

Name:  
Date:

## Allowed or Not Allowed?

Read each of the following scenarios. If you think the action described is allowed under the First Amendment, circle yes. If you think the action described is not allowed, circle no.

1. A student refuses to participate in the Pledge of Allegiance with the rest of his class. He says it is against his religion to say the pledge. He sits quietly in his seat while the rest of the class stands and says the pledge.

Is this allowed?                      YES                      NO

2. A group of college students who oppose U.S. involvement in foreign wars gathers in a public park and burns an American flag as a symbol of their protest.

Is this allowed?                      YES                      NO

3. A newspaper receives top-secret documents that show that the government has been lying about its involvement in an ongoing war. The newspaper publishes the documents to reveal the truth to the public.

Is this allowed?                      YES                      NO

4. A group of white supremacists (people who believe descendants of white Europeans are superior to other people) gather in Washington, D.C., and march to the U.S. Capitol. They have a permit for their event and march calmly while chanting and carrying signs that harshly criticize other races.

Is this allowed?                      YES                      NO

5. A group of people with cancer, including several teenagers, believe that marijuana could help ease their suffering. They organize a petition to gather signatures from voters who believe that the state should pass a law allowing doctors to prescribe marijuana to their patients as a form of medical treatment.

Is this allowed?                      YES                      NO

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## You Can't Say That in School Gallery Guide

Visit the **First Amendment Gallery (Level 4)** to answer the following questions.

Pick one of the five freedoms (religion, speech, press, petition, assembly) to investigate.

Chosen freedom: \_\_\_\_\_

Explain the meaning of the freedom and its origins: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Identify a pivotal Supreme Court case for the freedom and describe its impact:

Case: \_\_\_\_\_

Impact: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Identify two other examples of the freedom being used. Then explain if the First Amendment supports each example.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Head to the Bart Simpson wall. Choose an example of a student using a First Amendment Freedom and describe the event.

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Compare the student example with an example of your chosen freedom from the main display. How were the actions and consequences similar and different?

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How did the school respond to the student's actions? In your opinion, were the student's First Amendment rights violated? Explain your answer and use evidence from the display to support your argument.

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Should the First Amendment apply equally to students and the general public? Students attend school to get an education. What if using the five freedoms interfered with learning? Does that change your answer? Why or why not?

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## The Case of *Lee v. Weisman*

Read about the 1992 Supreme Court case *Lee v. Weisman*, then *answer* the questions.

### Facts of the Case

It was common for public schools in Rhode Island to invite local clergy members (leaders of religious groups) to participate in graduations ceremonies at the middle and high school level by leading a prayer. These clergy members received guidelines for leading non-denominational and non-sectarian prayers, meaning prayers that are not associated with a specific religious group. (Generally, non-denominational and non-sectarian prayers are directed to God or a higher being and do not mention specific religious figures such as Jesus Christ, Muhammad, etc.)

Attendance at school graduation ceremonies was not required in order for students to receive their diplomas, and those who attended the ceremony were not forced to stand or kneel during the prayers.

Nathan Bishop Middle School invited a local rabbi (leader of a Jewish congregation) to lead prayers at its graduation ceremony. The father of a student at the school sued, arguing that inviting the rabbi to lead prayers violated the First Amendment's Establishment Clause, which prohibits the government (including public institutions such as public schools) from establishing an official religion and from favoring religion over non-religion, or non-religion over religion.

The case eventually made it to the Supreme Court.

### Issue

Does the First Amendment allow public schools to invite clergy members to offer non-denominational and non-sectarian prayers at an official school graduation ceremony?

### Questions

1. Which First Amendment freedoms are at issue in this case? \_\_\_\_\_

2. If you were the principal, how would you defend inviting the rabbi to participate in the graduation ceremony?

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(Turn page over)

**Name:**

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3. If you were the student's father, how would you argue against allowing the rabbi to participate in the graduation ceremony?

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4. If you were a Supreme Court justice, how would you rule on this case? Why?

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