

NEWSEUM BATTLE FOR THE BILL OF RIGHTS

Blogging the Bill of Rights

This activity asks students to consider how the framers might have used the Internet and modern communication to spread their ideas and messages.

Have students assume the persona of either James Madison, Thomas Jefferson or George Mason. Tell them they will be using modern technology from today's world to express that individual's message from 1789.

Distribute the student handout "Blogging the Bill of Rights," and review the directions.

After students have completed their assignments, have them present their Web pages and blog entries. Ask them to explain why they chose the symbols they did and to elaborate on anything they believe is significant about their projects.

Have students post their Web pages around the room, and attach blank pieces of paper to each one. Give students time to view them all. Encourage students to stay in character and write comments on blogs in response to the points of views presented.

Finally, as a large group, discuss the following questions:



- What ideas do you think were most important in the debate on a bill of rights?
- The Internet did not exist in 1789. Does that mean that protections for free speech and press should not apply to Web pages?
- Do you think the framers of the First Amendment would have used the Internet to get their messages out to people? Why or why not?

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Name _____ Date _____

Blogging the Bill of Rights

Directions: Imagine that you are (circle one)

Thomas Jefferson

James Madison

George Mason

Even though it is 1789, you have access to modern technology, and therefore you have a computer and Internet access. You have decided to start a Facebook page, MySpace page or blog to get people thinking and talking about a bill of rights — and especially to get your point of view heard.

Your job is to design a Web page template and write the first entry of your blog. You don't want your readers to get bored, so make sure your Web page looks appealing and user-friendly. You should also keep your entry short, no more than two paragraphs. Why did your framer support a bill of rights? What did he do to promote it? How did he counter arguments against a bill of rights? Think back on your experience at the Newseum. You may need to do some additional research.

You can create your Web page using computer software or on paper using colored pencils.

Make sure your Web page includes:

- A title.
- A specific URL (for example, MasonsMusings.com).
- For Facebook, the Facebook groups that you would belong to.
- At least three pictures or symbols, which you should be prepared to explain.
- A two-paragraph entry explaining your point of view on the importance of protection for free religion, speech, press, assembly and petition in the form of a bill of rights.