

Applying the Bill of Rights

Student Objectives: Students will:

1. become familiar with the Bill of Rights
2. analyze situations which involve individual rights
3. use critical thinking to apply one of the Bill of Rights to a present day situation.

TEKS: LA 5.10 (B), SS 5.21 (A)

Materials Needed: printed cases for each student, overhead of Bill of Rights

Vocabulary: prohibit, search warrant, right, freedom, amendment

Teaching Strategy:

1. Review the Bill of Rights using overhead transparency.
2. Divide the class into groups of 2 or 3
3. Distribute a case involving the Bill of Rights to each group of students. Each group will read the case, analyze the situation described, and determine which amendment applies to this case.
4. Each group will read their case to the class and report their understanding of how the Bill of Rights applies to this situation.
5. Correct responses are as follows:
 1. No, Amendment 6
 2. Yes, Amendment 1
 3. No, Amendment 4
 4. No, Amendment 1 – assembly, religion
 5. Yes, Amendment 5 – due process
 6. No, Amendment 5
 7. No, Amendment 8
 8. No, Amendment 2
 9. Yes, Amendment 1 – free press
 10. Yes, Amendment 1 – petition, assembly

The Bill of Rights

Amendment 1	Freedom of religion, speech, press, assembly, and petition
Amendment 2	Right to keep weapons
Amendment 3	Protection against soldiers staying in citizens' homes
Amendment 4	Right of Privacy, Freedom from unreasonable searches
Amendment 5	Protection of life, liberty, and property. Right to remain silent when accused
Amendment 6	Right to a fair trial with a jury, right to know what you're accused of, right to have an attorney
Amendment 7	Right to a jury trial when someone sues another person
Amendment 8	Fair bail and punishment
Amendment 9	People have more rights than just these
Amendment 10	The states have other rights

Case 1

Mr. and Mrs. Lewis live in a three-story apartment building. They fight all of the time, and the neighbors can hear them yelling at each other. One Saturday morning their neighbor finds Mr. Lewis in the hallway. He has been shot. The neighbors are all positive that his wife did it, although no one saw her. Mrs. Lewis is accused of murder and put in prison for 30 years. Is this fair?

Case 2

Marty and Madge live on a street where everyone owns at least one dog. The dogs run loose, dig up flowerbeds, and turn over trashcans. Marty and Madge decided to hold a meeting to discuss the need for a leash law in their neighborhood. One of the neighbors called the police and insisted that they not allow the meeting because most of the neighbors are not interested in a leash law. Marty and Madge are viewed as just troublemakers. Do Marty and Madge have the right to have their meeting?

Case 3

Ten years ago, Phil was convicted of breaking into someone's house and taking a stereo and TV. He served his prison term and was released. One Friday night Phil was sitting in his living room watching a ballgame on TV. A police officer knocked at the door and said he was going to search Phil's house for stolen property. When Phil asked to see a search warrant, the officer said he didn't need one since Phil was once convicted of stealing. Is the police officer right?

Case 4

In the town of Green Oaks a group of people wanted to meet in a city park to worship nature. They were known as the Church of All Creation. The city did not want them to meet in the park because they were afraid it would interfere with other citizens who were trying to have picnics in the park. Can the city stop them from meeting in the park?

Case 5

The community of Birdville needed to widen the main street through town. The city paid each of the landowners along the street a fair amount of money for taking part of their land on the street to widen the street. Some landowners were upset. Can the city widen the street anyway?

Case 6

George was charged with stealing a car in Dallas and driving it to Phoenix, where he was arrested. The Dallas police charged him with auto theft. Can the Phoenix police also charge him since he was caught in Phoenix?

Case 7

Two girls broke school rules at Arlington Middle School and got in trouble. Sherry cheated on a test, and Alice wrote on the bathroom wall. Alice was upset because she got suspended for 3 days, and Sherry just had to stay after school for detention. Alice said her punishment was cruel and unusual. Do you agree?

Case 8

Bobby and his dad like to hunt quail every fall. They have a gun case in their den where their guns are kept when not in use. One summer some children were playing with a gun and one of them accidentally shot the other one. The city then decided that in order to keep children safe from accidental shootings, they should pass a law prohibiting guns in the city limits. Can they do that?

Case 9

Carl disagreed with his teacher about a grade on an assignment. His parents called the school to discuss it, but the grade remained the same. Carl was sure he was being cheated, so he wrote an article that was very critical of the school and the teacher. It was to be printed in the local newspaper. He accused the school of cheating him out of an A in the class, saying that he was discriminated against. Can the newspaper print this article?

Case 10

The local school board in Wainwright decided that their test scores would be better if they had school on Saturday morning as well as Monday through Friday. So they adopted that policy even though many were against it. A group of teachers and students gathered at city hall to distribute petitions to be signed, calling for a reversal of this policy. Does this group have the right to get petitions signed in various locations around town?