

Know Your Rights

Interpreting the Bill of Rights

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Grade Level	8th – 9th Grade	**Time Frame**	2 class periods
Subject	Social Studies	**Duration**	90–105 minutes
Course	U.S. Government, U.S. History		

Essential Question

What value do people place on individual rights? How does the Bill of Rights protect individual rights?

Summary

In this lesson, students will explore the meaning and application of the Bill of Rights. Students will summarize each amendment from the Bill of Rights in their own words and discuss the application of each amendment. Students will then discuss whether or not "ballot selfies" should be a protected form of speech.

Snapshot

Engage

Students read a letter from an alien nation and choose two amendments from the Bill of Rights that they think are most important.

Explore

In groups, students work together to summarize the first 10 amendments of the U.S. Constitution in their own words.

Explain

Students deepen their understanding of the Bill of Rights through a Jigsaw activity and by connecting these rights to given scenarios.

Extend

Students read an article and determine whether or not the "ballot selfie" should be considered a protected form of free speech.

Evaluate

Students reevaluate their amendment choices and determine if their two most-valued rights have changed from the beginning of the lesson.

Standards

ACT College and Career Readiness Standards - Reading (6-12)

CLR302: Draw simple logical conclusions in somewhat challenging passages
CLR404: Paraphrase some statements as they are used in somewhat challenging passages

ACT College and Career Readiness Standards - Writing (6-12)

I&A 402: Analyzing critical elements of an issue and differing perspectives on it. A score in this range indicates that the writer is able to: -Establish and employ a relevant context for analysis -Recognize implications, complexities and tensions, and/or underlying values and assumptions

Oklahoma Academic Standards (Social Studies Practices (8th Grade))

8.3.8: Explain how the Constitution of the United States was amended to include the Bill of Rights; identify and analyze the guarantees of individual rights and liberties as expressed in each of the ten amendments.

Attachments

- Alien Takeover—Know Your Rights - Spanish.docx
- Alien Takeover—Know Your Rights.docx
- Alien Takeover—Know Your Rights.pdf
- Applying Amendments (Sample Responses)—Know Your Rights.docx
- Applying Amendments (Sample Responses)—Know Your Rights.pdf
- Applying Amendments—Know Your Rights.docx
- Applying Amendments—Know Your Rights.pdf
- Applying the Bill of Rights—Know Your Rights - Spanish.docx
- Fundamental Freedoms (Modified)—Know Your Rights.docx
- Fundamental Freedoms (Modified)—Know Your Rights.pdf
- Fundamental Freedoms—Know Your Rights - Spanish.docx
- Fundamental Freedoms—Know Your Rights.docx
- Fundamental Freedoms—Know Your Rights.pdf
- Know Your Freedoms—Know Your Rights - Spanish.docx
- Know Your Freedoms—Know Your Rights.docx
- Know Your Freedoms—Know Your Rights.pdf
- Lesson Slides—Know Your Rights.pptx
- Show Me Freedom—Know Your Rights - Spanish.docx
- Show Me Freedom—Know Your Rights.docx
- Show Me Freedom—Know Your Rights.pdf

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- Alien Takeover handout (one per student, attached)
- Fundamental Freedoms handout (one per student, print front and back, attached)
- Fundamental Freedoms (Modified) handout (optional, attached)
- Know Your Freedoms handout (one per student, attached)
- Applying Amendments handout (one per student, attached)
- Applying Amendments (Sample Responses) document (one for teacher use, attached)
- Show Me Freedom handout (optional, attached)
- Sticky notes (two per student)
- Student devices with internet access

5 minutes

Engage

Teacher's Note: Activity Preparation

Before you begin the lesson, prepare a space for the Sticky Bars activity. Students represent their most valued amendments with sticky notes on a bar graph. Dedicate wall space or use large chart paper for the bar graph. Prepare the activity by drawing a horizontal line (an x-axis) and writing the numbers 1–10 along and below the x-axis. See **slide 6** for an example of what the finished bar graph may look like.

Use the attached **Lesson Slides** to guide the lesson. Begin by displaying **slide 2** and introduce the title of the lesson to students. Transition through **slides 3–4** and introduce the essential questions and learning objectives.

Move to **slide 5** and pass out one copy of the attached **Alien Takeover** handout to each student. Explain to students that an alien nation has colonized Earth and the class has received a letter from an alien representative. Read the following letter aloud:

Greetings Earthling,

Due to the recent demise of your country and our subsequent takeover, you are now under our control. Under your past government's rule, you were allowed certain "rights" that we are not willing to recognize. However, we are a just society. We will acknowledge and enforce two of the rights outlined in the first ten amendments of your Constitution (the Bill of Rights). It is up to you as a society to decide which two rights you will keep. This decision will be made by majority rule. You have little time to make your decision, so make haste!

Sincerely,

Zee-bo-dee-ba, Representative from Planet X

After reading the letter, draw students' attention to the list of rights below the letter. Each statement briefly summarizes one of the amendments in the Bill of Rights. Instruct students to work independently to rank the rights based on which ones are most valuable to them. Explain that students should rank the amendments from one to ten, with one being the most valuable and ten being the least valuable.

Teacher's Note: Students' Prior Knowledge

Do not describe each amendment in detail. Students are meant to use only prior knowledge to rank the rights provided. Later in the lesson, students will deepen their understanding of the amendments in the Bill of Rights.

Once students have finished ranking the amendments, display **slide 6**. Pass out two sticky notes to each student and introduce the Sticky Bars strategy. Ask students to write one of their two most valuable amendments on each sticky note along with an explanation of why they value that amendment. Tell them that they should write the amendment number small so they have room for their explanation.

As students complete their sticky notes, invite them to place each sticky note above the number of the amendment it represents. Have students place their sticky notes above each other in a column above each number to create a bar graph.

Display **slide 7** and point out which two amendments are most valuable to the whole class. You may choose to point out other interesting parts of the graph, like which amendment was least valued. Ask students to consider why the majority of the class chose certain amendments. Facilitate a class discussion on the topic that lasts no longer than ten minutes.

Tell students to set aside their handouts in a safe space like a folder or other dedicated location. They will return to the handouts during the Evaluate portion of the lesson.

Optional Modification For Distance Learning

To use this activity in an online or distance learning environment, consider using a ranked-choice voting tool like RCV123 or the multiple-choice option of an interactive tool such as Mentimeter. Once all of the students have had a chance to vote, share the results with the class and review which amendments were most valuable to the class. Download all attachments to use this lesson in Google Classroom.

20 minutes

Explore

Optional Differentiation

In this phase of the lesson, students read the Bill of Rights and summarize each amendment in their own words. Depending on your students' needs, give them a copy of the attached **Fundamental Freedoms (Modified)** handout, which offers a simplified version of the Bill of Rights.

Consider providing other resources of your choice, such as the Bill of Rights section of your class textbook, for students to reference.

Divide the class into groups of three to four students, creating at least five groups. Give each student a copy of the attached **Fundamental Freedoms** handout and display **slide 8**. Preview the activity by explaining to students that they are expected to summarize their two assigned amendments, then be ready to share out their summaries with the class.

To model what a summary might look like, begin by showing **slide 9**. Read the following text of the First Amendment on the slide:

"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." (U.S. Const. amend. I)

Invite volunteers to share what different parts of this amendment could mean. Then move to **slide 10** and share an example of a possible student summary (of the First Amendment).

Display **slide 11** and introduce the Jigsaw instructional strategy to the class. Give each student a copy of the attached **Know Your Freedoms** handout and assign each group a pair of amendments as indicated on the slide.

Have students work in their groups to summarize both of their assigned amendments in their own words. Tell them to be ready to share their understanding of their amendments with the class.

As students work, walk around the room and check answers. Listen to how different groups summarize each amendment. Allow enough time for students to addres the major elements of each amendment. For example, the First Amendment addresses religion, speech, the press, and peaceful gathering and protesting. Ask guiding questions to ensure that each important element is not missed.

Teacher's Note: Difficult Amendments

Pay special attention to discussion on the Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Amendments. Students tend to struggle with identifying all parts of the Fifth Amendment and discerning the differences between the Sixth and Seventh Amendments. Help students see that the Sixth Amendment guarantees a fair and speedy public trial for an accused party and gives the accused an opportunity to defend themselves against accusations. Meanwhile, the Seventh Amendment mainly establishes that all trials must be heard by a jury.

Optional Modification For Distance Learning

To use this activity in an online or distance learning environment, consider having student groups collaborate in a shared document using a Tech Tool like Google Doc.

25 minutes

Explain

Once students have finished summarizing their assigned amendments, ask for volunteers from each group to share their summaries, completing the Jigsaw activity. Use this time to correct misconceptions. As groups share, have students write or adjust each amendment summary on their handouts. Call on someone from each group at least once.

Display **slide 12** and give each group a copy of the attached **Applying Amendments** handout. Instruct students to read each description then work in their group to determine which amendment each statement represents. Direct students to explain each answer using one or more complete sentences. Allow them to use a separate sheet of paper for their explanations as needed.

After all groups have completed the activity, invite a volunteer from each group to share their responses. Use the attached **Applying Amendments (Sample Responses)** document for reference.

Optional Activity Modification

If you need to shorten this activity, you may have students focus on five of the provided statements instead of all ten. Consider editing the handout to reflect the five statements you want students to focus on.

Optional Modification For Distance Learning

To use this activity in an online or distance learning environment, assign each student a statement from the handout. Instruct students to determine which amendment the statement represents then record their answer on a discussion board, as a video response, or a digital bulletin board like Padlet. Download all attachments to use this lesson in Google Classroom.

20 minutes

Extend

Teacher's Note: Guiding the Lesson

Depending on the amount of time available for this lesson, consider using additional activities to deepen students' understanding. Additional activities are included in this portion of the lesson.

See the **Optional Alternative or Addition** note at the end of the Extend for more details regarding the illustrations option.

Explain to students that while the Bill of Rights outlines a list of rights we have, there are many different interpretations of these rights. Explain that the application of these rights is open to a lot of debate. Give students the example of how the Second Amendment is interpreted in many different ways related to gun control.

Teacher's Note: Guiding the Discussion

Help students understand that there are different interpretations of the Bill of Rights, which has caused many debates. Explain that some interpret the Second Amendment to mean that U.S. citizens have the right to carry firearms for many different reasons, as the amendment concludes with, "...the right...to bear Arms, shall not be infringed." While others believe that the introductory clause of the amendment, "A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State," explains that citizens should only have weapons so that they can quickly form a militia.

Display **slide 13** and ask the class if they've ever heard of a "ballot selfie." Based on student responses, fill in any gaps in understanding. Explain that a ballot selfie is a selfie that people take in the voting booth while they are casting their ballot.

Explain to students that while a ballot selfie might seem like an innocent photo, it has created a legal controversy involving discussion over whether or not U.S. citizens have the right to take selfies at the ballot box.

Instruct students to read USA Today's article "Justin Timberlake's Voting Selfie May Have Broken the Law" by visiting bit.ly/BallotSelfie2016 or scanning the QR code on the slide.

Options For Alternative Articles

If you'd prefer to have students read a different article, consider using one of the articles on the same topic listed below:

- "Selfie Control" on page two of the 2016 Oklahoma Voter Guide
- "Ballot Selfies, State by State"

After students have read the article, display **slide 14**. Have students discuss the following questions from the slide within their groups:

- Which First Amendment right is debated in this article? Share your reasoning.
- Do you think taking a selfie, in any form, is an expression of our First Amendment rights? Why do you think that?
- Do you think it is a violation of our First Amendment rights for a state to make taking and sharing "ballot selfies" against the law? Share your thinking.

Sample Student Responses

- Freedom of speech is the First Amendment right debated in the article because ballot selfies are a form of self-expression.
- Yes; taking a selfie, of any kind, is a form of speech, so it is protected by the First Amendment.
- No; I am not the press, so it is okay if a state says that I can't share that selfie.
- Yes; states that make ballot selfies illegal are violating First Amendment rights, because a ballot selfie expresses a political opinion and should be allowed as a form of free speech.
- No; states that make ballot selfies illegal are trying to keep voting ballots a secret to make sure we all feel safe to express ourselves when voting.

As time allows, facilitate a class discussion about the questions on the slide. Depending on your classroom needs, consider having students write down their answers to the questions prior to the discussion.

Conclude the discussion by stressing to students that it is important for U.S. citizens to know and understand their rights to inform their opinions on how those rights should be interpreted. Explain that people should know what their rights mean so they can make sure they are protected.

If you have already covered the concept of Federalism in class, explain that laws regarding ballot selfies are an example of a reserved power left to the states.

Optional Alternative or Additional Activity

Consider having students create visual representations of different amendments in this activity. Unhide and share **slide 15**. Give each student a copy of the attached **Show Me Freedom** handout.

Ask students to choose three amendments to represent visually. Each group may choose to work together on the same three amendments, or students may choose to work individually. Direct them to write the amendment numbers at the top of each column on the handout then create an illustration in the space below. Once students have completed their drawings, invite a few students to share their drawings and explain how their illustrations represent their chosen amendments.

To make use of this activity in an online or distance learning environment, consider having students create their visual representations using tech tools such as Popplet, Piktochart, or Canva.

10 minutes

Evaluate

Use the Exit Ticket strategy to individually assess what students have learned from the lesson. Display **slide 16** and ask students to consider the two amendments they chose during the first activity of the lesson. Ask them to evaluate their choices now that they have a better understanding of the Bill of Rights. Did their opinion change or stay the same? Why did their reasoning change or stay the same?

Have students respond to the prompt on an index card, sticky note, piece of paper, or other method. Consider collecting students' responses to evaluate the lesson.

Optional Modification For Distance Learning

To make use of this activity in an online or distance learning environment, consider having your students share their reflections using a discussion board or Padlet.

Resources

- Demsas, J. (2020, October 28). *Ballot selfies, state by state*. Vox. https://www.vox.com/21523858/ballot-selfies-state-rules
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Bell ringers and exit tickets. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/125
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Canva. Tech Tools. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/612
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Google classroom. Tech Tools. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/628
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Google docs. Tech Tools. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/2327
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Jigsaw. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/179
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Mentimeter. Tech Tools. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/645
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Padlet. Tech Tools. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/1077
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Piktochart. Tech Tools. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/2394
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Popplet. Tech Tools. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/663
- K20 Center. (n.d.). RCV123. Tech Tools. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/4055
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Sticky bars. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/129
- Mandell, A. (2016, October 25). *Justin Timberlake's voting selfie may have broken the law*. USA Today. https://www.usatoday.com/story/life/people/2016/10/25/justin-timberlakes-voting-selfie-may-have-broken-law/92728472/
- Nicu Buculei. (2006). *Newspaper nicu buculei* [Illustration]. Wikimedia Commons. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Newspaper_nicu_buculei_01.svg
- Salisbury, A. (Ed.). (2016). *Selfie control*. 2016 Oklahoma Voter Guide. http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/kgou/files/092216_OK_Voter_Guide.pdf?_ga=2.66350702.1180070985.1569589393-1428267346.1569589393
- U.S. Const. amend. I–X.