

Hunstman Seminar Lesson Plan 2009

BILL OF RIGHTS

Laraine Blackham

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Time: 2 class periods

Materials needed: Ranking Rights and Freedoms handout, Bill of Rights Listing handout.

Newspapers – enough so each group of 2-3 students will have one to use and cut up. I save my personal papers and also have the school librarian save them for me. Scissors, poster board or paper to make posters, glue or tape, markers

1. Start the discussion by asking the students to list their rights on the board. Then as a class develop a definition of what rights are. Post the definition in the room.
2. Next have the students list on the board as many of the rights and freedoms they can remember from the Bill of Rights. Compare their list to a copy of the Bill of Rights and see if they remember them all.
3. Discuss why the Bill of Rights was added to the Constitution. Are they still important today?
4. Give each student the Ranking Rights and Freedoms handout. Give them adequate time to complete it. Make sure that they answer the questions at the bottom of the page.
5. Tally the number of votes for each right. I do this on the board so the students can visually see which are the most popular and least popular. There are many ways to do this from having the students raise their hands for the right/freedom

they chose to giving each student post-it notes to place next to the rights/freedoms.

6. Discuss the class choices. Rank the responses from most popular to least popular. Why are some rights chosen by nearly the whole class, while others were not. Ask students to read their answers to the questions at the end of the handout. Encourage class members with differing opinions to explain their rationales.
7. Divide the class into groups of 2-3. Have them refer to a copy of the Bill of Rights and look through the newspapers and find articles dealing with Bill of Rights issues. Each group needs to find at least one article. Have the students cut out the articles and place them on the poster paper labeled with the number of the Bill of Rights that their article relates to. When the posters are finished have each group explain how or why their article relates to that specific Bill of Rights. When they are finished, put the posters up on the walls. Discuss what types of issues or articles were easiest to find, were there any of the Bill of Rights that there were no newspaper articles about, why?
8. Use the second Bill of Rights listing as a review worksheet or quiz. I want my students to be very familiar with the Bill of Rights, so I test them on matching the amendment number with the right.

If you have time, it is interesting to compare the Bill of Rights to the United Nation's Declaration of Human Rights.

The Ranking Rights and Freedoms handout is from Close Up Foundation's *The First Amendment – America's Blueprint for Tolerance*

STUDENT HANDOUT 1

Ranking Rights and Freedoms

Below is a list of sixteen freedoms and rights guaranteed by the Bill of Rights. Choose ten of the items on this list that are most important to you and that you absolutely would not be willing to give up. Keep in mind, however, that the items you leave off your list will no longer be guaranteed to you. After you have selected your "top ten," answer the questions that follow.

- _____ 1. freedom of religion
- _____ 2. freedom of speech
- _____ 3. freedom of press
- _____ 4. freedom of assembly
- _____ 5. freedom of petition
- _____ 6. right to keep and bear arms
- _____ 7. security against unreasonable searches and seizures
- _____ 8. probable cause necessary for issuance of a search warrant
- _____ 9. indictment by a grand jury necessary before being made to answer for a capital crime
- _____ 10. cannot be tried twice for the same crime (double jeopardy)
- _____ 11. cannot be made to testify against yourself
- _____ 12. cannot be deprived of life, liberty, and property without due process of law
- _____ 13. must be compensated for private property taken for public use
- _____ 14. right to a fair and speedy jury trial
- _____ 15. cannot be held in jail by excessive bail
- _____ 16. cannot be subjected to cruel and unusual punishment

Write a brief answer to each of the following questions. Use the back of this hand-out if you need more space.

1. Which one of your top ten is most important to you? Why?
2. Which one of your top ten is least important to you? Why?
3. Which one of the six not on your list was most difficult to give up? Why?
4. Which one of the six not on your list was easiest to give up? Why?
5. Write a paragraph discussing the process you used and the difficulties you had in arriving at your top ten list. Tell how you ultimately made the tough choices as you were deciding the last few items on your list.

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List the number of the amendment that goes with each freedom or right.

1. _____ Must be compensated for private property taken for public use.
2. _____ Freedom of religion
3. _____ No soldiers quartered in homes without consent.
4. _____ Security against unreasonable searches and seizures
5. _____ Right to bear arms
6. _____ Freedom of speech
7. _____ Cannot be tried twice for the same crime.
8. _____ Probable cause necessary for issuance of a search warrant.
9. _____ Cannot be made to testify against yourself
10. _____ Freedom of press
11. _____ Indictment by a grand jury necessary before being made to answer for a capital crime
12. _____ Cannot be deprived of life, liberty and property without due process of law
13. _____ Freedom of assembly
14. _____ Freedom of petition
15. _____ Right to have assistance of counsel for your defense
16. _____ No excessive bail or fines
17. _____ Right to a speedy, public trial
18. _____ Right to be informed of what you are being accused of
19. _____ No cruel or unusual punishment
20. _____ Right to a trial by jury