

Free Speech Quote Cloud Activity: An Intro to Free Speech

Done with the test? We'll wind up class today with a brief introduction to free speech.

Instructions: Let's get a light introduction to the First Amendment by looking at some famous quotes with respect to free speech. You can use the list I have compiled (below), and you may also google a few key free speech phrases/quote or famous people you like. Here are a few sites to use in addition to the handout if you like:

<http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/first-amendment>

http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/keywords/free_speech.html

Challenge: Who is your hero? Instead of the above, find an inspirational quote by an amazing famous person that speaks to freedom, equality, or humanness. Print out the quote and a picture of them (as big as you can), and do the rest of the exercise.

Your task is to create a short personal reaction to one of the quotes and construct a beautiful “cloud” response to this quote. Consider the following to use as prompts:

- Why did you pick this one?
- In what way do you feel this message is important?
- Does it affirm or contradict your view of free speech? Explain...

First, draft your short response. It should be DEEP – connect to your quote, and make your audience ponder your response. Blow minds!

Second, copy your response “beautifully” onto a piece of colored construction paper. Neat! Markers, borders, different shapes, etc – make these things beautiful, as they'll go up in the classroom.

Lastly, we will post all of the quotes up on the wall in the classroom. Your response (and others') will accompany the quote on the wall.

Free Speech Quotes

“First Amendment freedoms are most in danger when the government seeks to control thought or to justify its laws for that impermissible end. The right to think is the beginning of freedom, and speech must be protected from the government because speech is the beginning of thought.”—Supreme Court Justice Anthony M. Kennedy, [Ashcroft V. Free Speech Coalition](#)

“If large numbers of people believe in freedom of speech, there will be freedom of speech, even if the law forbids it. But if public opinion is sluggish, inconvenient minorities will be persecuted, even if laws exist to protect them.”—George Orwell, author, c. 1945

“[Confiscating a book and punishing its author] is a sign that one does not have a good case, or at least doesn't trust it enough to defend it with reasons and refute the objections. Some people even go so far as to consider prohibited or confiscated books to be the best ones of all, for the prohibition indicates that their authors wrote what they really thought rather than what they were supposed to think . . .”—Johann Lorenz Schmidt, 1741

“If there be time to expose through discussion the falsehood and fallacies, to avert the evil by the processes of education, the remedy to be applied is more speech, not enforced silence.”—U.S. Supreme Court Justice Louis D. Brandeis (1856–1941), [Whitney v. California, 274 U. S. 357 \(1927\)](#).

"Experience should teach us to be most on our guard to protect liberty when the Government's purposes are beneficent. Men born to freedom are naturally alert to repel invasion of their liberty by evil-minded rulers. The greatest dangers to liberty lurk in insidious encroachment by men of zeal, well-meaning but without understanding."—Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis, *Olmstead v. U.S.* (1928)

“Of course the people don't want war. But after all, it's the leaders of the country who determine the policy, and it's always a simple matter to drag the people along whether it's a democracy, a fascist dictatorship, or a parliament, or a communist dictatorship. Voice or no voice, the people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked, and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to greater danger.”— [Herman Goering at the Nuremberg trials](#)

“A popular government, without popular information, or the means of acquiring it, is but a prologue to a farce or a tragedy; or perhaps both. Knowledge will forever govern ignorance; and a people who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives.”—James Madison

“Books won't stay banned. They won't burn. Ideas won't go to jail. In the long run of history, the censor and the inquisitor have always lost. The only sure weapon against bad ideas is better ideas.”—Alfred Whitney Griswold

“If we don't believe in freedom of expression for people we despise, we don't believe in it at all.”—Noam Chomsky

“Whoever would overthrow the liberty of a nation must begin by subduing the freeness of speech.”—Benjamin Franklin

“They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety.”—Benjamin Franklin, Historical Review of Pennsylvania, 1759

“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.”—Supreme Court Justice William J. Brennan, Jr., [Texas v. Johnson, 491 U.S. 397 \(1989\)](#)

“God forbid that any book should be banned. The practice is as indefensible as infanticide.”—Dame Rebecca West

“Damn all expurgated books; the dirtiest book of all is the expurgated book.”—Walt Whitman

“I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it.”— [Beatrice Hall, The Friends of Voltaire, 1906](#)

“He that would make his own liberty secure must guard even his enemy from opposition; for if he violates this duty he establishes a precedent that will reach to himself.”— [Dissertations on First Principles of Government](#), Thomas Paine