

Is it Constitutional or Not? Research Project

Introduction:

The Constitution is the single most important document that impacts our life on a daily basis. The Constitution affects what we are allowed to do, protects our individual rights, and it is the framework that guides and limits the power of our government. The Supreme Court has the final word on whether a topic is allowed by the Constitution. The Supreme Court regularly has to decide the constitutionality of specific “hot topics.”

You and a partner are going to research one of the following “hot topics” in American society. (If you think of another topic you’d rather research, just have it approved by me ahead of time.) The issues are specific to the Bill of Rights and will possibly be heard by the Supreme Court in the near future. Therefore, we are going to divide the following topics so that you may be better informed about the following topics.

Possible Topics:

Amendment 1: Freedom of Speech and Expression

- *Censorship*: How much violence in movies and games should be allowed? How much is too much?
- *Freedom of expression on the internet*: How much is too much?
- *Dress codes in public schools*: Should public schools have uniforms?

Amendment 2: Gun Control

- *Gun Possession*: How should guns be controlled? Who should be allowed to have guns? How much control should the government have?

Amendment 4: Unreasonable Search and Seizure

- *Drug testing*: Should students be given drug tests in school?

Amendment 8: Cruel and Unusual Punishment

- *Juvenile Crime*: Should juveniles be treated as adults for serious crimes?
- *Capital Punishment*: Is the death penalty a just punishment?

Amendment 9: Rights of the People

- *Assisted Suicide and/or Euthanasia*: Should people be able to choose when they die? Should doctors assist individuals to end life?
- *Same Sex Marriage*: Should same sex marriage be legalized?
- *Illegal Immigration*: What rights do immigrants have that come to the U.S. illegally?
- *Legalizing Drugs*: Should some drugs like marijuana be legalized?

All of these topics are controversial because arguments can be made to support both sides of the issue.

Steps to Complete the Research Paper:

Steps	Suggested Completion Date	Check When Complete
1. Selection of partner and topic. ✓ Decide who will argue the opposing/supporting side.	12/23	
2. Begin research at home.	12/23 - 1/8	
3. Research in class. ✓ You will be given time in the Media Center to work on your research. Be sure to know both sides of the argument.	1/9 – 1/11	
4. Complete the rough outline as you do your research. ✓ This will help guide your writing for your final paper.	1/12	
5. Write your four paragraph essay as a team. (One person will be in charge of paragraph 1 and 2. One person will be in charge of paragraphs 3 and 4.) ✓ Paragraph 1: Introduction to topic: Brief overview as to why the issue is controversial and how it applies to the Bill of Rights. ✓ Paragraph 2: A detailed explanation of the opposing viewpoint of your topic. (You must be familiar with the arguments that will be used against you.) <u>You will use the Constitution, historical details, your opinion and any other information to forcefully support your viewpoint.</u> ✓ Paragraph 3: A detailed explanation of the supporting viewpoints of your topic. (You must be familiar with the arguments that will be used against you.) <u>You will use the Constitution, historical details, your opinion and any other information to forcefully support your viewpoint.</u> ✓ Paragraph 4: Conclusion to the topic: Brief summary as to why the issue is controversial and how it applies to the Bill of Rights. Summarize the arguments made in the paper.	1/17	
FINAL PAPER DUE:	Pds. 3, 5, 7 – Tues., Jan. 24 th Pds. 1, 2 – Wed., Jan. 25 th	

Note: The research paper will be with 30 points. A rubric is attached.

Note Format for Constitutional Research Paper

Paragraph 1: Introduction

- What is the topic of your paper?
- What specific amendment(s) does your issue relate to? Explain how your issue relates to this amendment.
- Why is your issue controversial? Explain the basis for the controversy. Can you relate the controversy to American values and/or government principles we have discussed in class?

Opposing Viewpoint

- Topic sentence
- Supporting 1 argument for the opposing viewpoint:
 - Explanation:
 - Example:
- Supporting argument 2 for the opposing viewpoint:
 - Explanation:
 - Example:
- Supporting argument 3 for the opposing viewpoint:
 - Explanation:
 - Example:
- Concluding sentence

Supporting Viewpoint

(Be sure to include the American values and/or government principles that support your argument.)

- Topic sentence

- Supporting 1 argument for the supporting viewpoint:
 - Explanation:
 - Example:
- Supporting argument 2 for the supporting viewpoint:
 - Explanation:
 - Example:
- Supporting argument 3 for the supporting viewpoint:
 - Explanation:
 - Example:
- Concluding sentence

Paragraph 1: Conclusion

- Summarize your paper.
- Why is your issue controversial? Explain the basis for the controversy. Can you relate the controversy to American values and/or government principles we have discussed in class?
- What conclusions can you draw about the topic?

Name(s): _____ Date: _____ Pd: _____

Rubric for Constitutional Research Paper

Topic	Group Member In Charge	Points Earned	Possible Points
Introduction Do you explain how your issue relates to a specific amendment?			5
Introduction			5

Do you explain the American values related to your topic?			
Introduction Do you explain why your issue is controversial?			5
Opposing Viewpoint: Argument 1 Do you explain your argument and provide explanations as to why your argument is the correct one?			5
Opposing Viewpoint: Argument 2 Do you explain your argument and provide explanations as to why your argument is the correct one?			5
Opposing Viewpoint: Argument 3 Do you explain your argument and provide explanations as to why your argument is the correct one?			5
Supporting Viewpoint: Argument 1 Do you explain your argument and provide explanations as to why your argument is the correct one?			5
Supporting Viewpoint: Argument 2 Do you explain your argument and provide explanations as to why your argument is the correct one?			5
Supporting Viewpoint: Argument 3 Do you explain your argument and provide explanations as to why your argument is the correct one?			5
Conclusion Do you summarize your research topic?			5
Conclusion Do you explain why your issue is controversial?			5
Conclusion Do you draw conclusions about your topic?			5
Conventions and presentation Does your paper have appropriate sentence structure?	Both		2
Conventions and presentation Does your paper have proper grammar?	Both		3
Conventions and presentation Is your paper well presented? Is it neatly typed and separated into appropriate paragraphs?	Both		5
Member Name:			
Member Name:			
TOTAL POINTS			40