

T-CHART SAMPLE STUDENT RESPONSES

As you read the “Is Freedom of Speech Absolute?” article, work in your groups to determine what the pros and cons would be if freedom of speech were absolute. List as many as you can.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Absolute freedom of speech would give individuals an opportunity to express their feelings and emotions.</i>• <i>Absolute freedom of speech would allow for different identities to be prevalent in a society.</i>• <i>Absolute freedom of speech would give students an outlet to express their ideas and their frustrations honestly in school settings without fear of retribution.</i>• <i>Absolute freedom of speech would allow individuals the opportunity to express their opinions on personal, political, and societal issues.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Absolute freedom of speech would allow hate speech and speech that could incite violence.</i>• <i>Absolute freedom of speech in a school setting could cause a disruption to the school environment or cause harm to students.</i>• <i>Absolute freedom of speech could be dangerous and threatening, particularly for people who are not in a position of power.</i>• <i>Absolute freedom of speech could increase the spread of misinformation (false news), which could have harmful consequences.</i>

Now that you have created your pros and cons list, choose one of the court case examples mentioned in the reading to support your stance on the following statement: “Freedom of speech should be absolute.” Use evidence from your chosen case to support your response.

I believe freedom of speech should not be absolute, but rather should come with limitations. As a student, I value having a voice on school grounds so I can express my feelings and ideas. However, I understand full freedom of expression could be damaging in some situations. For example, in the case Boucher v. School Board of the School District of Greenfield, a student published private information and claimed he had the right to express his ideas about hacking school computers. However, if not stopped, his expression in the underground newspaper could have been harmful because it could have damaged school property or released the private information of students and teachers. It could have disrupted the school environment.