



Weekly Discussion Questions 2/3/2025

[Smith, Orion Donovan. "Who Gave Trump the Power to Do That?" The Spokesman-Review, 3 Feb. 2025](#)

Classroom Discussion Questions College Level

Freedom of the Press vs. National Security: A Legal and Ethical Debate: The First Amendment guarantees freedom of the press, yet governments have historically restricted certain publications in the name of national security. Considering cases like the Pentagon Papers and Edward Snowden's disclosures, should the government have the power to limit press freedom in such instances? Where should the line be drawn between transparency and security?

Journalism's Role in Democratic Accountability: Investigative journalism has often exposed corruption, shaped public policy, and influenced elections. How does the press serve as a check on government power? Analyze a contemporary example where journalism has led to political or social change. What are the risks and responsibilities journalists face in this role?

The Evolving Boundaries of Free Speech and Press: Courts have long debated the limits of free speech and press, from *Schenck v. United States* to modern cases involving social media and misinformation. Should constitutional boundaries on speech be interpreted strictly based on original intent, or should they evolve with societal changes? How do modern technologies and digital media challenge traditional First Amendment interpretations?

Classroom Discussion Questions Grades 9-12

Freedom of the Press vs. National Security: The First Amendment guarantees freedom of the press, but there are times when national security concerns may limit what can be published. Should the government ever have the right to restrict the press in cases of national security? Why or why not? Provide examples to support your argument.

The Role of Journalism in Democracy: In what ways do journalists act as watchdogs for democracy? Discuss a recent news story where journalists uncovered an issue that led to political or social change. How would limiting press freedoms impact the public's ability to stay informed?

Interpreting Constitutional Limits: The Constitution sets boundaries on both government power and individual rights. How do courts decide when speech or press should be limited? Should these boundaries be flexible or strictly interpreted? Support your response with historical or modern examples.

Classroom Discussion Questions Grades 6-8

Freedom of the Press and Safety: The First Amendment protects freedom of the press, but sometimes the government says certain news should not be shared for safety reasons. Do you think the government should ever stop a newspaper from printing a story? Why or why not?

Why News Matters: Journalists help people learn about important events and problems. Can you think of a time when a news story made a big difference? How would life be different if people didn't have access to news?

Rules for Speech and News: The Constitution protects freedom of speech and the press, but there are limits. How do you think courts decide when something is not allowed? Should there be strict rules, or should the rules change depending on the situation? Give an example to explain your answer.

Classroom Discussion Questions Grades 1-5

Should the News Tell Everything? The news helps people learn about what is happening in the world. But sometimes, the government says some things should stay secret to keep people safe. Do you think the news should always tell everything, or should there be some secrets? Why?

Why is News Important? Imagine if there were no news—no newspapers, TV, or online stories. How would people know what is happening in their town or the world? Why do you think it is important for people to have news?

Are There Rules for What People Can Say? In America, people can say and write what they believe. But sometimes, there are rules about what can be said, especially if it could hurt someone. Do you think there should be rules about what people can say and write in the news? Why or why not?