

Assignment for Freedom Fighters Assemble Episode 1

Voices Unbound: How censorship brought it to life

Learning objectives:

The class will hear three former students who faced difficult consequences for trying to use their voices to enlighten their fellow high school classmates and community members about issues they thought were important. Moderator Cathy Kuhlmeier and John Tinker both became plaintiffs in cases that went all the way to the Supreme Court. Editor John Libresco and his staff of the *Theogony*, in Alexandria, Virginia, received the Courage in Student Journalism Award in 2025 from the Student Press Law Center and the National Scholastic Press Association for their campaign against administrative censorship. This podcast gives them a platform to share what they learned and why standing up for what you believe is so important.

Materials needed:

Access to the podcast and computers or other means to react and apply what students have heard.

Warm-up/prep:

Listen to the 36-minute discussion between Cathy Kuhlmeier, plaintiff in [*Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier*](#), and John Tinker, plaintiff, along with his sister Mary Beth, in the [*Tinker v. Des Moines Independent School District*](#), and editor John Libresco, whose staff of the *Theogony* earned the [*2025 Courage in Student Journalism Award*](#) from the Student Press Law Center. Check out additional information in the links above.

Use the template provided to keep track of major points and collect quotes to use later (or indicate the time stamp to find those again).

Activity 1:

Depending on group size, Activity 1 could be for the entire class if it's a small one or in teams if it's large. Students will use the note-taking template to help them remember important points and where to find them for future reference.

Your situation: Think of something going on in your school or your town/state/nation that has students upset and talking about it. (Consider something like money spent on new Astroturf for the football field, though it is expensive and would probably mean no new football helmets. Or a school board discussion about banning books used in English classes.)

Be able to present:

- A clear statement of the situation you want to cover.
- Your group's reasons for why this is important to cover for your audience.
- Your ideas of where you can get information/facts/expert opinions to support those reasons.

- Any arguments you think others (like the administration) might have against this and how you can counter these.
- What allies you might enlist to help you and to stand up for you.
- Anything else that might persuade your administration to see your side.

Activity 2:

For an individual activity, explain a topic you would like to present that might seem controversial. Outline the steps you would need to take to get it in your publication. Does an editor or an editorial board need to approve? If it's an adviser or an administrator, what else would you need to include? What would you need to know even before you approach anyone else? What would be your reason for writing this if those who must approve don't agree? (NOTE: If someone other than the students must approve, is this something you think should be changed? How would you go about getting that changed?)

Assessment:

Depending on what the teacher thinks is most appropriate, this could be a group grade for the Activity 1 scenario the team presents or individual grades based on a persuasive piece for Activity 2.