



Freedom of Speech and of the Press

“Free speech exercised both individually and through a free press, is a necessity in any country where people are themselves free.” President Theodore Roosevelt wrote this in 1918 in an essay called *Sedition, Free Press, and Personal Rule*. Freedom of speech and freedom of the press are essential in our lives. Freedom of speech is a right that other countries don’t have, and people can be killed over it. Freedom of the press in other countries is also a problem because the citizens don’t get to the full truth of what is really happening in their countries. Freedom of speech and freedom of the press are enjoyed every single day in our American lives.

The Constitution in America gives us the freedom of speech and freedom of the press. The Constitution states, “Congress shall make no law... abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press.” What this means is that anyone in our country can say and speak their opinion, and that we can write and read the truth about what is going on in our country. These rights allow an individual to say what he or she wants because the Constitution protects that. Freedom of the press means that reporters, journalists, and the people can write about what they want without it being controlled by the government. These two rights are what allow new thoughts and ideas to be shared. Without debate, we won’t hear people's different sides of the stories and we can’t evolve. We won’t learn anything new.

Freedom of speech and freedom of the press are used almost everyday in our lives. For example, when we share an opinion about the President or we write an essay complaining about a law that was passed, we are using our freedom of speech and freedom of the press. Take Afghanistan and Iran as another example. Anyone who shares an opinion about what is happening, is going to be arrested or even killed. We share our opinions every day without a thought of consequence. As for freedom of the press, we read the truth, or watch the news of what is happening to our country. The Politburo in the former Soviet Union edited the news to know only what they wanted the people to know. The Chernobyl nuclear disaster in 1986, was one example of a Russian cover up. In America we have multiple news stations that give us the true news. In some places in North Korea, China, and multiple Middle East countries, there is only one news station. The government can control and choose what the citizens hear. We don't even realize what a privilege that other people don't. We have freedom of speech and freedom of the press to help innovate and invigorate society and our government.

Freedom of speech and freedom of the press are rights that must not be taken away because of how important they are to our government and way of life. They help us to challenge one another, and for the sake of our country. Without it, we would not have the innovations that we do in life now. As Maragret Heffernan, writer and entrepreneur says, "For good ideas and true innovation, you need human interaction, conflict, argument, and debate."