

Introduction to the Elementary Materials

The elementary Education for Freedom lessons are intended to help teachers develop students' awareness of the rights identified in the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. Many complex ideas related to the amendment cannot be explored in the early grades. However, the essence of these rights can be understood when presented in a way that relates to child's life.

The elementary lessons not only relate to the child's experience, but also to the elementary curriculum in general, stressing particularly language arts and social studies concepts. Teachers who are concerned about teaching reading will especially appreciate the array of children's literature recommended in many of the lessons.

Eight major objectives form the framework for developing students' awareness of the First Amendment. The objectives are:

- Students will understand and demonstrate common forms of expression.
- Students will express what a right is.
- Students will know that the First Amendment protects our right to free expression and will understand that the First Amendment was added to the Constitution because of the importance of the rights it protects.
- Students will recognize that many Americans have come to the United States to gain freedom of religion.
- Students will understand the importance of freedom of the press and will recognize that freedom of the press belongs to young people, not just the institution of the press.
- Students will recognize that using our rights has consequences.

- Students will suggest ways of resolving conflicts that arise when citizens use their rights.
- Students will value First Amendment rights.

Teachers may choose to use the lessons in any order. Several of the lessons will correspond to units being taught in social studies, such as the one titled *Pilgrims, Newcomers, and the First Amendment* which fits with American colonial history or the one titled *Viva La Causa-Cesar Chavez* which can be used during National Hispanic Heritage Month. Others can be taught when an issue comes up such as using your rights responsibly. *Cry Wolf* is a good lesson to help students understand that with rights come responsibilities.

All of the lessons use a participatory approach that encourages students to discuss, role-play, conduct surveys, create projects and in other ways become engaged in their learning. Teachers should feel free to modify or adapt the lessons to whatever way seems appropriate for their students and communities.