



UNDERSTANDING THE FIRST AMENDMENT THROUGH *BARNETTE*

Lesson Plan for Grades 7-12

The Reluctant Student

Role: Student refusing to participate in the school's daily pledge of allegiance.

Scenario: Your state requires everyone to say the Pledge of Allegiance every morning at school. You feel this goes against your religious beliefs.

Guiding Questions:

- Which First Amendment freedoms are involved?
- What is your argument for refusing?
- How might the school respond?
- How does Jackson's opinion in *Barnette* support your position?

The Concerned Parent

Role: Your child is the student refusing to say the pledge. **Scenario:** Your child tells you that they cannot say the pledge because of religious beliefs. The school has expelled your child, and you are at risk of being arrested for truancy.

Guiding Questions:

- How would you advocate for your child's rights?
- Which First Amendment protections apply?
- How would you use Jackson's reasoning to support your child?

The School Official

Role: Principal enforcing the Pledge of Allegiance law.

Scenario: You believe saying the pledge is important to teach loyalty and respect for the country.

Guiding Questions:

- How would you explain the school's position?
- Can the government/school require speech?
- How might Jackson respond to your argument?

The Teacher

Role: Teacher in the classroom.

Scenario: The school district instructs you to require students to participate in the pledge every morning or to send them to the principal's office.

Guiding Questions:

- How should you balance state law and school rules with First Amendment rights?
- Can the government/school require speech?
- How would Jackson advise about government authority v. individual freedoms?



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The Classmate

Role: Student with no strong opinion, but witnessing the situation.

Scenario: You see some classmates refusing to say the pledge. You're not sure if you should participate, say something, or do nothing.

Guiding Questions:

- How could your actions impact others?
- What is the balance between peer pressure and respecting rights?
- How does this relate to civic responsibility and loyalty?

The Community Advocate

Role: You are a local religious leader.

Scenario: Members of your congregation are included in the students refusing to say the pledge.

Guiding Questions:

- How does the First Amendment protect these students?
- How can you support their rights in the school context?
- How would Jackson likely view your advocacy?

The State Official

Role: State legislator who passed the law.

Scenario: You believe saying the pledge is important to teach loyalty and respect for the country. You are especially passionate about this, given that the country is at war.

Guiding Questions:

- How would you explain the state's position?
- Can the government require speech?
- How might Jackson respond to your argument?

The Veteran

Role: You are a military veteran who fought in a previous war.

Scenario: You believe that reciting the pledge teaches loyalty and honors those who serve the country. You strongly feel that students should participate.

Guiding Questions:

- How would you defend your position?
- How does this connect to government or community authority?
- How might Jackson respond to your argument?