

Free Speech, Power, and Censorship in American History

TEST QUESTIONS

List the 5 Freedoms guaranteed by the First Amendment.

What was the first attempt to limit Free Speech, soon after the Constitution was ratified? *The Alien and Sedition Acts*.

Who was President when Congress passed the Alien and Sedition Acts?

- a. George Washington
- b. Thomas Jefferson
- c. John Adams*
- d. James Monroe

Which of the following groups faced attempts at silencing and suppression?

- a. Suffragists
- b. Communists
- c. Abolitionists
- d. Civil Rights leaders
- e. All of the above*

Which term has been used to describe free trade in ideas within the competition of the market, in order to help society progress and advance?

- a. the playing field of ideas
- b. the battlefield of ideas
- c. the marketplace of ideas*
- d. the mall of ideas

Which is NOT a reason antislavery (abolitionist) speech was considered dangerous before the Civil War began?

- a. it threatened the union
- b. it was unconstitutional*
- c. it could produce slave revolts
- d. it inflicted “emotional injury” on slave owners

Which statement by a Supreme Court Justice came in response to a famous case over the right of citizens to burn the flag as a form of expression?

- a. “If there is any principle of the Constitution that more imperatively calls for attachment it is the principle of free thought—not free thought for those who agree with us but freedom for the thought that we hate.”
- b. “Above all else, the First Amendment means that government has no power to restrict expression because of its message, its ideas, its subject matter, or its content.”
- c. “If there is a bedrock principle underlying the First Amendment, it is that the government may not prohibit the expression of an idea simply because society finds the idea itself offensive or disagreeable.” *
- d. “A function of free speech under our system of government is to invite dispute. It may indeed best serve its high purpose when it induces a condition of unrest, creates dissatisfaction with conditions as they are, or even stirs people to anger.”

In “A Plea for Free Speech in Boston,” Frederick Douglass states: “Slavery cannot tolerate free speech. Five years of its exercise would banish the auction block and break every chain in the South. They will have none of it there, for they have the power.” Who are “they?”

- a. The people who held the meeting
- b. The “gentlemen” who disrupted the meeting
- c. The authorities who ordered the meeting “broken up and dispersed”
- d. Both b and c*

Name of Senator famously associated with overzealous accusations of communist ties during the second Red Scare

- a. John McCain
- b. John Kennedy
- c. Joseph McCarthy *
- d. Joseph McCain

What is “blacklisting?”

True/False: The Civil Rights Movement was only to fight segregation in the South. **FALSE:** It was a campaign for the full spectrum of legal rights.

True/False: During the Jim Crow era, groups like the NAACP faced censorship and suppression of their constitutional rights, and had to file court cases to defend them. **TRUE.**

True/False: Women, during the fight for female suffrage (voting rights), did not face attempts to harass, intimidate or silence them. **FALSE.** Suffragists were opposed, censored, and even jailed.