

Teacher's Guide for

Free To Speak – The One True Faith

Vocabulary

Academic freedom: the right of teachers, students, and scholars to express their views without fear of retribution or censorship from the institution they belong to

Bias: a preference or inclination that inhibits impartial judgment; prejudice

Burqa: an outer garment worn by some Muslim women that fully covers the body and face

Censorship: the suppression or prohibition of any parts of books, films, news, etc. that are considered obscene, politically unacceptable, or a threat to security

Critical thinking: the process of analyzing, evaluating, and synthesizing information to form a reasoned judgment

Dogma: a principle or set of principles laid down by an authority as incontrovertibly true

Enlightenment: a cultural movement in the 18th century characterized by the belief in the power of reason and empirical evidence over traditional authority and dogma

Ethics: moral principles that govern a person's behavior or the conduct of an activity

Free speech: the right to express any opinions without censorship or restraint

Freedom of expression: the right to express one's ideas and opinions freely through any media or communication without fear of censorship or punishment

Hate speech: speech that attacks or dehumanizes a group based on their ethnicity, religion, gender, or other characteristics

Ideology: a system of beliefs or ideas that forms the basis of economic or political theory and policy

Intercultural dialogue: communication and understanding between people of different cultures, often with the aim of reducing conflict and increasing cooperation

Knowledge: information and skills acquired through experience or education

Niqab: a garment worn by some Muslim women that covers the face

Oppression: prolonged, cruel, or unjust treatment or control of a group or people

Peer review: the process by which scholarly work is evaluated by experts in the same field to ensure its quality and accuracy

Prejudice: preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience

Propaganda: information, especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote a political cause or point of view

Science: a systematic and logical approach to discovering how things in the universe work, based on empirical evidence and experimentation

Scientific method: a process for experimentation that is used to explore observations and answer questions

Secularism: the belief that religion should not play a role in government or public affairs

Self-censorship: the act of censoring or controlling oneself, often to avoid offending others or risking punishment

Stereotype: a widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing

Tension: mental or emotional strain resulting from opposing or conflicting forces or beliefs

Critical Thinking Questions

These questions can be used for group discussions or can be responded to in writing. Select the questions that you find most relevant to your curriculum or allow your students to choose those they wish to discuss.

1. In what ways can scientific research be biased or influenced by ideology, and what can be done to prevent this from happening?
2. How can we prevent dogma from getting in the way of scientific progress, and ensure that scientists are open to changing their views when new evidence emerges?
3. What role do scientific journals and peer review play in ensuring the quality and accuracy of scientific research?
4. What ethical considerations should be considered when conducting scientific research, and how can we balance the pursuit of scientific knowledge with the need to protect human and animal subjects?
5. What role do pharmaceutical companies play in either promoting or deterring research to find a cure for an illness? What does the saying "follow the money" have to do with it?
6. Who benefits from continuing the current/routine treatments as the standard for medical conditions? Who loses when the medical community overlooks new or different treatments?
7. How did Galileo's discovery of the satellites of Jupiter inspire a complete rethinking of astronomy?
8. How did the church attempt to silence Galileo, and what was the outcome of their attempt?

9. What might have happened if Galileo had been allowed to argue his case before the public without fear of reprisal?
10. How important is the ability to disagree with dogma in scientific progress?
11. In what ways did Galileo's experiments and discoveries challenge the existing construction of knowledge?
12. How has the Enlightenment era's emphasis on free and open discourse influenced our modern-day understanding of the relationship between science and religion?
13. How did the Encyclopedia challenge the prevailing intellectual and political order of Diderot's time, and what impact did it have on the Enlightenment?
14. What are the dangers of politicizing scientific research, as demonstrated by the Lysenko episode and the Great Chinese Famine?
15. How did the Scopes trial reflect broader cultural and political tensions in America during the early 20th century?
16. How did the Epperson v. Arkansas case reflect broader changes in American society and politics in the 1960s and 1970s?
17. How have the debates and legal battles over the teaching of evolution evolved since the Scopes trial and Epperson v. Arkansas, and what do they tell us about the ongoing tensions between science and religion in American public life?
18. In what ways can public school curricula be designed to encourage critical thinking and open-mindedness? How does this relate to the freedom of speech and academic freedom?
19. To what extent can freedom of speech be limited in the context of public school education? What factors should be taken into consideration when determining what speech is appropriate for public school classrooms?
20. To what extent should schools be allowed to teach controversial subjects without fear of censorship or persecution? How does this relate to the concept of academic freedom?
21. What are the cultural forces that have pushed France towards proscribed secularism? What are the cultural forces that have made Americans more likely to want to protect the right to open religious expression?
22. What are the arguments that suppressing/forbidding the wearing of head coverings is good for society? What are the arguments against?
23. How does the French government's ban on Islamic face coverings and headscarves in public spaces affect Muslim women's freedom of expression and religious practice, and what are the potential consequences for social cohesion of this restriction?

24. To what extent do the debates around secularism and the wearing of Islamic headscarves in France reflect broader questions about the relationship between religion and the state, and what are the implications of these debates for other religious minorities in France and beyond?
25. How do the experiences and perspectives of Muslim women who choose to wear the niqab or burqa challenge dominant Western narratives about Muslim women's oppression and the compatibility of Islam with modernity and democracy?
26. What role do media representations and political rhetoric play in shaping public attitudes towards Islam and Muslims, and how do these narratives perpetuate or challenge stereotypes and discrimination?
27. How can societies balance the protection of individual freedoms and religious rights with the promotion of social integration and the prevention of extremism, and what are the ethical and practical implications of different policy approaches?
28. In what ways does France's commitment to state secularism challenge the First Amendment's protections for religious expression in the United States?
29. Is it important for media outlets to publish provocative content to challenge societal norms and beliefs, or should they refrain from publishing content that might be offensive to certain groups?
30. How do societies balance the right to free expression and the need for respect of the cultural or religious beliefs of minority groups?
31. Is it fair to criticize someone for expressing their thoughts and beliefs even if they may offend or be disrespectful to certain groups? Whose rights should be honored and whose should be negated? Who gets to decide?
32. Is there a right to not be offended? If so, who should decide what is offensive and what is not?
33. To what extent should governments regulate free expression to prevent harm or hate speech towards minority groups?
34. In what ways can self-censorship limit freedom of expression and creativity?

Socratic Seminar

Adapt this model as best suits your situation and time limits.

Topic: The complex relationship between free speech and politics and how these ideas affect our society and culture.

Preparation: Participants will watch the video, ***Free To Speak: The One True Faith***, read and review primary documents, then respectfully discuss and debate the ideas surrounding free speech as it applies to politics and societies in general.

Structure: Circle discussion with facilitator asking guiding questions.

Introduction (5 minutes): The facilitator will introduce the topic and provide an overview of the readings and primary sources. Participants will briefly introduce themselves and share their initial thoughts or questions related to the topic.

Round 1 (15 minutes): Guiding Question - What are the implications of the French government's ban on Islamic face coverings and headscarves in public spaces for Muslim women's freedom of expression and religious practice, and what are the potential consequences for social cohesion of this restriction?

Round 2 (15 minutes): Guiding Question - In what ways does France's commitment to state secularism challenge the First Amendment's protections for religious expression in the United States, and how can societies balance the protection of individual freedoms and religious rights with the promotion of social integration and the prevention of extremism?

Round 3 (15 minutes): Guiding Question - How did Galileo's experiments and discoveries challenge the existing construction of knowledge, and what was the outcome of the church's attempt to silence him? How important is the ability to disagree with dogma in scientific progress?

Round 4 (15 minutes): Guiding Question: How can critical thinking and open-mindedness be encouraged in public school curricula, and what factors should be taken into consideration when determining what speech is appropriate for public school classrooms?

Conclusion (10 minutes): The facilitator will summarize the key themes and insights from the seminar and invite participants to share any final thoughts or reflections. Participants will be invited to suggest future topics for discussion and to reflect on their experience in the seminar.

Note: The facilitator should encourage participants to support their arguments and perspectives with evidence from the readings and primary sources, and to engage with and respond to the perspectives of other participants in a respectful and constructive manner. The facilitator should also be prepared to adjust the discussion questions or format as needed to ensure that the conversation remains focused and productive.

Primary Documents

The U.S. Constitution, Bill of Rights, particularly the First Amendment

<https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/constitution-transcript>

<https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/bill-of-rights-transcript>

The Trial of Galileo Galilei – Lecture delivered at CERN on Feb 20, 1964, on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of Galileo's birth

<https://cds.cern.ch/record/223822/files/p1.pdf>