

First Amendment Lesson Plan

*During the week of January 12-15, 2009, Sarai Trinidad, a student at Miami Carol City Senior High School, organized a **Censorship Awareness Week**. Below is the First Amendment workshop Sarai planned and conducted for her fellow students.*

Introductions

Question:

What is our First Amendment right?

Our first Amendment contains five freedoms:

- **Religion**
- **Speech**
- **Press**
- **Assembly**
- **Petition**

Activity:

Divide the class into groups of four. Have each group decide if they had to give up one of the five freedoms, which one would it be? Each group gives its rationale for its decision. Could the groups reach consensus? Did the different groups come up with the same freedom?

Question:

What is Censorship?

Censorship: the control of the information and ideas circulated within a society. It is basically other people telling you what you can and cannot say, write, display, or think about.

Censorship Case Study

A 10-year-old Coral Springs girl won't be allowed to sing a controversial President Bush-bashing ballad at her school talent show after her principal deemed it inappropriate and too political.

The song, *Dear Mr. President*, performed and co-written by the singer Pink, criticizes the president for the war in Iraq and other policies, including his stance on gay rights.

Parent Nancy Shoul says her daughter Molly should be lauded for choosing lyrics that are full of substance rather than pop music fluff. She said the principal's ban sends a bad message and violates her daughter's right to free speech.

[The full story here.](#)

Read together or in small groups.

Questions:

How many of you agree with the principal's decision?

How many disagree?

Do you think the principal was breaking Molly's First Amendment right?

Do you think there is an age limit for expressing your First Amendment rights?

If the opinions we have just discussed were censored, how would you feel?

Closing remarks.