
THREATS TO FREE SPEECH: ISLAMIC EXTREMISM

Segment Length: 9:42 minutes

Lesson Description:

Should people be stopped from offending each other? From criticizing each other's views, religion, even race? Should the government protect us from offensive speech, or protect offensive speakers? Should people be afraid to speak openly if what they say offends others? This segment looks at the threats to free speech from Islamic extremists.

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- discuss the pros and cons of free speech.
- explain the importance of free speech in a democratic society.
- evaluate the choices between exercising free speech and avoiding offending others.
- assess the potential consequences – intended and unintended – of prohibiting speech that some people find offensive.

Preview Activity and Questions:

Distribute copies of the Preview Activity (page 27) for students to complete.

OR

Write the following questions on the board:

Should government prohibit people from insulting people's religions? Why / Why not?

Use Think, Pair, Share to have students answer the preview questions. After a few minutes, poll the students. Then, ask the students to explain their answers. Did any students bring up the First Amendment or freedom of speech?

Viewing Guide:

It is recommended that teachers show the video segment twice: once to allow students to view the video and focus on the issues presented, and once to allow them time to complete the viewing guide. After they complete the viewing guide, allow students a few minutes to work in pairs sharing and verifying answers.

Answers to Viewing Guide:

1. support
2. violent
3. network
4. plurality
5. comments
6. reality

Name _____ Date _____

Class _____ Period _____ Teacher _____

Threats to Free Speech: Islamic Extremism Viewing Guide

Directions: As you watch the video, fill in the blanks with the correct words.

1. I don't want to be killed, either. But I want to _____ free speech.
2. There are almost two billion Muslims in the world and most are not _____.
3. So, South Park criticizes everybody. Right. They're grossly offensive about everybody and it's fine, but they made a mild – the very mildest – pathetic, dweebiest, pansiest Muhammad joke you can imagine, and the _____ yanked the episode.
4. But polls show a _____ of Americans now support laws that would ban "hate speech."
5. There are people that could be incited to violence because of her _____.
6. You can put your head in the sand as deep as you like but if you are confronted with a grim _____ like this – people murdering in the name of their God, murdering in the name of their holy book – the more you stick your head in the sand, the bigger the problem gets.

Now, take a few moments to reflect on the video and answer the question below:

What are your initial reactions to the video segment you just watched?

Is it ever justifiable to physically harm people for what they say or draw? _____

Explain: _____

Who is at fault: the people drawing cartoons of Muhammad and criticizing Islam or the people trying to kill them? _____

Explain: _____

Discussion and Analysis:

1. Is the concept of free speech old fashioned? Should we adapt it for modern times? If so, how?
2. Should there be limits to freedom of speech? If so, what should those limits be?
3. Isn't free speech just a recipe for hurting other people's feelings?
4. What if people were insulting your religion? How would you react? How should you react?
5. Should there be exceptions to free speech when it comes to other people's religions or ethnicities? For what other categories should there be exceptions to free speech? Physical appearance? Accents? Hair length? Where does it stop?
6. In the video segment, we learned that Dutch filmmaker Theo Van Gogh was killed because his film, *Submission*, criticized Islam's treatment of women. If a religion advocates practices that some people think are unfair, should people criticize that or should they refrain from commenting because it is a religion?
7. Was Theo Van Gogh trying to help women or was he trying to criticize a religion? Does it matter?
8. What about the cartoonists who drew images of Muhammad: Should anything happen to them? Should they be stopped? Should they be killed?
9. Should a Draw Muhammad contest in Texas have been allowed? If not, what reason would you give for not allowing it?
10. Is hate speech free speech?
11. Should freedom of speech and freedom of the press be based on how others might react, or should free speech be accepted as a fundamental part of being a citizen of our country?
12. If the government used the term "hate speech laws," would people be more likely to support them? Would you? Does the term "hate speech" seem clear? Is it possible that hate speech can be interpreted differently and be used to prohibit expressing unpopular opinions that might not be hate-based? Can you give an example?
13. Mark Steyn was brought before the Canadian Human Rights Commission and the British Columbia Human Rights Tribunal for a column he wrote, "The Future Belongs to Islam." Could that happen in America? Should it? Should any country have rules that interfere with freedom of the press? Why / Why not?
14. Why are freedom of speech and freedom of the press important in a democracy? How are they important in political debate?
15. If we stop news agencies from reporting on offensive topics, what will happen to freedom of the press?
16. If offensive speech is prohibited, how will we criticize our elected officials, our government? How would candidates be able to run for office, if some of their ideas can be deemed "offensive" and thus prohibited?
17. There are often unintended consequences to government actions. What unintended consequences might occur if governments prohibit speech that is deemed offensive or hurtful?
18. If we can ban offensive speech, can't some people claim that ideas they disagree with are offensive just to stop others from expressing their views?
19. In the "old days," children were taught the nursery rhyme: "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me." What does that mean? Is it true? How has society changed?

20. If we are concerned about offensive speech, would the line, “A bullet a day keeps the infidel away,” be offensive? Should we do anything about that?
21. If we didn’t allow people to be offensive – to make offensive comments – who would get to decide what’s offensive? Can we get all people to agree about what’s offensive speech and what isn’t?
22. What about songs with offensive lyrics? Should they be banned? Who gets to decide which lyrics are offensive and which ones aren’t?
23. Should all laws be objective, based on fact, or can some be based on the opinions of others? For example, should government be allowed to ban words that some people find offensive?
24. What are our First Amendment rights? Are there any First Amendment issues here?
25. Isn’t it good to be kind to one another? So what’s wrong with a law that requires that?

Discuss These Lines from the Video:

1. We Americans, we speak pretty freely. We trash politicians, celebrities, each other...
2. We have the right to express ourselves.
3. Because if we stop drawing Muhammad, we become a little more unfree.
4. The satire magazine *Charlie Hebdo* wanted to support free speech, too. But then terrorists killed 10 journalists and cartoonists.
5. All over the world people are killed for criticizing Islam.
6. Roula Allouch speaks for CAIR, the Council on American-Islamic Relations. She says that no one should draw Muhammad, because it’s offensive to depict the prophet.
7. It’s a cornerstone of Islam for a person to have the right to freedom of speech and to freedom to express themselves.
8. It’s only Muslims who seem to be doing the killing over speech.
9. There are almost two billion Muslims in the world and most are not violent.
10. Molly Norris wanted to start a Draw Muhammad Day to protest this censorship. Then she got death threats. So, she’s disappeared.
11. Wanting to pick a fight with Islam is insane. Why would you want to make them hate you?
12. You can put your head in the sand as deep as you like, but if you are confronted with a grim reality like this – people murdering in the name of their God, murdering in the name of their holy book – the more you stick your head in the sand, the bigger the problem gets.

Quotes for Discussion:

I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it.

– Evelyn Beatrice Hall (Voltaire biographer)

I don’t feel as though I’m killing someone with a pen. I’m not putting lives at risk. When activists need a pretext to justify their violence, they always find it.

– Jacob Weisberg

If my good friend Dr. Gasbarri says a curse word against my mother, he can expect a punch. It’s normal. You cannot provoke. You cannot insult the faith of others. You cannot make fun of the faith of others.

– Pope Francis

We should treat people like the Charlie Hebdo attackers as what they are: monsters who kill both for the simple sake of killing and to provoke exactly the sort of religious conflict that mosque-attackers are indulging. And we should treat Muslims as what they are: normal people who of course reject terrorism, rather than as a lesser form of humanity that is expected to denounce violence every time it happens.

– Max Fisher

The word “Islam” means “peace.” The word “Muslim” means “one who surrenders to God.” But the press makes us seem like haters.

– Muhammad Ali

The publication of the drawings cannot be considered freedom of speech.

– Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu

The First Amendment was designed to protect offensive speech, because nobody ever tries to ban the other kind.

– Mike Godwin

Religion, a medieval form of unreason, when combined with modern weaponry becomes a real threat to our freedoms.

– Salman Rushdie

The new UN resolution should prohibit defamation of all prophets and faiths.

– Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu

But there is also no question that the free speech clause protects a wide variety of speech that listeners may consider deeply offensive, including statements that impugn another’s race or national origin or that denigrate religious beliefs.

– Samuel Alito

If we don’t believe in freedom of expression for people we despise, we don’t believe in it at all.

– Noam Chomsky

The only valid censorship of ideas is the right of people not to listen.

– Tommy Smothers

The question in every case is whether the words used are used in such circumstances and are of such a nature as to create a clear and present danger that they will bring about the substantive evils that Congress has a right to prevent. It is a question of proximity and degree.

– Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., in *Schenck v. United States*, 1919

Restriction of free thought and free speech is the most dangerous of all subversions. It is the one un-American act that could most easily defeat us.

– William O. Douglas

Fear of serious injury alone cannot justify oppression of free speech and assembly. Men feared witches and burnt women. It is the function of speech to free men from the bondage of irrational fears.

– Louis D. Brandeis

Free speech is intended to protect the controversial and even outrageous word; and not just comforting platitudes too mundane to need protection.

– Colin Powell

[The] First Amendment does not recognize exceptions for bigotry, racism, and religious intolerance or matters some deem trivial, vulgar, or profane.

– United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia

Free speech is for everyone. If we let officials suppress an unpopular religious view based on hurt feelings or because someone might be offended, free speech becomes meaningless.

– Glenn Katon, ACLU of Florida

That which cannot be formulated into an objective law, cannot be made the subject of legislation – not in a free country, not if we are to have a government of laws and not of men. An undefinable law is not a law, but merely a license for some men to rule others.

– Ayn Rand, “Vast Quicksands” in The Objectivist Newsletter

Quotes from signs at an Islamist demonstration in London, 2006:

“Kill those who insult the Prophet Muhammad”

“Behead those who insult Islam”

“Massacre those who insult Islam”

“Butcher those who mock Islam”

“Be prepared for the real holocaust”

“Exterminate those who slander Islam”

“Freedom go to hell”

“Europe is the cancer – Islam is the answer”

Activities:

1. After showing the video and discussing it in class, have students complete the Pros & Cons graphic organizer (page 28) or the Flow Chart graphic organizer (page 29) as an individual or group activity, or for homework.
2. Research the 2015 Charlie Hebdo massacre in France. Be sure to discover the causes of it, who did it and why, and the results of the attack. Present your findings in a slideshow. (See links in the Resources section for help in preparing effective slideshows.)
3. Research and write a report about the film, *Submission*, and the killing of its producer, Theo Van Gogh.
4. Danish Cartoonist Lars Vilks has been the target of numerous assassination attempts. Research him, the reason for the attempted assassinations, and the numerous attempts on his life, and report back to the class in an oral report. (See link in the Resources section for a guide to speaking to a class.)
5. Research and write a biography of Molly Norris, who went into hiding after death threats as a result of her cartoon about an Everybody Draw Muhammad Day. (See links in the Resources section for help writing a biography.)
<http://freemollynorris.org>
6. Use the YouGov website to research polls about free speech. What did the polls specifically ask? What were the results? Report your findings to the class in a slideshow. (See links in the Resources section for help in preparing effective slideshows.)
7. Conduct a classroom debate on the topic: Islamic Extremism: A Threat to Free Speech? To get students to look at the debate from a different perspective, consider having them argue from a view with which they disagree. Students should be given time to research their position prior to debating. (See link in the Resources section for a guide to conducting classroom debates.)

8. Research Mark Steyn and his case before the Canadian Human Rights Commission and the British Columbia Human Rights Tribunal. As part of the research, read the article he wrote, "The Future Belongs to Islam." Either write a report or present your findings to the class in a talk. (See link in the Resources section for a guide to speaking to a class.)
<http://www.macleans.ca/culture/the-future-belongs-to-islam/>
9. Research and report on the 2015 Draw Muhammad contest and subsequent shooting in Texas.
10. In a five-paragraph persuasive essay, argue for or against limits on free speech to appease people who are offended. Make sure to include your thesis statement in your introduction, and in one of your body paragraphs, explore the opposition's argument and the reasons you think they are wrong. (See links in the Resources section for help writing persuasive essays.)
11. The attempt to silence critics of Islam has been called an extreme version of the heckler's veto. What is the heckler's veto, and how does it relate to the video? How is this appropriate or inappropriate behavior? Is there any similarity between bullying and the attempt by Islamic extremists to stop people they disagree with from speaking or publishing? Research heckler's veto and write an essay that answers these questions.
12. Just because we might be allowed to be offensive does not mean we should be. Draw a poster advocating – but not mandating – inoffensive speech. Be sure to clearly specify what inoffensive speech is and why people should try to be inoffensive in their communications with others.
13. Create a political cartoon or poster about the attempts by Islamic extremists to prohibit what they consider to be insults to their religion or about a response to those attempts.
14. Research and write a report about CAIR, the Council on American Islamic Relations. What is their mission? What activities do they participate in or sponsor? What educational outreach do they provide?
15. The creators of *South Park* wrote the Tony Award winning Broadway musical, *The Book of Mormon*. Research the *South Park* episodes that include references to Muhammad and the play. Are there any double standards there? What have been the responses by Mormon leaders to the play? Write an essay in which you compare and contrast the shows and the play, and the responses to them.
16. What European countries have laws against denying the Holocaust? Why do those laws exist? Is that the best way to oppose offensive speech? How might the Holocaust deniers be discredited rather than jailed?
17. Write a dialog between a person who supports free speech and a person who does not.
18. Research the issues in the Westboro Baptist Church case, *Snyder v. Phelps*. Summarize the issues and report on the Supreme Court's decision. What was the basis for the Court's decision? Compare and contrast this case to what you saw in the video.
19. Produce a "man-on-the-street" video in which you ask people what they know about the Charlie Hebdo and the Muhammad cartoons. (See links in the Resources section for help in producing man-on-the-street videos.)
20. Write a letter to the head of a media company or daily newspaper expressing your views about publishing Muhammad cartoons or other material that might be considered insulting or offensive.
21. Read one of the articles in the Resources section and either write a summary or take Cornell Notes. (See links in the Resources section for help in taking Cornell Notes.)

22. Read and write a book report about one of the books in the Resources section.

Resources:

Think, Pair, Share

A brief explanation of the Think, Pair, Share instructional strategy, with examples:

<http://www.readingquest.org/strat/tps.html>

A video explanation of Think, Pair, Share:

<https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/think-pair-share-lesson-idea>

Conducting classroom debates:

<http://712educators.about.com/cs/lessonsss/ht/htdebate.htm>

http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/socstud/frame_found_sr2/tns/tn-13.pdf

<http://busyteacher.org/7245-conducting-class-debate-essential-tips.html>

How to produce a man-on-the-street interview:

<http://onemarketmedia.com/2009/02/16/seven-ideas-to-help-get-the-most-out-of-a-man-on-the-street-interview/>

<http://watchdogwire.com/blog/2014/08/25/man-on-the-street-interview-tipsheet/>

How to write a biography:

<http://www.infoplease.com/homework/wsbiography.html>

<http://homeworktips.about.com/od/biography/a/bio.htm>

How to write a book report:

<http://www.infoplease.com/homework/wsbookreporths.html>

How to write a persuasive essay:

https://www.scribendi.com/advice/how_to_write_a_persuasive_essay.en.html

<http://www.infoplease.com/homework/writingskills7.html>

How to conduct a survey:

http://www.ehow.com/how_16596_write-survey-questionnaire.html

<http://www.mathsisfun.com/data/survey-conducting.html>

For a clear, simple explanation of the Cornell note-taking system:

<http://coe.jmu.edu/learningtoolbox/cornellnotes.html>

<http://www.bucks.edu/~specpop/Cornl-ex.htm>

For help in speaking to a class:

<https://www.hamilton.edu/oralcommunication/tips-for-effective-delivery>

Preparing effective slideshow presentations:

http://www.slideshare.net/satyajeet_02/how-to-make-effective-presentation

<https://support.office.com/en-us/article/Tips-for-creating-and-delivering-an-effective-presentation-f43156b0-20d2-4c51-8345-0c337cefb88b>

<http://smallbiztrends.com/2016/07/effective-powerpoint-presentations.html>

Articles

“Al Qaeda Mag Publishes ‘Wanted: Dead or Alive’ List: ‘Yes We Can: A Bullet A Day Keeps The Infidel Away’” by Daniel Halper

<http://www.weeklystandard.com/al-qaeda-mag-publishes-wanted-dead-or-alive-list/article/704904>

- “At United Nations, Organization Of Islamic Cooperation Calls For Ban On Insulting Prophet Muhammad” by Jaweed Kaleem
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/09/30/united-nations-organization-of-islamic-cooperation_n_1927166.html
- “Court decision on anti-Islam video is potentially hazardous to investigative journalism” by Peter Scheer
<https://firstamendmentcoalition.org/2014/11/court-decision-on-anti-islam-video-is-potentially-hazardous-to-investigative-journalism/>
- “Denmark Criminalizes Free Speech – Selectively” by Judith Bergman
<http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/7452/denmark-free-speech-islam>
- “Free speech, even when grossly offensive, has to be defended” by Roy Greenslade
<https://www.theguardian.com/media/greenslade/2016/jan/06/free-speech-charlie-hebdo-pastor-grossly-offensive>
- “Freedom Of Speech: We Will Not Cower” by Onkar Ghate
<https://ari.aynrand.org/issues/government-and-business/individual-rights/Freedom-of-Speech-We-Will-Not-Cower#filter-bar>
- “The future belongs to Islam” by Mark Steyn
<http://www.macleans.ca/culture/the-future-belongs-to-islam/>
- “I Am Not Charlie Hebdo” by David Brooks
http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/09/opinion/david-brooks-i-am-not-charlie-hebdo.html?_r=0
- “The Impact of Islamic Fundamentalism on Free Speech” by Denis MacEoin
<http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/8280/islamic-fundamentalism-free-speech>
- “Islam v. Free Speech: Twitter Surrenders” by Andrew C. McCarthy
<http://www.nationalreview.com/article/429190/islam-twitter-and-free-speech>
- “Islamic group calls for ban on offending prophet” by Daa Hadid
<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/huff-wires/20120929/un-un-general-assembly-islamic-organization/>
- “Onward, Mormon Soldiers! Exposing the Hypocrisy of the Liberal Left” by Paul Avallone
<http://havokjournal.com/nation/onward-mormon-soldiers-exposing-the-hypocrisy-of-the-liberal-left/>
- “The U.S. is alone among western democracies in protecting ‘hate speech.’ Chalk it up to a healthy fear of government censorship.” by Peter Scheer
<https://firstamendmentcoalition.org/2011/03/the-u-s-is-alone-among-western-democracies-in-protecting-hate-speech-chalk-it-up-to-a-healthy-fear-of-government-censorship/>

Books

- America Alone: The End of the World As We Know It* by Mark Steyn
- Lights Out: Islam, Free Speech and the Twilight of the West* by Mark Steyn
- Freedom vs Islam* by Robert Jameson
- The Organization of Islamic Cooperation’s Jihad on Free Speech* by Deborah Weiss

Organizations

- First Amendment Coalition
<http://www.firstamendmentcoalition.org/>
<http://www.firstamendmentcoalition.org/tag/offensive-speech/>
- First Amendment Center
<http://www.firstamendmentcenter.org>

Free Molly Norris Foundation

<http://freemollynorris.org>

National Coalition Against Censorship

<http://www.ncac.org/>

YouGov: online survey website

<http://www.YouGov.com>

Organisation of Islamic Cooperation

<http://www.oic-oci.org/oicv3/home/?lan=en>

Podcast

The Yaron Brook Show: Charlie Hebdo and the Threat to Free Speech

<https://ari.aynrand.org/blog/2015/01/12/new-episode-of-the-yaron-brook-show-charlie-hebdo-and-the-threat-to-free-speech>

Name _____ Date _____

Class _____ Period _____ Teacher _____

Preview Activity

Directions: Answer the questions below before watching the video.

When should you have free speech? _____

When shouldn't you? _____

Should people be allowed to be offensive? _____ Explain: _____

What is meant by "offensive"? _____

Who decides what is offensive and what is not? _____

Name _____ Date _____

Class _____ Period _____ Teacher _____

Preview Activity

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Name _____ Date _____

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Threats to Free Speech: Islamic Extremism Pros & Cons Table

Directions: After reviewing the video and discussing it in class, complete the chart below.

CHOICE	PROS	CONS
<i>Censor ourselves to avoid offending others and bringing harm to ourselves, even on issues we believe are important to discuss.</i>		
<i>Speak out on issues that we believe need to be addressed or that we desire to address, even though we realize others might not approve of what we say and might harm us.</i>		

Which of the two choices above is more important? In a brief paragraph, explain why.

Name _____ Date _____

Class _____ Period _____ Teacher _____

Threats to Free Speech: Islamic Extremism Flow Chart

Directions: Use the flow chart below to layout the arguments for and against limiting speech that offends or insults people's religious views or their religions.

