



UNDERSTANDING CIVICS THROUGH ROBERT H. JACKSON

Case Study Scenarios for Discussion

Each scenario presents a real-world situation inspired by Robert H. Jackson's legal principles. Students will analyze each case and discuss its implications.

Case Study 1: Freedom of Expression (Grades 4-12)

A middle school student refuses to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance during the morning announcements, citing personal beliefs. The school principal argues that all students must stand to show respect. The student's parents take the issue to court, claiming that forcing their child to stand violates their First Amendment rights.

Discussion Questions:

- Should students be required to stand for the Pledge? Why or why not?
- How does this scenario help us understand the role of individual rights in a democracy?
- What responsibilities do we have as citizens when our beliefs conflict with traditions or laws?

Case Study 2: Presidential Power (Grades 7-12)

Imagine the President issues an executive order to take control of all amusement parks in the country, claiming that there's a big security threat that could affect safety. The President decides to do this without asking Congress for approval, which many people think isn't the right way to make such big decisions. Some amusement park owners decide to challenge the order in court, arguing that the President didn't follow the rules and that this could set a dangerous precedent for how the government works.

Discussion Questions:

- Does the President have the power to seize private companies without Congress?
- Should the President be able to make decisions on their own, or should they have to ask Congress for approval? Why or why not?
- How can citizens make sure the government doesn't have too much power over things that affect them, like their favorite places or activities?

Case Study 3: Equal Protection and the Law (Grades 4-12)

A new rule is made in your school that says kids who come from different countries have to pay extra money to join the school sports teams, while other students don't have to pay as much. Some students feel that this rule is unfair because it treats students differently based on where they are from. These students decide to speak up and ask if the rule is fair and if they can do something to change it.

Discussion Questions:



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- Do you think it's fair to treat kids differently based on where they are from? Why or why not?
- How can we make sure all students are treated the same, no matter where they come from?
- What can you do as a student if you think a rule isn't fair?

Case Study 4: Freedom of the Press (Grades 7-12)

A student-run newspaper at your school uncovers information that the principal has been spending school funds in ways that many students think are unfair, like buying expensive things for the principal's office instead of using the money for new books or school activities. The principal tells the newspaper staff that they cannot publish the story because it might make the school look bad. The newspaper team argues that they have the right to share the truth and let other students know what's going on.

Discussion Questions:

- Should the school be able to stop the student newspaper from printing certain stories? Why or why not?
- Why is it important for students to have the freedom to share information, even if it might be uncomfortable or cause problems?
- How can students and teachers make sure that the truth is shared openly in school?

Case Study 5: Students and the Fourth Amendment (Grades 4-12)

A school principal receives an anonymous tip that a student may have illegal items in their backpack. Without asking for permission, the principal searches the student's bag and finds a prohibited item. The student argues that their Fourth Amendment rights against unreasonable searches were violated, and that students should have the same privacy rights as adults.

Discussion Questions:

- Should schools be allowed to search students' belongings without their permission? Why or why not?
- What are the limits of school authority when it comes to protecting student privacy?
- How can students take action if they believe their rights are being violated at school?