



## About *Raise Your Voice*

*Raise Your Voice* is a 45-minute documentary that follows the student journalists at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida as they navigate their school mass shooting as both survivors and journalists. The film explores youth free speech history, connecting the Parkland students to a broader story about the power of young voices through social movements.

## Discussion Questions

### Before viewing the film:

1. How did you first learn about your First Amendment rights?
2. Do you think your free speech rights apply in school? Why or why not?
3. How would you describe the role of student voices in America?
4. What do you know about censorship of student voices?
5. Why is the protection of the press important in a democracy?

### Before viewing the film:

1. What lines/images/moments stuck out to you, and why?
2. What surprised you? What do you want to know more about?
3. What emotions do you feel when watching the film?
4. How does the filmmaker connect free speech history with present day free speech in America?
5. How might student free speech be different today if the students would have lost the *Tinker v. Des Moines* Supreme Court case in 1969?
6. What First Amendment rights did the Parkland students exercise as both journalists and survivors?
7. Neha was censored for writing a critical op-ed of her school administration. What is the difference between an op-ed and a news story?

## Focus on the First Amendment

*Raise Your Voice* explores the First Amendment rights of students in America through the stories of Mary Beth Tinker, the Parkland student journalists, and a censored student.

### Discuss

- The First Amendment is part of the Bill of Rights. What is the Bill of Rights and what was its purpose?
- The Bill of Rights was ratified 10 years after the Constitution. Why do you think the Bill of Rights (and First Amendment) was not just included in the Constitution?
- What are the five freedoms guaranteed by the First Amendment?
- In what ways can you see the five freedoms working in your school? How are they failing?
- How has the interpretation of the five freedoms changed over time? Who is responsible for creating those changes?

### Activities

- **Identify First Amendment rights in news stories:**
  - Choose a newspaper and find five different articles that illustrate each of the five freedoms of the First Amendment at work in the United States.
  - Summarize each article. State why the story is evidence of each of the freedoms.
- **First Amendment collage activity:**
  - Look for imagery in magazines and newspapers that represents the five freedoms provided by the First Amendment.
  - Cut out the imagery and make a collage about the First Amendment.
  - Present your collage to a small group and explain why you chose the imagery in your collage.
- **First Amendment survey:**
  - Divide up into teams of two students. Each team will develop a survey of five questions related to First Amendment rights. The five questions should be designed to provide insight into your school community's understanding of First Amendment rights.
  - Conduct the survey. Analyze and present the results.
- **Primary source analysis:**
  - Read an article of your choice in the [Tinker 50th anniversary special issue of Eagle Eye News](#).
  - Summarize the article and discuss the article with another classmate during class time.

## Focus on Journalism

*Raise Your Voice* follows the Parkland student journalists as they cover the tragedy at their school as both survivors and journalists.

### Discuss

- What are the different types of journalism? What is the difference between news stories, feature stories, opinion articles, and activist journalism?
- What is a lede?
- How do you identify the who, what, when, where, why, and how in a news story?
- What are standard ethical practices of a journalist? Discuss the values of honesty, independence, fairness, diligence, and accountability and why they are important in the field of journalism.

### Activities

- **Primary source analysis:**
  - Choose [a Pulitzer Prize winning journalist](#) and read one of their articles.
  - Pair up with another student and discuss your articles:
    - Summarize the article
    - Identify the who, what, when, where, why and how of the story
    - What type of story is the article (news, feature, opinion, etc.)
- **Evaluate bias and objectivity in news:**
  - Supplies needed: Newspapers (digital/online or print/paper publications)
  - Choose an article to read. Write down the ways you think the writer is being objective and the ways you think the writer might be biased.
  - Discuss your impressions on the writer's objectivity or bias with a partner.
  - Play the [Factitious online quiz game](#) to determine your ability to spot fake or misleading news stories.
- **Be a photojournalist:**
  - With a camera or a phone, take photos that tell a story in your school community.
  - Write a caption that supports the photograph:
    - Check the facts. Be accurate with credit lines, details and anything else that might catch a reader's eye.
    - Captions should add new information and context to the image. Don't merely repeat the story headline or summary, and avoid stating the obvious elements that are captured in the image.
    - Always identify the main people in the photograph.
    - A photograph captures a moment in time. Whenever possible, use present tense. This creates a sense of immediacy and impact.

## Focus on The Supreme Court

One of the stories in *Raise Your Voice* is a landmark Supreme Court case, *Tinker v. Des Moines*, that establishes student rights to free speech in America.

### Discuss

- What was the chain of events that led to the *Tinker v. Des Moines* ruling by the Supreme Court?
- How does the Supreme Court work/operate? What is the process for a case to be tried in front of the Supreme Court?
- Who currently sits on the Supreme Court and how do you think they would rule on *Tinker v. Des Moines* if it were tried today?
- What is precedent and why do courts think it is so important?

### Activities

- **Oral argument listening exercise:**
  - Listen to the first 10 minutes of [the Supreme Court oral argument](#) of *Tinker v. Des Moines* where the Tinker lawyer, Dan Johnston, presents his case to the justices.
  - Write down five observations from listening to the oral argument.
- **Primary source analysis:**
  - Read the opening and section I of the [Tinker v. Des Moines Supreme Court opinion](#), delivered by Justice Abe Fortas.
  - From reading the text, write a summary of why you think the majority of the court ruled in favor of the students?
  - In small groups discuss your summaries. Also discuss why do you think the two dissenting judges did not rule in favor of the students?
- **Study and argue the cases that challenge the Tinker standard:**
  - Examine the three cases that challenge Tinker. Unlike Tinker, the students lost in these Supreme Court cases.
    - [Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier](#)
    - [Morse v. Frederick](#)
    - [Bethel v. Fraser](#)
  - Summarize each case.
  - Pair off and choose one of the three cases. In each pair, decide who is the plaintiff and who is the defendant.
  - Write and deliver an opening argument for each side.

## Focus on Expression & Censorship

Free expression can be a powerful tool for communication, activism, and healing trauma. *Raise Your Voice* explores the power of youth expression as well as what happens when young people are censored.

### Discuss

- What emotions did the Parkland students express in the film about reporting on the tragedy that happened in their school?
- How was Neha's experience as a student journalist different from the Parkland student journalists?
- What is censorship? When do you think schools have the authority to censor students? And when do you think they go too far?
- How would you compare how students express themselves today versus how students expressed themselves 50 years ago (when Mary Beth Tinker wore the black armband to school)?

### Activities

- **Hold a reading of banned children's books:**
  - Research children's books that have been previously banned in libraries in your community and across the country.
  - Discuss with another classmate the reasons why these books were banned.
  - Host a reading of excerpts from these banned books.
  - Find out what books are currently banned at your library. Ask your school administrator why they are banned.
- **Poetry exercise:**
  - Think about a time in your life where you felt silenced or heard.
  - Write a poem (any form of a poem) about that time.
- **Primary source analysis:**
  - Read and discuss an excerpt from one of the books published by the Parkland student journalists:
    - [We Say #NeverAgain](#)
    - [Parkland Speaks](#)

## Focus on Activism

Throughout *Raise Your Voice*, students use the power of free expression to engage in activism of many kinds and work to make change.

### Discuss

- In addition to the Parkland student journalists and Mary Beth Tinker, who were the other youth in the film that used their First Amendment rights and how did they use them?
- What is the role of youth as activists in movements? Why are youth effective? What limitations do they have in their activism?
- Do you think journalism is a form of activism? Why or why not?
- What issues are you passionate about that you engage in (or would consider engaging in) activism about?

### Activities

- **Learn about youth activists:**
  - Research more about one of these young people advocating for their rights:
    - Birmingham Children’s Crusade
    - Ruby Bridges
    - Katz’s Deli Lunch Counters & The Greensboro Sit-ins
    - The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)
    - Greta Thunberg
    - March For Our Lives
  - Write a summary of how that young person used their First Amendment Rights. Did they face any challenges or criticism for doing so?
- **Petition your local leaders:**
  - Journal about issues in your community that you feel need to change
  - Research who the congressperson or representative is in your district.
  - Write a letter to your local leader about an issue you believe in, using your First Amendment right to petition your leaders.
- **Youth activist portrait:**
  - Research youth activists from history and present day. Draw a portrait of a young activist from history or today that inspires you.
- **Primary source analysis:**
  - Read the [Eagle Eye’s editorial board “Manifesto”](#) from their issue after the shooting (pages 28-29)
  - Discuss the role of an editorial board at a publication.
  - Why do you think the editorial board decided to publish the Manifesto?
  - Choose one of the Manifesto points and write a counter argument to the point.