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# Is Capitalism Freedom?

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## Videos:

“Does Capitalism Mean Freedom? (with Zephyr Teachout)”  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pMALdj8u\\_do](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pMALdj8u_do) (5:33 minutes)

“Donald Boudreaux | The Case for Economic Freedom”  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y\\_gLivMfua4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y_gLivMfua4) (6:43 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. Zephyr Teachout said: “If you’re an American, you’ve probably heard this one before: ‘capitalism means freedom.’” Have you heard this before? If so, what did you think of this sentiment?
3. Donald Boudreaux said: "A society is free in facade only if capitalism is in facade only." What did he mean by this?
4. Zephyr Teachout said: “[W]e have allowed big corporate monopolies to take over a lot of the work of government and replace public institutions with private, for-profit ones.” What is a monopoly? Can you think of any examples of monopolies in the United States?
5. Donald Boudreaux described two propositions: "One [proposition is that]...when government interferes with reproductive choices or freedom of the press, that's dangerous. A second proposition is that when government interferes in the economy, that that somehow enhances our freedom, or at least doesn't threaten it." What are your stances on these propositions and why?
6. Zephyr Teachout said: “Sure, we can choose between different eyeglass companies—until we learn they’re all owned by the same company behind the scenes. We can choose between Budweiser, Skol, or Beck’s beer, but they’re all owned by the same company, too.” Are these true monopolies, or are there alternatives to buying from these companies?

7. Donald Boudreaux said: "[I]t's impossible for the government to...have some control over the economy without having similar at least potential control over the things we call 'non-economic.'" What was his reasoning for this claim?
8. Zephyr Teachout said: "Despite claims that workers freely enter into a contract to sell their labor, there's no free choice between working and not working." What did she mean by this? Are people free to not work? If not, should they be? Why/Why not?
9. Donald Boudreaux said: "Liberty respects the competence of the individual." What did he mean by this?
10. Zephyr Teachout said: "When we go to work, we check our hard-won rights at the door, and your employers rule over you night and day." Do you agree with this statement? Do employers "rule over" their employees? Why/Why not?
11. Donald Boudreaux said: "If we regard the individual as competent to choose his or her lifestyle...then why don't we regard the individual to be equally competent to make economic choices?" Should these two types of choices be treated differently? Why/Why not?
12. Zephyr Teachout said: "When Amazon decides it doesn't like a particular book, that book can vanish from the place most everyone buys books." Has the success of Amazon limited our access to books and other sources of information and art? If so, how?
13. Donald Boudreaux said: "The belief in freedom is not fearful of the true progress of society." What did he mean by this?
14. Zephyr Teachout said that in our current economy, "you don't have much of a choice at all." Do you agree with this statement? Do you feel that the market restricts your choices? If so, how?
15. Donald Boudreaux said: "Liberty, I believe, is a whole. It is indivisible. And when you threaten it in one area, you inevitably and invariably put it at risk in another area." Should some freedoms be restricted in order to protect other freedoms? Why/Why not?
16. Did these two videos share any common ground? Were there any points on which they agreed? If so, what were they?
17. Should one of the arguments we heard carry more weight than the other? If so, which one? Why?
18. 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?
19. What else would you like to learn about this topic?
20. For more on this topic, see [Both Sides: Does Capitalism Exploit Workers?](#)