



2023 Citizenship Challenge Prompt:

The First Amendment in the Bill of Rights in the American Constitution guarantees individual rights and is a foundation for life in the United States. In your own words, explain the amendment, its importance to Americans, and indicate which freedom you think is most important and why.

The Amendment Text:

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof: or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people to peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

Vocabulary:

Congress- the elected representatives of the people in the House and the Senate

Establishment- the formation; setting up

Exercise- practice; doing; activity

Abridging- shorten; stop; inhibit

Speech-communication

Press- newspapers, journalism, telling the news

Peaceably- not violent; quiet; orderly

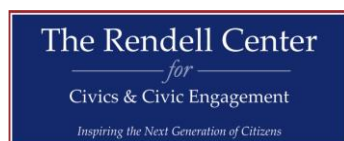
Assemble- gather, group

Redress- deal with; attention

Grievances- concerns, injustices

Teacher Notes:

1. The government of the United States can make no law which controls religion or participating in religious practices.



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2. The government can make no law to control the expression of speech or any communication.
3. The government can make no law to keep the people from peaceful assembly.
4. The government can make no law to keep the people from going to the government with concerns to be addressed.

Learning Intentions: The student will be learning about the first amendment of the American Constitution so that they can communicate in their own words its meaning and importance to the country and their personal experience.

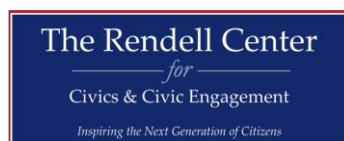
Success Criteria:

1. Students will analyze the first amendment for meaning.
2. Students will illustrate the meaning of the first amendment.
3. Students will give a verbal argument on which freedom in the amendment is most important to them.
4. Students will complete writing prompt: **The First Amendment in the Bill of Rights in the American Constitution guarantees individual rights and is a foundation for life in the United States. In your own words, explain the amendment, its importance to Americans, and indicate which freedom you think is most important and why.**

Lesson Plan:

Part One:

1. Check for prior knowledge of how many students are familiar with the Constitution of the United States. Explain the Constitution is the document that sets up the government of the United States. The constitution is written so that everyone can know what the rules are for the government, The Bill of Rights are the first ten amendments to the constitution that gives more guidance to the government on what the government can and cannot do.
2. Read the first amendment to the class: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof: or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people to peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”
3. Ask students if there are any words there, they don’t know. Once identified, use context clues to help determine meaning, or have students look up definition and share with the class, or give students a synonym or meaning for the word.
4. Divide the class into four groups. Each group will get one section of the first amendment.
 - a. Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof



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- b. abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press
 - c. the right of the people to peaceably to assemble,
 - d. to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.
5. Have students identify the vocabulary words that are new to them. Have students work together to determine the meaning of the words. Have students use the synonyms in the context of the amendment.
6. Each group will share out their section of the amendment with the simpler wording or meaning they came up with.

Part Two:

With the new student wording of the amendment send the students into 4 groups. They can be the same groups or different members.

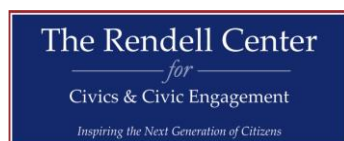
1. Each group will get their new wording of the amendment. The group will discuss the meaning and examples of the freedom to share with the class.
2. Give each group large poster paper and drawing implements. Each group will illustrate examples of the freedom they were assigned.
3. When completed, each group will share their work and explain their work to the class.
4. After each presentation ask the class to give additional examples to put on the poster.

Part Three:

1. Have each student created poster in each corner of the room.
2. Ask students to go stand with the poster of the freedom they think is the most important to them.
3. When students have chosen a freedom, ask them why they chose that as most important. Get one or two students to give an argument for their choice.
4. Ask if any student would like to change their mind and move to support that freedom as their most important. Permit students to move.
5. Continue doing this procedure with each freedom until all freedoms are argued as most important.
6. The freedom that has the most students will be determined to be the most important freedom. Stress that the others are still extremely important freedoms and we want to protect all of them.

Part Four:

1. Have students reflect on the activities they have completed using the first amendment.
2. Give students the writing prompt from the Rendell Center: **The First Amendment in the Bill of Rights in the American Constitution guarantees individual rights and is a foundation for life in the United States. In your own words, explain the amendment, its importance to Americans, and indicate which freedom you think is most important and why.**
3. Have students use the writing process to complete the prompt.



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