

Name: _____

Block: _____

8th Grade ELA CHOICE BOARD
Text, Freedom of the Press?

You must choose 3 different learning targets to complete on this tick-tack-toe board either vertically or diagonally.

<p>RI8 <i>What is the argument being made in the text, Freedom of the Press? Explain each side of the argument and what side you agree with?</i></p>	<p>RI6 <i>Create a comic strip with the students on one side and the principal on the other side expressing their point of view.</i></p>	<p>RI2 <i>Write an objective summary of the text that identifies the central ideas and analyzes its development over the course of the text.</i></p>									
<p>WI <i>Write a brief argumentative piece in which you state a claim in response to the following statement: Having passion for a subject is more important than having knowledge about it. (State your claim and provide your reasons)</i></p>	<p>RI2 <i>What is the Central Idea of the text? How does the central idea develop over the course of the text?</i></p>	<p>RI 3 <i>Complete the graphic organizer</i></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="992 835 1429 1062"> <tr> <td>Individual</td> <td>Idea or event</td> <td>How idea or event was influenced by individual?</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Principal</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Students</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Individual	Idea or event	How idea or event was influenced by individual?	Principal			Students		
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Principal											
Students											
<p>RI 6 <i>Create a poster that expresses your point of view as a slogan on the argument, "Freedom of the Press?"</i></p>	<p>RI 2 <i>Answer the following question using the R.A.C.E. When is it right to take a stand? Use evidence from the text to support your position. Your evidence should include the position of the principal or the students from the text.</i></p>	<p>WI <i>Write an introductory paragraph that hooks the reader and includes the writer's claim on the topic.</i></p>									

Freedom of the Press?

NOTES

- 1 **T**he First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution gives newspapers, magazines, and other publications the right to print whatever they see fit, without interference from the government. The framers of the Constitution felt that a free press is vital to a democratic society.
- 2 This important idea breaks down when schools are involved. As it turns out, there is a difference between “free press” and high school newspapers.
- 3 The difference is technical. The First Amendment prevents the government from censoring the press. However, private publishers can censor whatever they want. Since schools and school districts pay the student newspaper’s publication costs, they are private publishers. This means that they can edit information as they see fit. They can even refuse to publish some articles.
- 4 This is a tough lesson for budding journalists, some of whom have challenged the restrictions. One case even made it to the Supreme Court, in *Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier*.
- 5 Here are the facts. In 1983, students at Hazelwood High, a public high school near St. Louis, Missouri, saw two pages missing from their school newspaper, *The Spectrum*. They found out that the principal, Robert Reynolds, had removed two of the articles after finding them unfit for publication. One article, about teen pregnancy, contained interviews with pregnant students whose names were changed; the other article dealt with divorce.
- 6 Principal Reynolds said the pregnancy article was not appropriate for a high school audience. He was also concerned

that the girls’ identities would have been revealed eventually in such a small school. His problem with the divorce article was that it was not “fair and balanced.” He felt it criticized parents without providing their side of the story.

- 7 Some students were outraged and sued the school. They argued that the issue was not the content of the articles, but whether or not the school had the right to suppress them.
- 8 In 1988, the Supreme Court ruled 5–3 in favor of the school. The ruling said that while students “do not shed their first amendment rights at the schoolhouse gate,” no school should tolerate activities “inconsistent with its basic educational mission.” In other words, when student expression is school-sponsored, it can be censored—as long as those doing the censoring have valid educational reasons. The law now varies from state to state. States that disagree with parts of the ruling have their own laws that govern students’ freedom of expression.
- 9 We are now left with these critical questions: Is it fair for some students to have greater freedom of speech in their high school newspapers when others are subjected to censorship? What does this situation say about us as a society and a nation?
- 10 The framers of the Constitution believed that if governments could censor opinions they did not like, the public would be less educated. Given that schools are places of education, it seems counterproductive to limit students’ free speech. The more opinions students are exposed to, the better equipped they will be to handle the issues they will face later in life. ■

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