

**Lesson 5.1**

**FREEDOM IS . . .**

**Objective:** Students will explore various ideas of freedom by comparing the profiles of seven Mainers from the early 19th century.

**Materials:**

- **Sheet 5.1:** Freedom Matrix Worksheet, one per student
- Textbook Chapter Five

**Timing:** Two to three class periods

**Background Reading:** Chapter Five

**Procedure:**

1. Discuss freedom with students: a term that Americans have always treasured since the inception of the country. Look up the word in the dictionary. Do they agree with the dictionary definition? What do they think it means to be free? List their ideas on the board.
2. Hand Freedom Matrix out to students. Discuss with them their task: as part of a long-term search for the meaning of freedom, they will be trying to determine what freedom meant to seven early 19th century Mainers represented in the textbook.
3. Break students into groups of three or four. Have each student fill out a Freedom Matrix, after discussing each question with his or her group. Make sure each student has a role in the group: timekeeper, facilitator, note taker, presenter, etc. (see Appendix 1).
4. When students are finished filling out their matrices, have them share their "Freedom is . . ." statements. Call out the name of each of the people represented in the textbook, and allow each group to suggest its own interpretation of what freedom was to that person. (i.e. For William Allen, freedom meant being self-sufficient.) Take notes on the board.
5. When groups have finished offering their ideas, debrief with the students. Ask them questions like the following:
  - Did you disagree with any of your classmates about their interpretations? Why?
  - Which of these characters are the "most free"? The "least free"? Why?
  - What does freedom have to do with money? With gender? With race?
  - Do nineteenth century ideas of freedom as shown by these people differ from ideas of freedom today? How?
  - Why is freedom so important to most people?

- Is there one definition of freedom that everyone can agree upon? Does freedom vary from person to person?
- Is there such a thing as perfect freedom?

**Homework:** Have students add one more person to the matrix: themselves. They should write their own "Freedom is . . ." statement, and be prepared to explain it the next day in class.

**Evaluation:** Grade student matrices based on thoughtfulness and thoroughness.

**Follow-up Activities:**

- Portfolio Option: Have students conduct a "freedom interview" with an older member of the community--a parent, grandparent, etc. Have them formulate questions about freedom: whether or not the person considers him or herself free, why or why not, if there's ever been a time when he or she hasn't felt free, etc.
- Create a "Freedom Is . . ." poster representing different ideas about what freedom is. Hang it in the classroom. Add to it throughout the year when new suggestions arise.
- Write different ideas about freedom on several cards (self-sufficiency, wealth, social class, race, gender, education) and have students line them up in a spectrum, from "Necessary to Freedom" to "Not Necessary to Freedom."

**Alignment with Learning Results:**

Grade Level: **SECONDARY GRADES**

Content Area: **CIVICS AND GOVERNMENT**

Standard: **FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF GOVERNMENT AND CONSTITUTIONS.**

Students will understand the constitutional principles and the democratic foundations of the political institutions of the United States.

Performance Indicator: Demonstrate an understanding of the meaning and importance of traditional democratic assumptions such as individual rights, the common good, self-government, justice, equality, and patriotism.

Grade Level: **MIDDLE GRADES**

Content Area: **CIVICS AND GOVERNMENT**

Standard: **FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF GOVERNMENT AND CONSTITUTIONS.**

Students will understand the constitutional principles and the democratic foundations of the political institutions of the United States.

Performance Indicator: Explain the importance, in a pluralistic society, of having certain shared political values and principles.

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

FREEDOM MATRIX

	Wealth	Education	Major Life Events	Major Problems Faced	What Freedom Meant to them	Was He/She Free?
<b>William Allen</b>						
<b>Nathan Barlow</b>						
<b>Martha Ballard</b>						
<b>Eliza Southgate</b>						

	Wealth	Education	Major Life Events	Major Problems Faced	What Freedom Meant to them	Was He/She Free?
Mary Nicola						
Joseph Nicola						
Frank Dingley						
You						

Place yourself on the Freedom Spectrum:

FREE ..... NOT FREE

In a paragraph, explain why you placed yourself where you did: