

## The Bill of Rights

**Definition-** the first 10 Amendments to the Constitution added in 1791 to the U.S. Constitution

**Amend** = to change the Constitution. In order to do this, Congress must have **2/3** of both the **House of Representatives and the Senate** approve the change and **3/4 of the states** must ratify (approve it)

**1<sup>st</sup> Amendment to the Constitution:** “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

### Directions

**\*Read** each part of the 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment below. A. **Highlight 2-4 words** or phrases in each that you think would be important to know in order to understand the amendment (change) to the Constitution. B. In your own words, explain your response to the following at the bottom of the sheet in 3-4 sentences: \* Explain why your right is the most important of the 5 freedoms. Think of good examples to share to bolster your case.

**The 5 First Amendment Freedoms below- taken from**  
<http://www.illinoisfirstamendmentcenter.com/freedoms.php>

#### 1. Speech

The First Amendment says that people have the right to speak freely without government interference.

#### 2. Press

The First Amendment gives the press the right to publish news, information and opinions without government interference. This also means people have the right to publish their own newspapers, newsletters, magazines, etc.

#### 3. Religion

The First Amendment prohibits government from establishing a religion and protects each person's right to practice (or not practice) any faith without government interference.

#### 4. Petition

The First Amendment says that people have the right to appeal to government in favor of or against policies that affect them or that they feel strongly about. This freedom includes the right to gather signatures in support of a cause and to lobby legislative bodies for or against legislation.

#### 5. Assembly

The First Amendment says that people have the right to gather in public to march, protest, demonstrate, carry signs and otherwise express their views in a nonviolent way. It also means people can join and associate with groups and organizations without interference.