Amendment*** **Viewing Guide**

1. The story begins when a copy of the \_\_\_\_\_ reaches the author of the Declaration of \_\_\_\_\_.
2. \_\_\_\_\_, the Father of the Constitution, was at first very strongly opposed to having a Bill of Rights. Why? Because he knew the second you started trying to list them, you would invariably \_\_\_\_\_.
3. We do not have a pure \_\_\_\_\_ where the \_\_\_\_\_ always controls.
4. Free speech, free thought, free religion. The \_\_\_\_\_ should not be involved in any of these things.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ of the thirteen colonies were settled by \_\_\_\_\_ refugees.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ shall make no law respecting the \_\_\_\_\_ of religion, or the \_\_\_\_\_ thereof.
7. True \_\_\_\_\_ government wants to control your \_\_\_\_\_, your \_\_\_\_\_, and your \_\_\_\_\_.
8. We have a strong belief that no government should be able to tell us what we \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ say.
9. The Supreme Court heard a series of cases trying to set a standard for what could be deemed \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ but eventually gave up.

10. The right of the people \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_,  
and to petition the government for a \_\_\_\_\_ of  
\_\_\_\_\_...

11. The Framers wrote the \_\_\_\_\_, the first Congress  
added a \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.

12. It was outlawing \_\_\_\_\_! Seven years after the  
\_\_\_\_\_ was adopted.

13. The \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ is one of the great  
bulwarks of \_\_\_\_\_.

14. That combination of free \_\_\_\_\_ and a free  
\_\_\_\_\_ really defines the United States more than any other right.

15. We are teaching people from \_\_\_\_\_ through  
\_\_\_\_\_ that they have a right not to be \_\_\_\_\_.

16. We've lost the idea that you should counter \_\_\_\_\_ ideas and \_\_\_\_\_  
thoughts with \_\_\_\_\_ ideas and drive them from the  
\_\_\_\_\_.

17. Martin Luther King wrote his famous letter from a Birmingham jail because his  
ideas were considered \_\_\_\_\_ and  
\_\_\_\_\_.

18. The great safeguard of liberty is a government of \_\_\_\_\_ and not of  
\_\_\_\_\_.



# *First Amendment* Viewing Guide Answer Key

1. Constitution, Independence
2. James Madison, leave some out.
3. Democracy, majority
4. Government
5. Six, religious
6. Congress, establishment, free exercise
7. Totalitarian, speech, ideas, mind
8. Must, must not
9. Indecent, censored
10. Peaceably, assemble, redress, grievances
11. Constitution, Bill, Rights
12. Dissent, First Amendment
13. Freedom, press, liberty
14. Speech, press
15. Kindergarten, college, offended
16. Bad, bad, good, marketplace
17. Hateful, dangerous
18. Laws, men

# *First Amendment* Discussion Questions

(These can be used for discussion after the film. Or use them as essay questions and have students respond in writing.)

1. Why is it important that these rights are rights that people are born with, not granted by a government?
2. Do you agree with the woman in the video that we often take our rights, especially our First Amendment rights, for granted? Why or why not?
3. Writer Jonathan Rauch points out that the government not being involved in speech, thought, and religion was “an unprecedented idea, never been tried before.”
  - a. Do you think government should or should not be involved in these things and why?
  - b. Do you think government has stayed out of these areas or have they encroached into them?
4. Why is freedom of religion such an important concept?
5. What did Voltaire mean when he said, "If there were one religion in England there would be tyranny. If there were two, they would cut each other's throats. But there are thirty, so they live happily and in peace."? Why does one state-sponsored religion equal tyranny? Why would two "cut each other's throats?" And why can thirty religions live happily and in peace?
6. What is the difference between the Establishment Clause and the Free Exercise Clause? Why do you think the Framers included both?
7. Should the President have the power to jail people for political speech, particularly speech that criticizes the president and government? Why or why not?
8. Why is the freedom to speak up against the president or any part of the government, such an important freedom?
9. Writer Jonathan Rauch says “... the single most counter-intuitive idea in human

history: the idea that it's good for society and good for us as individuals to encounter offensive speech and hate speech. That idea has always been under siege and always will be."

a. Do you agree that it is good for us to encounter hateful or irritating speech? Why or why not?

b. What possible benefits could there be to reading/hearing speech that is irritating or offensive?

c. Who should decide what speech is offensive? Justify your position.

d. Should you be allowed to express speech other people find irritating or offensive?

e. The word argue comes from the Latin, meaning "to polish." How does listening to those who you find irritating make your arguments better? How does debating/discussing with that person make their argument better?

10. Should free speech be protected, even if it is unpopular speech that the majority of people disagree with? Why or why not? Does the Constitution (and Supreme Court) support your stance on this? Explain.

11. Just because the Constitution protects unpopular or offensive speech, does that mean that your speech has no consequences? You can say what you want without anything happening to you? What could result from a person speaking offensively?

a. Is there a time to speak out, even though what you have to say may be considered offensive and there could be consequences? Under what circumstances would you do that? Explain.

b. Are some people behaving badly (in almost a bully fashion) in trying to get people fired from their jobs, etc. ("cancel culture") for something they said? Does it matter if they said "the thing" recently, or years ago? What consequences are reasonable and what would be unreasonable? Who gets to decide which speech is acceptable or not, and which consequences should be handed out in which cases?

12. How is the press supposed to act as a check/balance against the government? Do you feel the press is doing that today? Why or why not?

13. In one section, we saw two different reporters asserting their First Amendment

rights. In one clip, a professor calls for students to help her "get this reporter out of here!"

a. Do you agree that the reporter had the right to be where he was? Why or why not? Is your answer based on the way you "feel" or the Constitution? Explain.

b. What could happen if the students help "muscle" the reporter out of there? What could be the consequences to them?

14. What do you think is the greatest threat to freedom of the press today? How can citizens ensure our free press is protected?

15. Why did the Framers specifically include the right to peaceable assembly? Not just assembly?

16. In the video, Judge Ginsberg says that immigration, specifically people studying to and becoming citizens of the United States, renews us as a country.

a. What does he mean by this?

b. What perspective do these new citizens provide us? And how is that tied into the First Amendment?

17. Why do we have a representative democracy as opposed to a pure democracy? Who is this supposed to protect?

# *First Amendment*

## **Activity: Who Chooses? Who Benefits? Who Pays? What's Fair?**

The four questions above can be a useful tool for evaluating any policy or system. Posing the questions is a great way to stimulate critical thinking. As a class, or in small groups, discuss the following:

*(For each question, think broadly about all the possible people or groups of people who may be affected, and remember there may be non-monetary costs and benefits.)*

A college campus group has invited Ms. A to come and speak on campus, using funds they raised. Other students declare that Ms. A should not be allowed on campus as what she has to say may be offensive to some. The college decides to allow the speech to continue and encourages students to peacefully protest, or better still, to respectfully challenge the speaker's ideas by asking questions when allowed during the presentation.

1. Who should choose which speakers can address student groups on campus? Should everyone have to agree on a speaker? What would happen if everyone did have to agree (reach consensus) about speakers who could present on campus?
2. Who benefits from freedom of speech on campus (and everywhere)? Who benefits if some speakers are "cancelled?"
3. Who pays, and how, when free speech is shut down? Who pays if protesters damage school buildings, cars, or physically harm people? Does who pays the speaker's fees influence if they should be allowed to speak? Why or why not?
4. What's fair in this case? Is causing damage to property or harm to individuals fair? Is peaceful protesting fair? Is cancelling the speaker fair? Is allowing the speaker to present fair? Explain your reasoning for your answers.
5. Would it be more fair to apply "content neutral" rules for speakers? That is, the rules apply the same to all speakers, regardless of the actual content of their speech? Why or why not?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# ***First Amendment*** **Quiz**

1. The First Amendment covers \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Free speech, free press, freedom from unreasonable search & seizure, freedom of religion
  - b. Free speech, freedom of religion, freedom to keep and bear arms, the right to peaceful assembly & to petition the government for a redress of grievances
  - c. Free speech, free press, freedom of religion, freedom to keep and bear arms
  - d. Free speech, free press, freedom of religion, the right to peaceful assembly & to petition the government for a redress of grievances
  
2. This man is considered the "Father of the Constitution."
  - a. Thomas Jefferson
  - b. Alexander Hamilton
  - c. James Madison
  - d. George Mason
  
3. Disagreements about \_\_\_\_\_ had caused wars in Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.
  - a. politics
  - b. who should be king
  - c. religion
  - d. natural resources
  
4. The concept that all ideas should be openly discussed and debated, and bad ideas challenged by good ideas is called \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. the Marketplace of Ideas
  - b. the right to free speech
  - c. the Open Marketplace
  - d. the Free Market
  
5. Religious refugees founded \_\_\_\_\_ of the Thirteen Colonies.
  - a. four
  - b. six
  - c. three
  - d. all

6. The Alien & Sedition Acts \_\_\_\_\_.
- a. made it illegal to criticize the government
  - b. made it illegal to come from another country to live in the U.S.
  - c. didn't conflict with the First Amendment
  - d. was an executive order by President John Adams
7. The First Amendment \_\_\_\_\_.
- a. Protects rights the people already have
  - b. Grants rights from the government to the people
  - c. Protects people from being offended
  - d. Allows protesters to damage property while protesting
8. A free press is meant to \_\_\_\_\_.
- a. act as a watchdog over the government
  - b. provide news slanted to a particular audience
  - c. force the government into doing what the people want
  - d. act as a watchdog over the people
9. The First Amendment does NOT cover the right to \_\_\_\_\_.
- a. free speech
  - b. worship as you please
  - c. protest peacefully
  - d. not be offended
10. Silencing those who offend us and with whom we disagree \_\_\_\_\_.
- a. is the best way to keep life peaceful
  - b. infringes on their First Amendment rights
  - c. is self-defense
  - d. is our right as Americans

# ***First Amendment*** **Quiz Answer Key**

1. D
2. C
3. C
4. A
5. B
6. A
7. A
8. A
9. D
10. B



# *First Amendment*

## Enrichment & Integration Activities

### Writing Exercises

1. Identify an issue you feel strongly about. (Recycling, funding schools differently, the name of a local sports team, the cost of gasoline, taxes...whatever you want.) Write a letter to the editor about this issue. Be sure you support your stance with facts.
2. Choose one of the First Amendment rights and write an essay about why that right is critical for a free society.
3. Choose one of the First Amendment rights and create a slide presentation or video to teach others about that right. Write a script first!

### Science, Technology & Research

**Social Media & Free Speech** – Research how (or if) the First Amendment applies to social media platforms. Do social media platforms have the right to censor certain viewpoints on their platforms? Why or why not? Even if they CAN censor certain viewpoints, should they? Why or why not? Does it depend on what the viewpoint is?

Why has the Supreme Court said that any restrictions on these rights that the government applies must be applied in a content-neutral way? Should social media platforms adopt that same "content-neutral" outlook? Why or why not?

What concerns do social media platforms likely have in allowing completely free speech on their sites/platforms?

If you were the CEO of a social media platform, what recommendations would you make for how your company handles free speech?

**Deepfakes** – Deepfakes are videos (or audio files) that appear to be real but aren't. (They appear to show specific people doing things they didn't.) They're created using Artificial Intelligence software. They can be used for entertainment (such as showing actors who have died in new roles) but they can also be used to mislead people. Video explaining Deepfakes - <https://www.wired.com/video/watch/researcher-explains-deepfake-videos>

Have students search the internet for several examples of DeepFakes and share them with the class.

Discuss: Should Deepfakes be protected as a form of free speech? Why or why not? Does the intent of the Deepfake matter? Does the content matter? What other

consequences might you predict if Deepfakes become more common? Could this impact freedom of the press? How so? What limitations might you recommend?

**Scientific Free Speech** – How does free speech (or the lack thereof) impact the scientific community? What impact might it have on our society if scientists are not allowed to freely share their discoveries with us? How do people in power attempt to use/control scientific information, and why? Scientists have been "muted" often by governments in the past. Do an internet search to discover which scientists have been censored and why.

Beware that this is often a very politically-charged idea. Articles may have slants/bias. (Could be helpful to have students work to identify such things.)

Here are some resources about Scientific Free Speech that may be useful:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2656210/>

<https://quillette.com/2018/04/13/scientific-importance-free-speech/>

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-05-psychologists-alternative-free-speech.html>

<https://slate.com/technology/2017/12/there-is-no-ban-on-words-at-the-cdc.html>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/16/health/cdc-trump-banned-words.html>

<https://www.cnn.com/2017/12/17/opinions/cdc-banned-words-opinion-fisher/index.html>

# First Amendment

## Importance of First Amendment Rights Lesson Plan

<b>Time to Complete:</b>	50 mins
<b>Materials/ Technology/ Resources:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* The <b>First Amendment</b> video (can be streamed from <a href="http://izzit.org">izzit.org</a> with no login required.)</li><li>* Presentation Method (smartboard, projector, etc.)</li><li>* Viewing Guide</li><li>* First Amendment Rights Worksheet</li></ul>
<b>Standards:</b>	Use our free and easy-to-use <a href="#">Standard Alignment</a> tool to align this lesson with the standards in your school district.
<b>Learning Objectives:</b>	<i>Students will identify the rights guaranteed by the First Amendment and explain the importance of these rights. They will relate current events to the exercise of these rights and provide examples.</i>
<b>Topics:</b>	Constitution, Bill of Rights, First Amendment Rights, Free Speech, Freedom of Religion, Freedom of the Press, Freedom to Petition for Redress of Grievances, Freedom of Assembly
<b>Absorb:</b> <b>(TIME of video)</b>	<u>Watch:</u> <b>First Amendment</b> video streamed from <a href="http://izzit.org">izzit.org</a> with no login required.
<b>Overall guiding question(s):</b>	<b>Why are the rights protected by the First Amendment so important? What are examples of people exercising these rights today?</b>

<b>Lesson Procedures: (Approx. Time)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Watch video: <b><i>First Amendment</i></b></li><li>2. PROCEDURES: If desired, have students complete the <a href="#">Viewing Guide</a> while watching the video.</li><li>3. List each of the rights on the board. Discuss the importance of each right.</li><li>4. Individually or in groups, have students complete the First Amendment Rights Worksheet. They will list why each right is important, and then research and list examples of each right being exercised today.</li></ol>
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<b>Summary &amp; Assessment:</b>	<p>Assessment can be on content and/or each student's contribution to discussion.</p> <p>Bring students back together to have the groups discuss their worksheets, especially the examples they came up with.</p>
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<b>Reflection: (5 minutes)</b>	<p>What would be the impact on our society if suddenly these rights were forbidden to practice?</p>
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# First Amendment Rights Worksheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Fill in the table below with a explanation of why each of the rights in the First Amendment is important (to you and to society as a whole). Then fill in at least one example of the right being exercised in current events.

<b>Rights of the First Amendment</b>	<b>Why This Right is important</b>	<b>An Example of This Right Being Exercised Today</b>
<b>Freedom of Speech</b>		
<b>Freedom of Religion</b>		
<b>Freedom of the Press</b>		
<b>Freedom of Assembly</b>		
<b>Freedom to Petition for Redress of Grievances</b>		

# *First Amendment*

## Banned Books Lesson Plan

<p><b>Time to Complete:</b></p> <p><b>Materials/ Technology/ Resources:</b></p>	<p>50 mins</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* The <i>First Amendment</i> video (can be streamed from <a href="http://izzit.org">izzit.org</a> with no login required.)</li> <li>* Presentation Method (smartboard, projector, etc.)</li> <li>* Viewing Guide</li> <li>* Banned Books Worksheet</li> </ul> <p><a href="http://www.ala.org/advocacy/bbooks/frequentlychallengedbooks/top10">http://www.ala.org/advocacy/bbooks/frequentlychallengedbooks/top10</a></p>
<p><b>Standards:</b></p>	<p>Use our free and easy-to-use <a href="#">Standard Alignment</a> tool to align this lesson with the standards in your school district.</p>
<p><b>Learning Objectives:</b></p>	<p>Students will recognize books that have been challenged or banned and the reasons for those challenges/bans. They will evaluate the reasons and support their agreement or disagreement with the bans.</p>
<p><b>Topics:</b></p>	<p>Free Speech, Constitution, Censorship, Banned books</p>
<p><b>Absorb:</b>  (TIME of video)</p>	<p><u>Watch:</u></p> <p><i>First Amendment</i> video streamed from <a href="http://izzit.org">izzit.org</a> with no login required.</p>
<p><b>Overall guiding question(s):</b></p>	<p><b>Why are books challenged or banned? How does book banning relate to the Constitution and free speech?</b></p>

<b>Lesson Procedures: (Approx. Time)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Ask students if they've ever read <i>Captain Underpants</i> or <i>Where the Wild Things Are</i>. (Show a copy of the book or display cover on screen.) Would they be surprised to know that some places had banned both of those books? Do they know any other books that have been banned?</li><li>2. Watch video: <b><i>First Amendment</i></b> (Can watch only up through the segment on censorship and banning books, if so desired.)</li><li>3. If desired, have students use the <a href="#">Viewing Guide</a> while watching.</li></ol> <p>Give students the Banned Books Worksheet. Have them fill out individually or in groups. They will need to be able to research on the internet as well to complete the worksheet.</p>
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<b>Summary &amp; Assessment:</b>	What book included on challenged/banned lists surprised them the most? Which the least? Have them share their thoughts on the titles. Have students vote on which books they think should be banned. Why do they think that?
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<b>Reflection:(5 minutes)</b>	What does society lose when books are banned?
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# Banned Books Worksheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Theorize why each book has been challenged or banned. Find four more titles that have been challenged or banned to add to your list. Then research the actual reasons for their challenge/banning. Finally, do you agree or disagree that each should be banned and why?

Title of Book	Why You Think It Was Challenged/Banned	Why It Actually Was Challenged/Banned	Agree/Disagree with Banning This Book & Why
<b>The Bible</b>			
<b>Captain Underpants</b>			
<b>Where the Wild Things Are</b>			
<b>Where the Sidewalk Ends</b>			





Title of Book	Why You Think It Was Challenged/ Banned	Why It Actually Was Challenged/Banned	Agree/Disagree with Banning This Book & Why

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