

KIDS, KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!

Democracy (a government controlled by its people) only works when everyone has the freedom to explore all sides of an idea and form their own opinions. Intellectual freedom is a vital part of democracy.

WHAT IS INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM?

Intellectual freedom is your freedom to learn and think anytime and anywhere. This includes:

- Freedom to find out and discover: to read, listen, and watch what you want using books, magazines, websites, movies, TV shows, radio, and music
- Freedom to think for yourself and make up your own mind
- Freedom to talk and write about what you believe
- Freedom to think and express yourself everywhere, including at home, at school, and at the library
- Freedom to gather with others to express your ideas peacefully

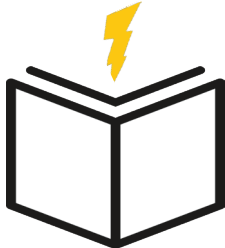
WHY DO WE NEED INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM?

• In many countries, the government tells people what to think, read, say, and do. However, in the United States, we have a Constitution and Bill of Rights, so citizens tell our government what it can and cannot do.

• The First Amendment to the Constitution is part of the Bill of Rights. It stops the United States government from telling people what we can or cannot say (freedom of speech), what we can or cannot print (freedom of the press), and who can or cannot gather together to express their ideas (freedom of assembly).

• If you think the government is limiting your intellectual freedom to think, read, say, or do, then you have the right to challenge the government.

• Democracy only works when everyone has the freedom to explore all sides of an idea and form their own opinions. When people have access to all the information available, they can wisely debate, discuss and argue about their ideas.



WHAT IF SOMEONE TRIES TO LIMIT YOUR INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM?

One adult or group of adults might believe that a certain book or other media shouldn't be available to you. If you feel your intellectual freedom rights are being violated, you have a right to protest. You can:

- Talk to the adults in your family about how you feel
- Talk to a teacher or a librarian
- Talk to the principal of your school
- Consider creating a petition
- Talk to your peers
- Get the word out to local media

Intellectual freedom is a guaranteed right, but it is also a great responsibility. Gathering new information, learning to tell the difference between real and fake information, and listening to ideas that are different from yours, are all part of your responsibility as a citizen of a democracy. Hearing ideas that are different from yours might change your mind or strengthen your beliefs. No one knows everything, and by listening to, and learning from each other, we can better understand and appreciate each other's viewpoints.

HOW CAN KIDS FIND THE INFORMATION THEY NEED?

Don't worry! Librarians will help you find all the free materials you want! They are trained to show you how to find the most accurate information. Libraries are dedicated to collecting materials that provide information from many different sources and they will respect your privacy.