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READING COMPREHENSION

FIRST AMENDMENT POP-UP

The first 10 Amendments to the United States Constitution are known as the Bill of Rights. They were added to guarantee the rights and freedoms of individual Americans.

The First Amendment is only one sentence long, but it includes many of the basic rights the Framers considered essential. To help you understand what it says, we have "popped up" some of the more challenging terms. Read the information below, then use what you have learned to answer the questions.

prohibiting: forbidding by authority; preventing from doing something.

respecting: relating to; concerned with; involving.

establishment: the creation of a private or public group.

exercise: the act or practice of something, as in religious worship.

abridging: depriving, reducing, diminishing, or shortening.

press: the gathering, publishing, or broadcasting of news; journalism.

petition: make a request, especially a formal, written plea.

assemble: gather in a group, usually for a particular purpose.

redress: relief from distress; payment for a wrong, a loss, or an injury.

grievances: suffering, injustices, or distress.

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**.

QUESTIONS *(Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.)*

1. How many basic rights does the First Amendment guarantee?
2. What two things does this Amendment say about the government's role in religion?
3. Why are *speech* and *the press* together?
4. Why is it important to be able to assemble?
5. What is meant by the right "to petition the government for a redress of grievances"? Can you think of a historical example?

BONUS QUESTION: Why do you suppose the Bill of Rights' authors considered these particular rights so important?