


Religion And The First Amendment Icivics Answer Key

 Legal Reference Sheet


Name _____

Religion and the First Amendment

A. Considering Clauses. The cases below involve a violation of the First Amendment's religious protections. But which clause applies? Read each case. Write an E next to the ones you think violate the Establishment Clause. Write an F next to the ones that involve the Free Exercise Clause.


1. _____ A Maryland law requires candidates to publicly state that they believe in God before running for office.	3. _____ An Arkansas law stops public schools from teaching the theory of evolution because it goes against the Biblical theory of creation.
2. _____ In Wisconsin, three Asian fathers are arrested after permanently taking their children out of school. They believe schools teach their children ideas that conflict with their religious beliefs.	4. _____ After being fired from her job for refusing to work on her religion's holy days, a woman is denied unemployment payments by South Carolina.

B. Arguing an Amendment. Read the scenario and answer the questions that follow. Then write your response to the prompt using 2–3 complete sentences. In your answer, include at least one reason to support your argument.

 Every year the city of Pinkerton and local merchants co-sponsor a winter holiday display. The display is placed in a public park. It includes Santa Claus's house, sleigh and reindeer. It also has a Christmas tree, a "Season's Greetings" banner, candy-striped poles, cutouts of an elephant and teddy bear, and a Nativity scene (a set of figures depicting the birth of Jesus). Some residents have complained that the city's display of the Nativity scene violates the First Amendment.

1. Which religious freedom clause would apply to this case?		5. Does the display promote religion?	
Yes	No	Yes	No
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Is the display on public property?		6. Does the display favor one religion over another?	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Is the display paid for by public money?		7. Is the government forcing people to follow a religion?	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Is the only purpose of the display to promote religion?			
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		

Do you think Pinkerton's holiday display violates the First Amendment?

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Religion and the First Amendment iCivics Answer Key is a crucial topic that explores the intersection of faith and governance within the framework of the United States Constitution. The First Amendment, enacted in 1791, serves as a foundational pillar of American democracy, safeguarding individual freedoms, particularly the freedom of religion. This article will delve into the complexities of the First Amendment as it relates to religion, how iCivics aids in understanding these concepts, and provide insights into the corresponding answer key for educators and students.

The First Amendment: A Brief Overview

The First Amendment of the United States Constitution encompasses several essential freedoms, including:

- Freedom of religion
- Freedom of speech
- Freedom of the press

- Right to assemble
- Right to petition the government

Among these freedoms, the clauses that specifically address religion are the Establishment Clause and the Free Exercise Clause. Together, these clauses create a delicate balance between government and religion, shaping the legal landscape of religious practice in the United States.

The Establishment Clause

The Establishment Clause prohibits the government from establishing an official religion or favoring one religion over another. This clause is often cited in cases involving:

- School-sponsored prayer
- Religious displays on public property
- Funding for religious institutions

The intent behind the Establishment Clause is to ensure that all citizens, regardless of their religious beliefs, are treated equally under the law. This principle is foundational to the idea of religious pluralism in American society.

The Free Exercise Clause

In contrast to the Establishment Clause, the Free Exercise Clause protects individuals' rights to practice their religion freely without government interference. This clause supports:

- The right to hold religious beliefs
- The right to participate in religious ceremonies
- The right to express religious views publicly

However, the Free Exercise Clause is not absolute. The government may impose restrictions on religious practices if they conflict with public order or safety. Landmark Supreme Court cases, such as *Employment Division v. Smith* (1990), illustrate the ongoing debate over the extent of religious freedoms.