



Lesson Title: First of all

ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

Am I heard?

I HAVE:

One hour

TYPES OF ACTIVITIES:

- ✓ Building arguments
- ✓ Reflective writing
- ✓ Listening and considering other points of view
- ✓ Out of our seats
- ✓ Sharing aloud

MATERIALS:

- Labels for the corners/rights listed around the room
- Projector or smartboard for video

STEP-BY-STEP:

Journal: watch the following video and have the students write out the freedoms listed in the first amendment—

<http://www.annenbergclassroom.org/page/the-story-of-the-bill-of-rights> □

Then answer—What makes these rights powerful? And Why do you think the founders listed these freedoms FIRST in the Bill of Rights?

List each right from the first amendment on the board and provide real life examples for each. *Allow time to share answers for the second part of the journal prompt.*

Ask the kids to write a short response on which do they think is the most powerful right citizens have (compared to the others) by filling out the following statement prompt:

_____ is the most important of the rights listed in the first amendment because _____

_____. It is more important than _____ (other right listed in 1st) _____ because _____. One historic example of its significance is _____.

Label five "corners" of the room with each right and have students stand at the right they think is the most powerful.

Take five minutes to let kids discuss with the other kids gathered at their right what everyone's reasons were. Each group should select a speaker.

Go around the room and hear from each speaker why they think that right is the most powerful compared to the others.

Once all rights have spoken give five more minutes for each group to discuss what they heard and generate possible counter-arguments. Students may also move to a different right if they heard something persuasive.

Do one more round going around to each right and allow them to respond to arguments they heard in round 1.



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KEEP IN MIND

This activity is meant to help build debate skills, but the students are expected to observe decorum, *especially*—not speaking when other kids are talking, mentally planning on what they are going to say BEFORE they say it, and keeping an open mind for strong arguments presented by other students.

Students should be specific in their responses (example: “Shakira said that freedom of assembly is most important because of _____, but I disagree because _____.”)

IT WENT WELL! EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Homework: Of all of the arguments you heard today, which did you find the most persuasive and why?

Viewpoint discrimination is a very topical issue kids are likely to be aware of because it involves a lot of online speech, some primary sources on viewpoint discrimination to continue discussion:

<https://www.thisisinsider.com/couple-wearing-abolish-ice-shirts-denied-access-statue-of-liberty-2018-8>

<https://www.nationalreview.com/2018/08/supreme-court-decisionsclarify-campus-free-speech-protections/>

Survey from 2014 on which right students think is most important:

<https://www.knightfoundation.org/reports/first-amendment-future-2014-survey>

<https://www.knightfoundation.org/future-first-amendmentsurvey#second>