Rights in Action

Read a community meeting through Indiana's Constitution

IS.2.2 "Describe and characterize individual rights, such as freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and the right to public education, that are protected in Indiana's Constitution, including a focus on Articles I and VIII."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB As you read, underline each right or government duty named in the passage. Circle its article and section number, then number the examples that show how it applies.

Three Questions at a School Board Meeting

(1) At a crowded school board meeting in Indiana, Maya reads a statement criticizing a proposed change to library hours. Another resident writes a letter to the local newspaper supporting the change. They disagree, but Article I, Section 9 of Indiana's Constitution protects the free exchange of ideas, including speaking, writing, and printing on any subject. The provision also says people are responsible for abusing that right. It does not promise that a speaker will face no criticism. Its protection matters here because residents can present opposing views about a public decision rather than wait for officials to speak for them.

(2) Before the meeting, a family asks whether their child must join a religious activity at school. Article I, Section 3 protects the free exercise of religious opinions and the rights of conscience from government interference. Section 4 bars laws that favor one creed or mode of worship and says people cannot be forced to attend or support a place of worship. These provisions protect a person's choice about religious belief and practice, including a decision not to participate. They also limit what government can require or favor, rather than asking all residents to hold the same beliefs.

(3) At the same meeting, students ask why every neighborhood must have access to public schools without tuition. Article VIII, Section 1 directs the General Assembly to provide by law for a general and uniform system of common schools, with no tuition charge and access equally open to all. This is different from the protections in Article I: it assigns lawmakers a duty to build a statewide school system, not merely to leave individual choices alone. A student's access to a tuition-free common school is therefore connected to a public obligation. Families may debate school policies while the state's duty to provide that system remains.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does Article I, Section 9 protect both residents' actions at the meeting, and what does it say about abusing that right?

2. How do Article I, Sections 3 and 4 protect the family's choice about religious participation?

3. What must lawmakers provide under Article VIII, Section 1, and how does that duty affect students?

4. How is Article VIII's approach to protecting students different from Article I's approach to protecting speakers at the meeting?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a student advisory group proposes a required prayer before every public school assembly and a tuition charge for attending classes. In 4 to 5 sentences, explain how Articles I and VIII apply and propose a revision to each plan.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

As you read, underline each right or government duty named in the passage. Circle its article and section number, then number the examples that show how it applies. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does Article I, Section 9 protect both residents' actions at the meeting, and what does it say about abusing that right?	**It protects Maya's spoken criticism and the other resident's written opinion. People remain responsible for abusing the right.**
2	How do Article I, Sections 3 and 4 protect the family's choice about religious participation?	**Section 3 protects religious opinions and conscience from government interference. Section 4 prevents laws from favoring a creed or mode of worship and bars forced attendance or support of worship.**
3	What must lawmakers provide under Article VIII, Section 1, and how does that duty affect students?	**Lawmakers must provide a general and uniform system of common schools with no tuition charge and access equally open to all.**
4	How is Article VIII's approach to protecting students different from Article I's approach to protecting speakers at the meeting?	**Article VIII gives lawmakers a duty to provide a school system. Article I protects residents' freedom to express opposing views.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A required prayer before a public school assembly conflicts with Article I's protection of conscience and its rule against compelling worship. The group could allow students to pray privately by choice instead of requiring everyone to join. Charging tuition to attend common school conflicts with Article VIII's requirement that the school system have no tuition charge and be equally open to all. The group should drop the tuition charge so attendance does not depend on payment.

Accept accurate paraphrases of the cited protections and duties. For the open task, look for a distinct revision to each proposal that respects both articles.