

Investigate All Sides

Imagine that your city's mayor asked a museum to remove all paintings by a controversial artist. Is this censorship? Carefully read the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution below. Then study the different points of view and explain why each person might have such an opinion.

FACT: First Amendment

"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 peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances."

POINT OF VIEW #1: Parent

"It's my right to insist that public museums not display inappropriate artwork where children can wander by and see it. I do not consider this a violation of our First Amendment rights."

What would make a parent feel this way? _____

POINT OF VIEW #2: Artist

"By banning my work from public museums, you are infringing on my First Amendment right to free expression."

What would make an artist feel this way? _____

POINT OF VIEW #3: City Official

"Our city has a responsibility to protect all of our citizens from harmful and unsafe situations, regardless of the First Amendment."

What would make a city official feel this way? _____

On a separate piece of paper, write one to two paragraphs describing your own opinion. Give reasons for your opinion.

Research and Write

The following topics relate to the freedom of expression:

- a) music videos banned from television
- b) "Parental Advisory" warnings on CDs
- c) movie rating system (General, Parental Guidance suggested, Parental Guidance for anyone under 13, Restricted)
- d) tabloid magazines

Choose a topic and write a four- to five-paragraph essay describing three different points of view. Finish your essay with a paragraph describing your own point of view. Persuade the reader to agree.



Teens and young adults are the groups least likely to buckle up and most likely to die in traffic accidents.*

Make a difference in your community by spreading the message that seat belts save lives. First, create a public service announcement that encourages teens to be seat belt smart. Then mail it in for a chance to see it broadcast nationally on TV!

All entries must be postmarked by 5/3/05. Ask your teacher for details.

*Source: NHTSA (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration)