



SCHOOL VIOLENCE PREVENTION DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM

FIRST AMENDMENT GRAFFITI

By Heather Cagle

Activity Description

Students read a short biographical story about a historical figure associated with freedoms in the First Amendment. Assign each student one of the correlating freedoms, then instruct them to write an essay or paragraph about its significance. Highlight a sentence within each summary that will be written on a designated section of a First Amendment display.

Suggested Grade Level

Upper elementary and middle school

Estimated Time to Complete

Two 45-minute class periods

Objectives

Students will be able to

- interpret the meaning of the First Amendment;
- explain the significance of the freedoms within the First Amendment.

Materials Needed

- Printed-out biographical short stories from <http://www.freedomforum.org/packages/first/Curricula/EducationforFreedom/L01main.htm>
- Permanent markers
- Large canvas dropcloth or butcher block paper

Activity Procedures

1. Hand each student one copy of text from one of the following biographical short stories to read:
 - *The Story of Cesar Chavez*
<http://www.freedomforum.org/packages/first/Curricula/EducationforFreedom/supportpages/L01-CesarChavez.htm>
 - *The Story of Thomas Waring*
<http://www.freedomforum.org/packages/first/Curricula/EducationforFreedom/supportpages/L01-ThomasWaring.htm>

- *The Story of Martin Luther King Jr.*
<http://www.freedomforum.org/packages/first/Curricula/EducationforFreedom/supportpages/L01-MartinLutherKingJr.htm>
- *The Story of Ida B. Wells*
<http://www.freedomforum.org/packages/first/Curricula/EducationforFreedom/supportpages/L01-IdaBWells.htm>
- *The Story of Bridget Mergens*
<http://www.freedomforum.org/packages/first/Curricula/EducationforFreedom/supportpages/L01-BridgetMergens.htm>
- *The Story of Maya Lin*
<http://www.freedomforum.org/packages/first/Curricula/EducationforFreedom/supportpages/L01-MayaLin.htm>
- *The Story of Rosa Parks*
<http://www.freedomforum.org/packages/first/Curricula/EducationforFreedom/supportpages/L01-RosaParks.htm>
- *The Story of Sequoyah*
<http://www.freedomforum.org/packages/first/Curricula/EducationforFreedom/supportpages/L01-Sequoyah.htm>

2. After reading, assign each student one of the First Amendment freedoms (speech, assembly, petition, religion or press), then instruct them to write an essay or paragraph explaining why the freedom is significant. Their freedom should coincide with the short bibliographical story that they read (see breakdown below), so that they can include specific examples of the freedom.

Cesar Chavez: Speech, assembly, petition
Martin Luther King Jr.: Speech, assembly, petition
Ida B. Wells: Press
Thomas Waring: Religion, speech, assembly

Rosa Parks: Speech, assembly, petition
Maya Lin: Speech
Bridget Mergens: Religion, speech
Sequoyah: Speech, press

3. After students have written their essays, the teacher will highlight the best sentence in each.
4. Each student uses a marker to write the highlighted sentence on the correct portion of the dropcloth or paper display. (See example below.) *Teacher note:* Before the students write on the display, divide it into six sections. Write one of the five freedoms as a heading for each section then title the last section “First Amendment Freedoms,” or something snappy that your students come up with.

Common Core State Standards

English Language Arts, History/Social Studies, Grades 6–8

Key Ideas and Details

1. Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
2. Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

9. Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.

Example

