



# How well do you know the First Amendment?

## NEWS LITERACY QUIZ

These 7 questions test your knowledge of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Can you ace it?



ANSWERS ON BACK →

**Q1** How many freedoms are protected by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution?

3

4

5

6

**Q4** It is possible to repeal (remove) the First Amendment from the U.S. Constitution.

TRUE

FALSE

**Q5** Public school students who refuse to say and/or stand for the Pledge of Allegiance can be punished.

TRUE

FALSE

**Q6** The U.S. Supreme Court has established that the First Amendment does not protect student expression that...

*Circle all that apply.*

**A** Makes the school administration look bad.

**B** Disrupts the learning environment.

**C** Is profane, vulgar or lewd.

**D** Is about controversial political issues.

**E** Promotes illegal activity.

**Q2** Which of the following freedoms are protected by the First Amendment?

*Circle all that apply.*

**A** Freedom of speech

**D** Freedom of religion

**B** Freedom of choice

**E** Freedom of information

**C** Freedom of the press

**F** Freedom to petition the government

**Q3** One freedom was not listed in the previous question. Can you fill in the blank?

Freedom to

peacefully.

**Q7** The First Amendment protects you from...

*Circle all that apply.*

**A** Being fired from a private company for something you post publicly on Facebook.

**B** Being arrested for writing a blog post criticizing the government.

**C** Having a comment, a post or your entire account removed by a social media platform, such as Facebook, YouTube or Twitter.

**D** Being arrested for recording the actions of police in public.

**E** Having your religious student club barred from using school facilities for meetings after school.

## QUIZ ANSWER KEY: HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW THE FIRST AMENDMENT?

Q1 The First Amendment protects

**5 basic freedoms.**

Q2 While the First Amendment protects five freedoms, only four are listed:

- A** freedom of speech,
- C** freedom of the press,
- D** freedom of religion and
- F** freedom to petition the government.

Q3 Freedom to **assemble** peacefully.

The First Amendment protects the people's right to assemble in public spaces as long as such gatherings do not pose an immediate threat to public safety.

Q4 **True.**

Any part of the U.S. Constitution can be amended or repealed, but it is extremely unlikely. It would require approval by a two-thirds majority in both the U.S. House (290 of 435) and the U.S. Senate (66 of 100) *and* ratification by three-fourths (38) of the 50 states.

Q5 **False.**

Several cases, including the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark *West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette* (1943) ruling, have established that public schools cannot punish students for refusing to recite the pledge.

Q6 The U.S. Supreme Court has established that the First Amendment does not protect student expression that...

- B** Disrupts the learning environment.
- C** Is profane, vulgar or lewd.
- E** Promotes illegal activity.

While most student speech is protected by the First Amendment, certain limits apply. Several cases have established limits on student expression while in school.

In *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District* (1969), students wearing armbands to protest the Vietnam War were protected because the school district could not prove that their protest was disruptive to the school environment, a key factor for such cases.

In *Morse v. Frederick* (2007), a student's suspension did not violate his rights because his protest sign advocated illegal drug use.

Finally, in *Bethel School District No. 403 v. Fraser* (1986), the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that vulgar or lewd speech undermines a school's fundamental educational mission.

Q7 The First Amendment protects you from...

- B** Being arrested for writing a blog post criticizing the government.
- D** Being arrested for recording the actions of police in public
- E** Having your religious student club barred from using school facilities for meetings after school.

The First Amendment protects you only from *government* action against you for (legal) acts of expression. Private companies can legally fire, ban, censor or refuse to serve you because of your expressive activities without violating the First Amendment.

(Note that state and federal civil rights laws prohibit private companies from discrimination for reasons of race, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability and sexual orientation.)



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### About NLP

The News Literacy Project, founded in 2008, is a nonpartisan nonprofit building a national movement to ensure that all students are skilled in news literacy before high school graduation, giving them the knowledge and ability to participate in civic society as well-informed, critical thinkers.

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