Rights at Work

How constitutional protections shape public life and economic opportunity

USG.C.6.4 "Analyze the civil rights and civil liberties affirmed and guaranteed by the Bill of Rights. Explain how individual liberties are essential to the functioning of the United States of America constitutional republic society..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB As you read, underline two protections against government abuse, circle the words that explain how Bill of Rights protections reach state governments, and number two ways liberty or property can help a newspaper and its readers.

A Newspaper, Its Rights, and Its Property

1. Imagine a small newspaper printing a report that criticizes federal officials. The First Amendment protects its speech and press, and people may petition the government to change a policy. These liberties let voters share evidence, challenge leaders, and organize without needing official approval. The Fourth Amendment guards against unreasonable searches and seizures, while the Fifth requires due process before the federal government takes life, liberty, or property. The Sixth promises a speedy, public trial and a lawyer in criminal prosecutions. Together, these rules limit national power while leaving room for laws that protect the public.

2. Originally, the Bill of Rights restricted the national government, not state governments. After the Civil War, the Fourteenth Amendment required states to provide due process and equal protection of the laws. Through selective incorporation, the Supreme Court has ruled, right by right, that most Bill of Rights protections also bind states through the Fourteenth Amendment's Due Process Clause. For example, states must respect freedom of the press and the right to counsel in criminal cases. Incorporation is not automatic or complete: the Fifth Amendment's requirement of a grand jury indictment for serious federal crimes has not been applied to states. States still must follow other constitutional rules.

3. Suppose the newspaper's owner buys a building and adds a printing press. Secure property rights make that investment less risky: the owner can use the property, sell it, or borrow against it, subject to lawful regulation. If the government takes private property for public use, the Fifth Amendment requires just compensation, a rule also applied to states. Freedom to publish helps the owner reach customers and helps readers compare claims about public decisions. Neither liberty nor property guarantees a profitable business, but both can support economic opportunity and a society where citizens can hold officials accountable.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does protecting criticism of officials help a constitutional republic function?

2. If federal officials searched the newspaper's office and seized its equipment, which two protections in the passage would matter? Explain why.

3. How can a Bill of Rights protection become binding on states, and what example shows that this process has limits?

4. How could both property rights and freedom to publish create opportunity for the newspaper? What limit does the passage place on that claim?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A state agency orders a bicycle repair shop owner to stop posting criticism of the agency. It also takes the shop's land for a public road without paying the owner. In four sentences, explain which two protections apply, how they bind a state government, and one possible effect on economic opportunity or public accountability.

ANSWER KEY

Rights at Work

HIGH SCHOOL · USG.C.6.4

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

As you read, underline two protections against government abuse, circle the words that explain how Bill of Rights protections reach state governments, and number two ways liberty or property can help a newspaper and its readers. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does protecting criticism of officials help a constitutional republic function?	**It lets people share evidence, challenge leaders, and organize without official approval, helping citizens hold officials accountable.**
2	If federal officials searched the newspaper's office and seized its equipment, which two protections in the passage would matter? Explain why.	**The Fourth Amendment guards against unreasonable searches and seizures. The Fifth Amendment requires due process before the federal government takes property.**
3	How can a Bill of Rights protection become binding on states, and what example shows that this process has limits?	**Through selective incorporation under the Fourteenth Amendment's Due Process Clause, the Supreme Court applies protections to states right by right. The federal grand jury indictment requirement has not been applied to states.**
4	How could both property rights and freedom to publish create opportunity for the newspaper? What limit does the passage place on that claim?	**Secure property rights make investment less risky, and freedom to publish helps the owner reach customers. Neither guarantees a profitable business.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The state agency cannot silence the shop owner's criticism simply because it dislikes the message, since freedom of speech protects that criticism. The state must also pay just compensation if it takes the owner's land for a public road. Through selective incorporation under the Fourteenth Amendment, these Bill of Rights protections apply to states. Protecting speech helps people hold officials accountable, while compensation reduces the risk of investing in a shop.

Accept answers that distinguish a restriction on government power from a guarantee of business success. For the open task, look for speech protection, just compensation, application to states through the Fourteenth Amendment, and a reasoned effect.