

The Bill of Rights

TOPIC SUMMARY

The Bill of Rights, or the first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution, guarantees certain basic freedoms to all Americans. The First Amendment protects five basic freedoms: freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, and freedom to petition the government. There are some limits to these freedoms when one person's exercise of them infringes upon the rights of other citizens. The other nine amendments guarantee the right to fair and legal treatment, as well as other rights and liberties. Our government has adopted several amendments to the Constitution since the creation of the Bill of Rights; some of these amendments extend liberties and voting rights to African Americans, women, and other minority groups. Many of these groups have had to struggle in order to achieve equal status. For example, in the mid-1900s, African Americans organized a civil rights movement to help end segregation and discrimination.

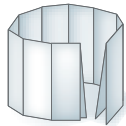
FOLDABLES[™]
Study Organizer

Organizing Information Study Foldable *This Foldable will help students organize information about the Bill of Rights.*

Step 1 Fold a sheet of paper in half from side to side.



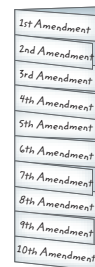
Step 2 Turn the paper and fold it in fifths.



Step 3 Unfold and cut only the top layer along both folds. Then cut each of the five tabs in half. This will make 10 tabs.



Step 4 Label your Foldable as shown.



Reading and Writing *Select key facts about each amendment to the Constitution and write them under the tabs of your Foldable.*

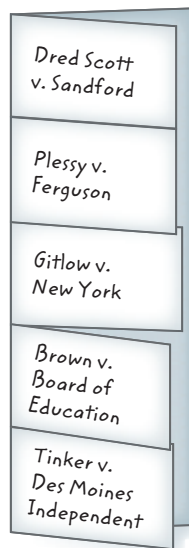
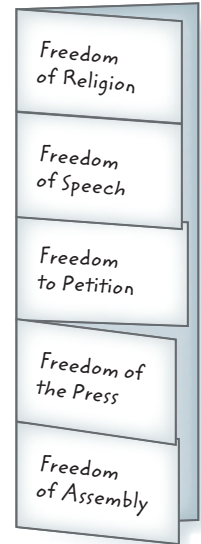
TOPIC ACTIVITY IDEAS

Organizing

Have students use the Organizing Information Study Foldable to organize facts about the first ten amendments. Have them create a Foldable as shown above and write facts from their textbook and the internet about each one under the tabs. Then have students share their facts as a class. Students should add new facts to their Study Foldable.

ILLUSTRATING

Have students use this Foldable to explore the five basic freedoms ensured by the First Amendment. Foldables should be divided into five tabs. Have students label each of the five tabs with one of the basic freedoms listed in the amendment: *Freedom of Religion*, *Freedom of Speech*, *Freedom to Petition*, *Freedom of the Press*, and *Freedom of Assembly*. Beneath each tab, ask students to illustrate the appropriate freedom with examples from their own experiences or from current events. Students should list incidents that they have witnessed, read about, or been told of. When the Foldables are finished, give students time to share some of their examples with the class.



CLASSIFYING

Have students use the Foldable to create five tabs, each listing the name of an important court case related to civil liberties, such as *Dred Scott v. Sandford*, *Plessy v. Ferguson*, *Gitlow v. New York*, *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, and *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent*. Students should list details about each case, such as the general subject of the case and its outcome, under the appropriate tab. When students have finished this task, discuss with them the effect of each case on civil rights.

Student Study Tip

To help students remember details from the text, encourage them to take notes as they read. Students may wish to pause at the end of each paragraph or page to record important names, dates, or concepts from the text they have just read. Tell students that personal notes do not have to be detailed. If students have briefly listed important items, they can easily find and expand upon those ideas later.