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# Free Speech

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## **Videos:**

“The Limits of Free Speech | Janne Teller”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FbLOxttcpY4>

(5:06 minutes)

“Prof. Peter Jaworski: The Philosophy of Free Speech”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-4J8QL81LNg>

(6:12 minutes)

## **Guide:**

The questions below will help students achieve a better understanding of the arguments made on either side of a contentious topic. Because these questions often touch upon statements made briefly in the videos, we recommend reading the questions before watching each video.

Students are encouraged to take notes during the videos, and it may be helpful for students to break into groups, each taking responsibility for only a few questions, before coming together for discussion.

## **Analysis Questions:**

1. What are the opposing ideas in these two videos?
2. What does “free speech” mean to you?
3. Prof. Peter Jaworski said that most people would agree that people should be allowed to say things that are true. Do you agree? Should people be free to say whatever they want if it’s true? Why/Why not?
4. In the Institute of Art and Ideas (IAI) video, Janne Teller said that freedom of speech comes with a responsibility. What is that responsibility?
5. Prof. Jaworski said that John Stuart Mill argued we should not prevent people from saying things that are untrue, “because what we don’t want...is for our true opinions to turn into dogma.” What did he mean by this? What is the difference between a true opinion and dogma?
6. Janne Teller said: “[The people] have decided [the protections against free speech] because we have voted politicians in place through generations that built up the democracy we live in today.” Does democracy empower politicians to decide what qualifies as free speech? Why/Why not?
7. Prof. Jaworski used the term “the free market of ideas.” What is the free market of ideas?
8. Janne Teller said: “[A]narchy is not freedom for everybody, anarchy is always rule of the bully.” What did she mean by this?

9. Prof. Jaworski said: “If I’m allowed to say what is false, then that presents a challenge to the true view, and then people who believe the truth are going to have to make that truth more robust.” What does it mean to make a truth “more robust”? What are some examples of this?
10. Janne Teller said she had been subjected to online bullying, including hacking and identity theft. Are hacking and identity theft forms of speech? Why/Why not? If so, do they fall under the category of free speech? Why/Why not?
11. Prof. Jaworski said that throughout human history, “majorities of people have thought what turned out to be false, but they all thought that it was true.” What are some examples of this?
12. In the IAI video, Nigel Inkster said the police aren’t equipped to police ideas, but that U.S. politicians should be encouraged to address problems with online speech. Are politicians equipped to police ideas? Why/Why not?
13. Prof. Jaworski said: “If we don’t allow people to say things freely, you may never have the opportunity to correct your false beliefs.” What did he mean by this? Are there any beliefs you once held that you later realized were false? If so, what were they and how did you realize they were false?
14. In the IAI video, Yasmin Alibhai-Brown referenced a story of teenage girls who joined ISIS after seeing online propaganda. Is this evidence that online speech needs to be more regulated? Why/Why not?
15. Prof. Jaworski mentioned “the Harm Principle.” What is the Harm Principle?
16. In the IAI video, the speakers discussed the differences between online and offline speech. In what ways are these two things different? Should they be treated differently? Why/Why not?
17. While Prof. Jaworski expressed doubt that censorship can solve the problem of false beliefs, he said there wasn’t sufficient evidence “to believe that the truth will in fact win out.” Do you think truth generally wins out? Why/Why not?
18. Did these two videos share any common ground? Were there any points on which they agreed? If so, what were they?
19. Should one of the arguments we heard carry more weight than the other? If so, which one? Why?
20. Did you have an opinion on this topic before watching these videos? If so, what was it? Has your opinion changed? If so, how? What did you learn from these videos that affects your views on this topic?
21. What else would you like to learn about this topic?