

The Education for Freedom Project - Elementary Lessons

The original material for the Education for Freedom project was developed through a coalition of communication organizations called First Amendment Congress with the support of a grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. After the coalition dissolved in the late 1990s, the project materials were made available to state First Amendment groups and other educational organizations. The current elementary lessons include ones that have been revised and updated but most are new lessons.

The goal of the project was to develop and disseminate curriculum materials for teaching about the First Amendment at all levels. This package of materials for K-5 students represents one part of the project. There is also a collection of lessons developed for students at grades 5-12. There is some overlap at the 5th grade level. Teachers are encouraged to look at both sets of lessons.

While teachers may initially feel that concepts related to the First Amendment would be better introduced at later grades, research indicates that learning at all levels contributes to giving individuals the values, knowledge and skills needed for citizenship in a democratic society.

The project materials address three critical goals or outcomes:

1. Students will understand history and meaning of the First Amendment and its importance in today's society.
2. Students will understand that the First Amendment belongs to each individual, not to any one segment of society or institution.
3. Students will understand the importance of protecting their First Amendment freedoms through exercising their rights and responsibilities as citizens in our democracy.

FOI Oklahoma Inc. is a non-profit education organization formed in 1990 to educate the public about its First Amendment rights and the need for openness in government to preserve its right to freedom of information. FOI Oklahoma has made the Education for Freedom project a priority and offers training to teachers and curriculum specialists throughout Oklahoma. More information on training is available at www.foioklahoma.org.

The following educators wrote, revised and updated the current lessons on the web site: Rita Geiger, Education Consultant, Oklahoma City and Pam Merrill, Social Studies Coordinator, Edmond Public Schools, Edmond.

