

1Voice Teaching Resource: Freedom and Order

As the May 19 1Voice story on Myanmar demonstrates, some people around the globe continue to live in societies that deny fundamental freedoms, including freedom of the press.

In part, Myanmar's leaders continue to stifle press coverage out of the belief it is the only way to maintain order in a repressive society. Meanwhile, human rights activists around the world decry Myanmar's refusal to honor basic freedoms.

Striking this delicate balance - between individual freedoms and group order - is the central challenge for any society. But what is the proper balance? How far may societies go in honoring individual freedoms before the social experiment descends into chaos in the streets?

Share these three different scenarios with your students, and let them decide for themselves.

NOTE: The idea for this lesson comes from an outstanding teaching resource on the U.S. Constitution that was produced by About Learning. For more information, visit www.aboutlearning.com.

Scenario 1 - All freedom and no order.

Imagine a society in which everyone has unrestricted freedoms. You can do whatever you want, whenever you want.

Of course, so can everyone else. If someone wants something in your house, they can come in and take it. There is no such thing as a body of laws, so no crime is being committed.

What are the chief advantages and disadvantages of this type of social arrangement?

Scenario 2 - All order and no freedom.

Imagine a society in which everything you do - from how you dress to what you eat to who you hang out with - is determined by the state. Police are everywhere, and there is essentially no crime. But individual expression does not exist.

What are the chief advantages and disadvantages of this type of social arrangement? If you had to choose between these two scenarios, which one would you choose, and why?

Scenario 3 - The Proper Balance

Imagine that you are playing a game of Sim City, in which you have the chance to create a mini-society from scratch. In what order

would you want to build your society? What institutions would be most essential, if your goal is to strike the right balance between individual freedoms and group order? What would this society need to look like in its final stages? How would you know if it was working?