



Why Free Speech Matters

George Orwell said, "If liberty means anything at all, it means the right to tell people what they do not need to hear." In the video "Why Free Speech Matters," you heard three reasons why this provision in the 1st Amendment to the Constitution is so important. Three of the top **three reasons** are:

1. **It's what keeps us free people:** Free speech allows us to criticize or debate about the people we elect without fear of retribution.
2. **It protects the ways we communicate:** In other words, Americans have the freedom to express themselves without fear of government violence. This covers all forms of speech, including communication on social media.
3. **It protects minority opinion:** Just because someone may not have the popular opinion does not mean they do not have the right to voice their thoughts.



America is a free nation, but it is becoming increasingly common to hear people argue against the value of free speech. What might be some arguments **against** free speech?

1. **It can promote hate speech:** One of the most prominent modern arguments is that the ability to speak freely allows for "unacceptable" or hate speech. College campuses across the nation have had protests where students argue this very point. The question is, who will decide what is considered an acceptable opinion and what is deemed hate speech?
2. **It can be misleading:** The ability to state what's on a person's mind doesn't mean that statement is the truth. Some argue that the freedom to say anything has led to the public believing opinions or false information rather than facts.



3. **It can provoke violence:** Another concern is that some opinions are so disliked by those in disagreement that violence breaks out. Allowing free speech at schools and public places, some say, can instigate a riot or other violent confrontation.