

Education Service Learning Group: Eden Conner, Billie Guerin, Cosimo Giovine, Ryder Katz, Mia Cuomo, Joe Bohan

December 25, 2018

Written By: Eden Conner

Why is freedom of the press important?

Freedom of the press is the right of the media to report news and express opinions without censorship by the government. Freedom of the press enables freedom of thought and the ability to have different views on a subject. It is a Constitutional right of the American people, but not for everyone on Earth.

Having freedom of the press promotes the truth. If the government were allowed to censor everything, people would not be able to see truth. One example of this is North Korea. Everything is censored, so that the citizens only see what the government wants them to see. This promotes a false sense of knowing and creates vulnerability. When people don't know the truth, they can't have an opinion, because they only receive one side of a story or a thought. When there is freedom of the press, people can form an opinion because they get to see many different sides to a topic.

Freedom of the press also promotes democracy. When information is not censored, people get to understand their government and the flaws of their country. Having this information, citizens can make needed change. Without freedom of the press, dictators can rule forever, as we have seen in many countries, because they shield their citizens from the outside world and the government's problems.

Some may argue that freedom of the press is not good because false ideas can still be planted in people's brains by reporters and editors trying to drum up a story. Even though this is true, there is a lesser chance of believing false news when the press is free. As Thomas Jefferson said of some opponents:

"Let them stand as monuments to the safety with which error of opinion may be tolerated, where reason is left free to combat it." With a free press, the uncensored contrast of ideas gives people a much better opportunity to learn the truth. There are many sources to check to see if information is true.

Freedom of the press is the only way to be free, to have opinions, and to live in a place with diverse ideas and thoughts. Living in the world where media are free to say what they wish promotes truth, democracy, and the ability of a people to solve its problems and create a better life for all people.