

Freedom of Speech Case Study Worksheet

Instructions

Does freedom of speech extend to a school newspaper? Read the following scenario and consider the issue of free speech in this instance. Afterwards, research all facets of the issue and develop an opinion. As you create your slideshow presentation, support your argument with specific references. You will be graded on the depth of thinking you show, the logical progression of ideas in your argument, and the degree to which you effectively support your opinion. You will also need to address the Essential Question, *Is information power?*

Case Study in Brief

In the 1980s, students at Hazelwood East High School, near St. Louis, Missouri, wrote several stories for the official school-sponsored newspaper that were censored by the school principal. One article was about pregnancy among specific but unnamed teenagers at the school, and another was about the effect of parental divorce on Hazelwood students. The principal believed that the pregnancy story was unfair to the unnamed students, and he feared they might be recognized. He was concerned that the parents who were criticized in the article about divorce had not been consulted or given an opportunity to address the criticism lodged against them. He ordered the students to remove the stories before allowing the paper to be published. The students sued, charging that their right to a free press had been violated.

Abstract

U.S. Supreme Court

HAZELWOOD SCHOOL DISTRICT v. KUHLMEIER, 484 U.S. 260 (1988)

Abstract Prepared for the Court

Respondents, former high school students who were staff members of the school newspaper, filed suit in Federal District Court against petitioners, the school district and school officials, alleging that respondents' First Amendment rights were violated by the deletion from a certain issue of the paper of two pages that included an article describing school students' experiences with pregnancy and another article discussing the impact of divorce on students at the school. The newspaper was written and edited by a journalism class, as part of the school's curriculum. Pursuant to the school's practice, the teacher in charge of the paper submitted page proofs to the principal, who objected to the pregnancy story because the pregnant students, although not named, might be identified from the text, and because he believed that the article's references to sexual activity and birth control were inappropriate for some of the younger students. The principal objected to the divorce article because the page proofs he was furnished identified by name (deleted by the teacher from the final version) a student who complained of her father's conduct, and the principal believed that the student's parents should have been given an opportunity to respond to the remarks or to consent to their publication. Believing that there was no time to make necessary changes in the articles if the paper was to be issued before

the end of the school year, the principal directed that the pages on which they appeared be withheld from publication even though other, unobjectionable articles were included on such pages. The District Court held that no First Amendment violation had occurred. The Court of Appeals reversed. It was sent to the U.S. Supreme Court for a final decision.

Research Citations (use more pages as needed)

Argument (use more pages as needed)