

Literacy and the Law

Lesson Title: Lesson 2: The Courts as Interpreters of the Constitution: Freedom of Religion



Context of the lesson within the project: Students learn more about the role of the Judicial branch and how the work of this branch relates to the Constitution. They read and interpret the language of the First Amendment as it relates to Freedom of Religion. (Slides 11-16)

Standards:

California History Social Science Content Standards

12.2 Students evaluate and take and defend positions on the scope and limits of rights and obligations as democratic citizens, the relationships among them, and how they are secured.

1. Discuss the meaning and importance of each of the rights guaranteed under the Bill of Rights and how each is secured (e.g., freedom of religion, speech, press, assembly, petition, privacy).

Common Core State Standards

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading K-12

Key Ideas and Details

1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

Craft and Structure

4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

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Common Core State Standards

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening K-12

Comprehension and Collaboration

1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
3. Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

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Quality Criteria:	Absolutely!	Almost!	Not Yet!
<p>Interpretation I am able to accurately interpret the text of the first amendment as it relates to the freedom of religion in my own words</p>			
<p>Collaboration I work cooperatively with others to review, brainstorm and determine the meaning of the freedom of religion language in the first amendment of the Constitution.</p>			

Materials and Resources Needed: Power point, room for students to group with a partner. Handout, In Your Own Words.

Learning Activities: (40-45 minutes)

Hook: (5 minutes)

Slide 11: Ask students what is meant by “interpretation of the law”. This slide is meant to further reinforce the role of the judicial branch: The **Constitution** sets the “rule of law”, and arguments in court must be heard on both sides. Decisions are made based on the rules set out by the Constitution. “Interpreting the law” in an impartial way, is the job of the courts.

This is a good time to ask about the role of the other branches of government - slide #9:

Legislative Branch - Makes the laws

Executive Branch - Initiates and Administers Law

Clarifying Terms: (5 minutes)

Slide 12: Clarify what is meant by “constitutional” or “unconstitutional”: The judicial branch, or the courts, try to find out if a rule or law from the Constitution has been broken. Ask students to discuss in a Pair Share what “Constitutional” would mean, and what “Unconstitutional” would mean...discussion.

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The First Amendment (10 minutes)



Slide 13: Have students read the First Amendment and the freedoms they represent.

Freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of the right to peaceably assemble, and freedom to petition. They also give the right to **freedom of religion. (Discuss)**

Freedom of Religion (15 minutes)

Slide 14 -15: Introduce the *free exercise clause* and the *establishment clause*. Students pair/share, discussing and collaborating about the meaning of the two clauses, each one completing the handout, “In Your Own Words”, to interpret the meaning.

Closure: (5 – 10 minutes)

Slide 16: Ask students to use their own handout and **turn to a different partner**, sharing their interpretation from “In Your Own Words”...do we agree? Discussion with new partner.

The entire group can discuss and provide summaries for these two clauses of the First Amendment, bringing closure to the third lesson.