

Maggie's Civics Corner

Lesson #8 – Free Speech



Maggie says ...

In these difficult times, as our nation and the world pull together, it is more important than ever to understand our role as a citizen.

Today's lesson is about FREEDOM OF SPEECH. I love to bark and share my voice. Did you know that the Constitution allows us to speak and express ourselves, even if we have different opinions than our neighbors? This is important because it lets us share our ideas and make changes in the community!

Sticky Situation: Imagine that your school wants to make the school week 6 days instead of 5 days. That means you get one less day of the weekend! You want to tell your teacher that you think the school week should be 5 days. Are you allowed to respectfully tell your teacher about your opinion?

Instead of telling the teacher, you decide to wear a shirt that says, "School should be 5 days." Is this still free speech, even though you did not speak it out loud?

Activity: The Supreme Court said students have the right to free speech while they are at school as long as it is not disruptive. The landmark court case is *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District*, where students were allowed to wear armbands protesting a war because it expressed their opinion and was not disruptive.

Activity: Think of something you believe. Maybe you believe that vanilla ice cream is better than chocolate ice cream, or that dogs are better than cats. (*We all know that last one is true!*) Practice free speech by explaining to a friend or family member why your opinion is right. Then let them explain to you why they think their own opinion is right. Even if you disagree with each other, you both practiced your right to share your ideas!

Civics Resources: Learn more about the First Amendment and the forms of expression it protects –

[The Annenberg Guide to the United States Constitution – The First Amendment](#)