Get the Message?

Purpose:
The First Amendment's guarantees of freedom of expression can be articulated through visual representations found on poster art created for the bicentennial commemoration of the Bill of Rights. Students will gain a deeper understanding of the importance of the First Amendment in modern society through analysis of selected poster art.

Procedure:
1. Inform the class that a special contest was conducted for the 200th anniversary of the Bill of Rights. This contest encouraged high school and college students to submit a poster, conveying a message about the significance of the Bill of Rights and its First Amendment to the liberties we cherish today as American citizens. Students will analyze the winning posters from this competition, evaluating the artist's message and determining how the First Amendment might affect us in the future.

2. Divide the class into pairs. Provide each pair with a copy of either the sample poster A or B. Also, provide pairs with a copy of the “First Amendment in Posters” handout to assist them in analyzing the sample posters. Conduct a class discussion in order to model an effective approach to analyzing the message of both a visual piece of artwork and the written message accompanying the artwork.

3. Provide each pair of students with two posters in this lesson, copied front to back, and one copy of the “First Amendment Poster Matrix.” Give pairs of students four minutes to examine their posters, completing the necessary information in the first three columns of the matrix. (If student pairs are not in agreement with the artist’s message, they may indicate their individual opinions in the space provided on the matrix.)

4. When the instructor calls “time,” pairs of students will exchange their posters with another pair of students. The process will be repeated until all pairs have analyzed all eight posters.

5. When completed, ask student pairs to discuss the question found in the last column of the matrix, using the last two posters they have analyzed. After a given time to record their responses, ask volunteers to share their thoughts with the class.

6. For extension, create a class competition encouraging students to create their own posters about one of the five liberties expressed in the First Amendment. Offer certificates as awards for completion of posters, or encourage publication of the posters in a school or local newspaper.
Which First Amendment right is represented in this poster?

FIRST AMENDMENT POSTER ANALYSIS

What issue, or conflict, is reflected in this poster?

What message is the artist/author presenting?

| How might this issue affect you or your future? | Do you agree or disagree with the author? Why or why not? |
With Liberty...

The Statue of Liberty was a gift of France to the United States, as a pledge of peace. She stands in the New York harbor, welcoming foreigners to the land of opportunity. The Statue of Liberty symbolizes the American Dream and its ideals as guaranteed by the First Amendment to the Constitution.
Can you imagine what life would be like unable to listen to music of your choice? Or watch television or movies of your choice? Or speak your mind? Rights make such freedoms possible.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Poster: First Amendment right?</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
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<td>Message?</td>
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<td>How might this issue affect YOU or your FUTURE?</td>
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Being young and well-informed, you’ll have fantastic, great ideas. But what good will they be if they cannot be expressed due to the lack of free speech? With the Bill of Rights, your unique ideas, one-of-a-kind solutions, and a whole lot more, will be given due recognition.
Without the First Amendment....
It might all have been a dream.
IS SOMEONE WATCHING YOU?

Scared to speak out on issues such as politics or religion? Not if you live in the United States.

In 1791, the First Amendment was added to the Constitution. Since then, other amendments have been added, assuring that all enjoy the rights they deserve, regardless of race, religion, or beliefs.

By reading and understanding the First Amendment, we can carry on our nation's tradition of freedom.
A high-school senior challenged the school system.

And he won.

Thanks to the First Amendment.

Because Andrew Banks didn’t believe in saying the Pledge of Allegiance, or even standing while the rest of his class participated, he was suspended from high school.
But Andrew took it to court.
The court recognized that “standing is no less a gesture of acceptance and respect than utterance of the words of allegiance.”
Andrew knew his rights.
Read the Bill of Rights and know your freedoms.
In 1845, a teenager helped free a slave.

Last year, he was kicked out of school for causing racial tension.

It’s true. Huck Finn’s been banned from many high school classrooms and libraries. But Huckleberry Finn in not the only book. Steinbeck’s *Of Mice and Men*, even *Little Red Riding Hood*, have been thrown out of our schools. But thanks to the First Amendment, many are going back on the shelves.

Find out about your rights. Find out what you can do to keep them.
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How can we preserve one freedom without trampling on another?

Should the government allow people to enjoy all freedoms, even if it means infringing on other Constitutional rights? What happens when Americans push these freedoms to their limits?

These are tough questions for tough times. Tough questions that require the right information. Find it in the First Amendment.
Their parents believed in due process and freedom of religion....

But their government had a much different idea...

In the summer of 1944, Jewish deportees from Hungary arrived at Auschwitz. Some men, women, and children from each train were sent to barracks; others met their death.

Our Constitution clearly states that no one “shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law.”

This prevents prejudice against any race, religion, or creed, giving all walks of life the freedom of choice.
If Freedom of Speech didn’t exist in America, what price would you pay to be heard?

Tiananmen Square, China, 1989...

A hunger strike by 3,000 students became a public demonstration by more than one million Chinese, trying to express a desire for freedom.

Many voices were silenced by government troops. Are you willing to pay that much for freedom of speech?

Because of the First Amendment, this is one question you should never have to answer.