

## **Kid Civics: Freedom of Expression**

### General Lesson Structure

- 1. Introduction: Start with a discussion to engage students in the topic. Possible questions include:**
  - a. When you look at your school, your community, the world around you, is there anything that you wish were different?
  - b. Have you ever noticed an issue that makes you angry and think, “somebody ought to do something about that!” That reaction is spurred by a conviction that the issue matters to *you*. In fact, YOU have unique thoughts that nobody else has, and when you speak those thoughts, it can make the world a better place.
- 2. Watch Kid Civics Video: Freedom of Expression**
- 3. Discuss:**
  - a. What are some important freedoms protected by the First Amendment?
  - b. Why would the government want to punish someone for speaking their mind?
  - c. What are some limits to freedom of speech?
  - d. Someone’s expression of their ideas might make you mad or hurt your feelings. And yet we live in a society in which people have lots of different ideas, some of which we like and some of which we don’t like. We must be willing to defend even speech that we don’t like if we want to create space for us to speak our minds, too. How should we respond if we hear speech we don’t like or that hurts our feelings?
- 4. Activity:**
  - a. If your class created a Constitution and amendments after the first two Kid Civics episodes, ask whether they think freedom of speech should be protected in the classroom.
  - b. Then, brainstorm what “time, place and manner” restrictions should be imposed on freedom of speech so that it doesn’t harm the learning environment or limit someone else’s freedom of speech. (i.e. Students raise hands, wait to speak at the end of class, use inside voices, etc.)
- 5. Activity:**
  - a. Have students design posters to express their view of a problem they would like to see addressed in society.
  - b. Optional: Give them a chance to display their posters for the rest of the school to see.
- 6. Closing and reflection:**
  - a. Summarize the key points:
    - i. The First Amendment of the Constitution protects your right to freely express yourself, with limits.
    - ii. Individuals and groups can use freedom of speech to raise awareness of issues in society and convince others to join their cause. While some may not like their ideas, the Constitution protects their right to share them.
    - iii. In a pluralistic society, we may encounter ideas that we don’t like, but we have to remember that doesn’t mean we get to shut them down. If we want

our freedoms protected, we must be willing to protect the freedoms of others, even those we don't like.

**7. Lesson Learning Goals:**

- a. Understand how the First Amendment protects individuals' right to freely express themselves.
- b. Understand how individuals and groups in American history have used the First Amendment to create positive change.
- c. Understand that freedom of expression has limits when it puts people in harm's way or prevents other people from expressing themselves.

# Vocabulary Aid: Bill of Rights

## **FIRST AMENDMENT**

*Abridging*: Limit or take away.

*Establishment of religion*: Picking a favorite religion and make everyone follow it.

*Free exercise of religion*: Believing and practicing your religion in your own way.

*Petition*: Asking the government to fix a problem.

*Prohibiting*: Stopping someone from doing something.

*Redress*: To make something that was unfair right again.

*Thereof*: Refers to something just mentioned.

## **SECOND AMENDMENT**

*Bear arms*: Owning and carrying a gun

*Infringed*: Taken away

*Militia*: A group of everyday, ordinary people who are ready to fight for their state or country.

*Regulated*: Rules that help something work properly.

## **THIRD AMENDMENT**

*Quartered*: To give someone a place to stay.

*Consent*: Giving your permission to something.

*Prescribed*: Decided by rule or law.

*Regulated*: Rules that help something work properly.\

#### **FOURTH AMENDMENT**

*Seizure:* When police take something to use as evidence in a crime.

*Probable cause:* When police have a good reason (in the form of evidence) to believe that someone has committed a crime.

*Warrant:* An order from a judge that gives the police permission to search an area.

*Particularly:* Specifically or exactly.

*Violated:* When a rule is not followed.

*Shall Issue:* Can be given

*Oath or affirmation:* A serious commitment to be honest.

#### **FIFTH AMENDMENT**

*Incrimination:* Proof or evidence that someone broke the law.

*Capital crime:* A serious crime punishable by death.

*Indictment:* When police or the courts officially charge someone with a crime.

*Grand jury:* A group of people who decide whether there's enough evidence to put a person on trial for a crime.

*Offense:* When someone breaks a rule or law.

*Jeopardy:* When you could get in trouble or punished for something.

*Compelled:* Required

*Due process of law:* Following proper procedures

## **SIXTH AMENDMENT**

*Accused:* The person people think did something wrong.

*Prosecutions:* When the government tries to prove someone did a crime.

*Trial:* When people go to court to figure out if someone did something wrong.

*Impartial jury:* A group of people who listen fairly and don't take sides.

*Ascertained:* When you make sure something is correct.

*Compulsory:* Required.

*Counsel:* A lawyer who helps people in court.

*Witnesses:* People who tell what they saw or heard about what happened.

## **EIGHTH AMENDMENT**

*Excessive:* More than necessary

*Fines:* Having to pay money because you did something wrong.

*Bail:* Money you give the court so you can get out of jail while waiting a trial.

*Imposed:* Made a rule or punishment happen.

*Inflicted:* Someone causes hurt or damage to someone else.

## **NINTH AMENDMENT**

*Enumeration:* Listed

*Construed:* Interpreted

*Deny:* Hold something back.

*Disparage:* To make something seem less important

## **TENTH AMENDMENT**

*Delegated:* Given a job or a power

*Prohibited:* Not allowed

*Reserved:* Saved or kept for someone or something