

# Rights in Action

Read how constitutional amendments protect people from unfair government action.

**CE.6.b** “describing the rights and privileges guaranteed by the First Amendment, including freedoms of religion, speech, press, assembly, and petition, the rights guaranteed by due process and equal protection under the law (Fifth, Sixth...”

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## 1 READ AND MARK \_\_\_\_\_ Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** Underline every protected freedom or legal protection. In the margin, label each one 1st, 4th, 5th, 6th, or 14th to show which amendment the passage connects to it.

### Constitutional Protections

- ① The Bill of Rights limits government power while protecting individual liberty. The First Amendment protects freedom of religion: people may hold beliefs and practice religion, while government may not establish an official religion. It also protects speech and press, so people can express ideas and publish news or opinions. Peaceful assembly lets people gather for a cause. Petition lets people ask government officials to change a law or policy. These freedoms are powerful, but they do not protect threats, violence, or every action that breaks a valid law.
- ② Other amendments focus on fairness when government acts against a person. The Fifth Amendment requires due process of law from the federal government. Due process means government must use fair procedures before taking a person's life, liberty, or property. In criminal cases, the Sixth Amendment includes the rights to know the accusation, have a speedy public trial, question opposing witnesses, have an impartial jury, and receive help from a lawyer. The Fourteenth Amendment requires states to provide due process and equal protection, meaning state laws must treat people equally under the law.
- ③ The Fourth Amendment guards people against unreasonable searches and seizures by government. A search may include looking through a home, backpack, or phone. A seizure can mean taking a person or property. Usually, police need a warrant from a judge, supported by probable cause, before searching a home. Courts recognize limited exceptions, such as consent or an emergency. These amendments ask officials to respect rights while carrying out lawful duties. A person may use speech, press, assembly, or petition to challenge a government decision without losing other constitutional protections.

**2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE** \_\_\_\_\_ Use the passage

**1** At a city meeting, Jordan gives a speech criticizing a new rule and hands out a newspaper article with the same opinion. Which two First Amendment freedoms apply?

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**2** A criminal court refuses to tell Elena what she is accused of and will not let her question a witness against her. Which two Sixth Amendment rights are denied?

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**3** A state bans a peaceful gathering only because the organizers follow a certain religion. Name two protections that apply to this situation.

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**4** Police want to search an apartment. The resident does not consent, and there is no emergency. What does the passage say police usually need before searching the home?

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**3 YOUR TURN** \_\_\_\_\_ Your own words

Create a community situation involving at least two constitutional protections from the passage. In 3 or 4 sentences, explain which protections apply and what government officials should do.

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**PART 1 • READ AND MARK**

Underline every protected freedom or legal protection. In the margin, label each one 1st, 4th, 5th, 6th, or 14th to show which amendment the passage connects to it. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

**PART 2 • ANSWERS**

| # | QUESTION                                                                                                                                                               | ANSWER                                                                                                                |
|---|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | At a city meeting, Jordan gives a speech criticizing a new rule and hands out a newspaper article with the same opinion. Which two First Amendment freedoms apply?     | <b>Freedom of speech and freedom of the press apply.</b>                                                              |
| 2 | A criminal court refuses to tell Elena what she is accused of and will not let her question a witness against her. Which two Sixth Amendment rights are denied?        | <b>The rights to know the accusation and to question opposing witnesses are denied.</b>                               |
| 3 | A state bans a peaceful gathering only because the organizers follow a certain religion. Name two protections that apply to this situation.                            | <b>Freedom of religion and peaceful assembly apply. Equal protection under the Fourteenth Amendment also applies.</b> |
| 4 | Police want to search an apartment. The resident does not consent, and there is no emergency. What does the passage say police usually need before searching the home? | <b>Police usually need a warrant from a judge that is supported by probable cause.</b>                                |

**PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)**

Residents plan a peaceful rally and submit a petition asking the city council to repair a park. The city must respect their rights to peaceful assembly and petition, although officials may enforce neutral safety rules. Later, an officer wants to enter a resident's home to look for rally signs, but there is no emergency and the resident does not agree. The officer usually needs a judge's warrant supported by probable cause before searching the home.

Accept accurate equivalent names for the listed freedoms and protections. For the open response, accept any realistic situation that correctly explains at least two constitutional protections and an appropriate government action.