The Cloudy River

Compare rights and government limits in two systems.

7.C.6.3.B "Compare civil liberties in representative to authoritarian systems of government, referencing the United States of America's Bill of Rights."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each protection described in the United States and circle each related limit in the imagined authoritarian system. Give matching protections and limits the same number so you can compare them.

Questions About the River

1. At a town meeting, neighbors ask why their river looks cloudy. In the United States, voters choose representatives who make laws and can be voted out. The First Amendment of the Bill of Rights protects people's freedom to speak about public problems, publish news, gather peacefully, and petition the government. A resident can criticize the mayor at the meeting. A local paper can report on the river, and neighbors can gather peacefully to sign a petition. These protections limit what the government may silence.

2. Now imagine an authoritarian government facing the same cloudy river. Its leaders hold power without meaningful competition and can punish people who challenge them. Officials let only approved newspapers cover the river. They cancel a peaceful gathering and refuse to receive a petition asking for water tests. A resident who criticizes the leader risks being detained. In this system, the leaders decide which complaints people may share. Different authoritarian governments have different rules, but these controls make it harder for people to question officials in public.

3. The neighbors also worry that officials might enter their homes to look for letters about the river. The Fourth Amendment protects people in the United States against unreasonable government searches and seizures. Officials usually need a warrant based on probable cause to search a home, though exceptions exist. In the imagined authoritarian government, officials search a neighbor's home without asking a court or giving a reason, then take the letters. Both systems have officials who investigate problems, but their legal limits on government power can differ sharply.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the resident's ability to criticize a leader differ between the two systems?

2. Compare what the local paper can report about the river in each system.

3. How are the neighbors' peaceful gathering and petition treated differently in the two systems?

4. Compare the limits on officials who want to search a neighbor's home in each system.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine residents want to tell officials that a playground is unsafe. In four sentences, compare how one liberty in the Bill of Rights could protect their actions in the United States with how an authoritarian government might limit the same action, and explain one effect of that limit.

ANSWER KEY

The Cloudy River

GRADE 7 · 7.C.6.3.B

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each protection described in the United States and circle each related limit in the imagined authoritarian system. Give matching protections and limits the same number so you can compare them. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the resident's ability to criticize a leader differ between the two systems?	**In the United States, the First Amendment protects the resident's criticism of the mayor. In the imagined authoritarian system, criticizing the leader risks detention.**
2	Compare what the local paper can report about the river in each system.	**The local paper can report on the river under First Amendment press protections. In the imagined authoritarian system, officials allow only approved newspapers to cover it.**
3	How are the neighbors' peaceful gathering and petition treated differently in the two systems?	**The First Amendment protects peaceful gathering and petitioning in the United States. Officials in the imagined authoritarian system cancel the gathering and refuse to receive the petition.**
4	Compare the limits on officials who want to search a neighbor's home in each system.	**The Fourth Amendment protects against unreasonable searches in the United States, and officials usually need a warrant based on probable cause to search a home, though exceptions exist. In the imagined authoritarian system, officials search without asking a court or giving a reason.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Residents want to tell officials that the playground equipment is broken. In the United States, the First Amendment protects their right to speak about the danger, even if officials dislike the complaint. In an authoritarian system, leaders might forbid public criticism of their decisions. That limit could keep families from learning about the hazard or getting it fixed.

Accept comparisons that accurately connect a Bill of Rights protection to a related restriction in the imagined authoritarian system. For Your Turn, accept another relevant liberty if the four sentences apply it to the playground and explain an effect.