

Kid Civics: Freedom of Press

General Lesson Structure

- 1. Introduction: Start with a discussion to engage students in the topic. Possible questions include:**
 - a. Where do you look to find information about things going on in your community? Have you ever used that information to make a decision?
 - b. What kinds of decisions do citizens in a democracy need to make? What kind of information do they need to make those decisions?
 - c. Where should their information come from? Why is it important to know who is publishing the information that we are using to form our opinions and our decisions?
- 2. Watch Kid Civics Video: Freedom of the Press**
- 3. Discuss:**
 - a. How does the First Amendment protect the media from government interference into what they publish?
 - b. Why is freedom of the press important in a democracy, where individuals get to make decisions to influence their government?
 - c. Why might the government want to restrict certain information from reaching the public?
 - d. Does freedom of the press mean that the media can publish false information that hurts your reputation?
 - e. How do laws against defamation limit freedom of the press?
- 4. Activity:**
 - a. Have students write articles for a classroom newspaper. Decide who the audience would be and what kind of information they would need to make decisions or benefit their lives. Brainstorm articles the students could write and discuss where they might go to find information for their articles. Encourage them to interview sources within the school to get information for their articles. Alternatively, brainstorm topics on which students could write opposing viewpoints to be published in your classroom newsletter.
 - b. Put the articles into a newspaper format and distribute to the intended audience.
- 5. Closing and reflection:**
 - a. Summarize the key points:
 - i. The First Amendment of the Constitution protects the media from government interference in what they publish.
 - ii. Individuals and groups can use freedom of press to raise awareness of issues in society and convince others to join their cause. While the government 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.
- 6. Lesson Learning Goals:**

- a. Understand how the First Amendment protects freedom of the press.
- b. Understand why freedom of the press is essential for a democratic republic form of government.
- c. Understand that freedom of press is limited by defamation law, which prohibits libel and slander.

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