

FREEDOM MATTERS!

# GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

## INTRODUCTION

*Freedom Matters!* is a project of the Bush Institute at the George W. Bush Presidential Center in Dallas, Texas. Developed in cooperation with the George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum, and with generous support from the John Templeton Foundation, this supplemental curriculum aims to help students deepen their understanding of the nature and experience of freedom around the world.

Freedom, or political liberty, as the concept appears throughout the four units of study in *Freedom Matters!*, refers to that condition which broadens the range of choices and actions available to human beings living under governments. The ideal of freedom should always be understood in opposition to restrictions imposed on individuals by other human beings, whether they are acting alone, in groups, or as officers of government.

When Abraham Lincoln ran for a seat in the Illinois General Assembly in 1832, he described his ambition that “every man may receive at least, a moderate education, and thereby be enabled to read the histories of his own and other countries, by which he may duly appreciate the value of our free institutions.” In offering this supplemental curriculum, the Bush Institute aims to help foster the next generation of men and women—perhaps even a future president among them—who have an enduring understanding of the principles and importance of democracy and individual liberty.

## THE FREEDOM COLLECTION

A unique feature of *Freedom Matters!* is its relationship to the Bush Institute’s Freedom Collection, an archive of oral histories about the struggle for human freedom and democracy around the world. Launched online in 2012, the Freedom Collection reinforces the principles of human liberty by documenting in digital video the personal stories of men and women who have led or participated in movements to achieve freedom and democracy.

For teachers, the Freedom Collection can serve as a unique educational tool that introduces timely, high quality, multi-media content into the classroom without cost or need for special permissions. The creators of *Freedom Matters!* understand that today’s students learn and interact with information in a variety of ways—certainly through readings but also through videos and interactive tools. Throughout the lessons in *Freedom Matters!* teachers will find opportunities to connect the content under study with the personal stories of individuals featured in the Freedom Collection. Teachers may stream videos live from the Internet or download video clips for later use.

## UNITS OF STUDY

The lessons in *Freedom Matters!* are organized into four units. Each unit contains three to five lesson plans that follow a standard outline, including guiding questions and student objectives, suggested length of lesson, relevant curriculum standards such as the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), background readings, detailed classroom procedures, and classroom-ready materials. Most lessons incorporate video clips from the Bush Institute's Freedom Collection in order to make linkages between the foundations of freedom and the actual experiences of contemporary political dissidents who have struggled to achieve freedom.

Unit 1, *The Foundations of Freedom*, will help deepen students' understanding of freedom by introducing them to its historical and philosophical origins, via document-based studies, as well as its contemporary champions.

Unit 2, *The Individual's Experience of Freedom*, draws on America's founding documents as well as oral histories from the Freedom Collection to explore the role of government in securing political, economic, and personal rights in the United States and around the world.

Unit 3, *Totalitarianism and Freedom in the 20th Century*, explores the nature of totalitarianism in Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. With the help of oral histories from the Freedom Collection, Unit 3 also investigates efforts to advance individual rights in three case studies: China, Poland, and South Africa.

Unit 4, *Securing Freedom in the 21st Century*, analyzes contemporary movements for freedom and democracy in four countries: Burma (also known as Myanmar), China, Cuba, and Tunisia. Using oral histories from the Freedom Collection, the unit examines the motivations of political dissidents, barriers to freedom, and the status of efforts to secure individual rights under democratic systems of government.

## CONTENT DEVELOPMENT

The Bush Institute, in cooperation with the George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum, assembled a team of educators, subject matter experts, and independent evaluators to develop the lessons in *Freedom Matters!* (See acknowledgments.) The team was nonpartisan and pursued no political agenda. The task was to develop lessons that reinforce universally held ideas and principles. Among the sources consulted for *Freedom Matters!* is the comparative methodology for assessing political rights and civil liberties developed by the nonprofit organization Freedom House. Freedom House's work is widely regarded as independent and nonpartisan in its assessment of progress and setbacks in the experience of freedom and democracy around the world.

To support the design and implementation of *Freedom Matters!*, an evaluation team was engaged to conduct a two-part study to inform final lesson designs. In Phase I, teachers at the high school and college level, who are experts in the subject areas covered by the curriculum, reviewed and provided detailed feedback on each of the lessons comprising the units. This content-beta review entailed completing a rating form on the relevance, accuracy, clarity, and content of the lessons and open-ended sections for recommendations and comments to guide the lesson designs. Each lesson was evaluated by

three to five reviewers and a report was prepared to synthesize the findings for each overall unit. Phase II consisted of pilot field tests of most lessons in actual instructional settings.

## Q & A

### HOW SHOULD FREEDOM MATTERS! BE USED?

*Freedom Matters!* consists of four units of teacher-led lesson plans and supporting materials. The curriculum is intended as a supplemental resource for classes studying world history and related subjects. The content is intended to reinforce or enhance existing learning requirements. Each unit and lesson has been designed to provide teachers with maximum flexibility. While all four units can be taught together, a unit of study or a single lesson can stand alone with limited or no prerequisites.

### WHAT TIME OF YEAR IS BEST?

The units and lessons in *Freedom Matters!* have been designed to provide teachers maximum flexibility in incorporating them into an existing course of study. The content is appropriate for subjects that are taught either thematically or chronologically. Options include using the materials at relevant times throughout the year, as an overall course review, or after standardized testing.

### WHAT GRADE LEVEL IS INTENDED?

The lessons in *Freedom Matters!* are written for the high school classroom but are appropriate for some middle school classes. Teachers of Gifted and Talented or Advanced Placement students can look at background and extension activities for opportunities to further challenge their students. Teachers can cut content in order to decrease rigor.

### DO I NEED WRITTEN PERMISSION TO USE THE LESSONS?

All of the lesson and supporting materials in *Freedom Matters!*, including video clips from the Bush Institute's Freedom Collection, are available for download and use free of charge under a Creative Commons License. Written permission is not required.

### HOW DO I GET STARTED?

All of the lessons and supporting materials for *Freedom Matters!* are available online at [www.freedomcollection.org/curriculum](http://www.freedomcollection.org/curriculum). Teachers can download PDF documents containing a complete unit of study or individual lesson plans.

### WHAT ARE THE TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS?

The lessons in *Freedom Matters!* assume access to the Internet, along with computers or mobile devices, so that students can conduct research and view Freedom Collection video clips. Teachers have the option of live streaming video clips or downloading and saving clips in advance of the lesson.

### HOW ARE THE LESSONS ORGANIZED?

Each lesson in *Freedom Matters!* has these standard features:

- Lesson title
- Introduction
- Guiding questions

- Student objectives
- Suggested length of lesson
- Curriculum standards for World History and AP World History
- Background readings for direct teaching or adaptation for student reading
- Detailed classroom procedures and suggested duration
- Classroom-ready materials

Most lessons incorporate video clips from the Bush Institute’s Freedom Collection in order to make linkages between the foundations of freedom and the actual experiences of contemporary political dissidents who have struggled to achieve freedom. The video testimonies are also included to help students compare actual experiences of freedom in different countries around the world.

Unit 3 features a text-based, structured Socratic Seminar. In this unit, students will work cooperatively in groups to research, prepare, and teach fellow classmates about selected country case studies. The unit includes the criteria and rules for the seminar, along with discussion questions and guidance for teachers in how to help students prepare.

#### **HOW MUCH TIME DO I NEED PER LESSON?**

Most lessons in *Freedom Matters!* are designed for a single class period. Some lessons require more than one class period. Each lesson contains a suggested number of days and times to complete each procedure. Teachers may reduce or expand these times based on the unique needs of their classrooms. For example, some teachers might decide to assign background readings, research, and written assignments for homework in order to increase time for class-based discussion.

#### **ARE THE LESSONS ALIGNED WITH STANDARDS?**

Each lesson in *Freedom Matters!* identifies corresponding standards for the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Social Studies (TEKS) in high school World History and Advanced Placement World History.

#### **HOW DO I ASSESS STUDENT LEARNING?**

Teachers may assess learning based on the participation of students in class discussions and on the quality and accuracy of their completion of worksheets and writing assignments.

#### **IS THERE SOMEONE I CAN CONTACT WITH QUESTIONS?**

For questions related to *Freedom Matters!*, please send an email to [humanfreedom@bushcenter.org](mailto:humanfreedom@bushcenter.org) and reference “Freedom Matters!” in the subject line.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

### CONTRIBUTORS

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