

Freedom Takes Shape

Trace how legal protections for religion expanded in the United States.

8.25.A "trace the development of religious freedom in the United States;"

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline four laws, amendments, or court decisions that changed religious freedom. Number your underlined items from 1 to 4 in the order they happened.

From Uneven Rules to Constitutional Protection

- ① Before independence, religious freedom differed sharply among the colonies. Several colonies supported an established church with taxes or legal advantages, while some dissenters faced fines or limits on worship. Other places offered wider protections. Rhode Island, founded by Roger Williams after he was expelled from Massachusetts Bay, became known for allowing many religious groups. Pennsylvania, founded by William Penn, also welcomed Quakers and other believers. These contrasts taught colonists that government power could either restrict religious practice or protect it.
- ② After the Revolution, leaders debated how to protect conscience. In Virginia, Thomas Jefferson wrote the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, which the legislature passed in 1786. It ended required financial support for a church and said that civil rights should not depend on religious opinions. The new United States Constitution added another safeguard in Article VI: no religious test could be required for federal office. In 1791, the First Amendment barred Congress from establishing a religion or prohibiting free exercise thereof.
- ③ At first, the Bill of Rights limited the federal government, so state laws could still treat religions differently. After the Fourteenth Amendment was adopted in 1868, the Supreme Court gradually applied key Bill of Rights protections to state and local governments. In *Cantwell v. Connecticut* (1940), the Court ruled that state action could not violate free exercise of religion. In *Everson v. Board of Education* (1947), it applied the Establishment Clause to states. Religious freedom therefore developed from uneven colonial rules into broader constitutional protection against both federal and state interference.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How did religious freedom in some colonies differ from religious freedom in Rhode Island and Pennsylvania?

2 What did the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom change about government support for a church and a person's civil rights?

3 What federal protections did Article VI and the First Amendment provide?

4 How did the Fourteenth Amendment and the Supreme Court decisions named in the passage broaden religious freedom?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write exactly four sentences tracing the development of religious freedom from the colonies to the twentieth century. Include at least three specific turning points from the passage and explain how protection became broader.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline four laws, amendments, or court decisions that changed religious freedom. Number your underlined items from 1 to 4 in the order they happened. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did religious freedom in some colonies differ from religious freedom in Rhode Island and Pennsylvania?	Some colonies supported an established church and restricted dissenters. Rhode Island and Pennsylvania offered wider protection to different religious groups.
2	What did the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom change about government support for a church and a person's civil rights?	It ended required financial support for a church and said civil rights should not depend on religious opinions.
3	What federal protections did Article VI and the First Amendment provide?	Article VI banned religious tests for federal office. The First Amendment barred Congress from establishing a religion or prohibiting free exercise of religion.
4	How did the Fourteenth Amendment and the Supreme Court decisions named in the passage broaden religious freedom?	They helped extend important religious-freedom protections to state and local governments, not just the federal government.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In colonial America, protection for religion depended on where a person lived, and some governments favored one church. Virginia's 1786 statute and Article VI limited government preference and religious tests. The First Amendment stopped Congress from establishing a religion or blocking free exercise. Later, the Fourteenth Amendment and Supreme Court rulings extended important protections against state and local interference.

Accept equivalent descriptions of the change from unequal colonial practices to broader legal protection. For the open response, require four sentences, at least three accurate turning points, and a clear explanation that protections expanded from federal limits to include state and local government actions.