

First Amendment Socratic Study Questions

1. What do you think "freedom of speech" is? What does it mean?
2. What do you think "abridge" means?
3. Some have argued that for speech to be protected by the First Amendment, it has to be political speech, such as commenting on a campaign.
 - Does the Supreme Court agree with that?
 - Do you?
4. The Court says that the government can make rules on speech that involve time, manner, or place are allowed (meaning a government can tell you not to use a bullhorn in a park at 1 a.m. at night). But, the Court insists, these rules must be "viewpoint neutral"? What do you think they mean by that?
5. Does the Supreme Court believe that it matters whether someone is offended when deciding whether government can restrict speech?
 - Do you agree with the Court's answer?
6. Why is free speech important?
7. Are there reasons we might want the government to stop offensive speech?
8. Are there reasons we might think allowing the government to determine what speech is allowed is a bad idea?
9. How do current events affect your opinions?
10. How does your knowledge of history affect your opinions?
11. Are any of the parts of this bill unconstitutional? If so which? And why are those parts unconstitutional?
12. Are the parts of the bill that you think are constitutional also good ideas that should be passed? Or are they a bad idea even if constitutional? Why or why not?
13. Some scholars have argued that if the First Amendment does indeed protect offensive speech, it should be repealed. Do you agree?