Name _____ Date _____

The First Amendment: Five Freedoms and Their Limits

Directions: Each situation below is invented. Use the First Amendment and the Supreme Court cases that apply it to choose your answers.

1. Match each situation to the First Amendment freedom that most specifically describes what the people are doing.

Write the letter of the matching answer on each line.

1. _____ Students send their city council a signed letter asking for a new crosswalk.
2. _____ A family attends weekly services at a temple it chose.
3. _____ Members of a hiking club meet together in a public park to plan a trail cleanup.
4. _____ A local newspaper prints an article criticizing the city council.
5. _____ A man wears a T-shirt with a message urging people to protect rivers.

A. Freedom of religion
B. Freedom of assembly
C. Freedom to petition
D. Freedom of speech
E. Freedom of the press
F. Right to bear arms

2. Jamal hands out flyers about a school fundraiser inside a privately owned bookstore. The owner asks him to stop or leave. Which statement is accurate?

A. The owner is not violating the First Amendment, because it limits government, not private businesses.
B. The owner may ask him to stop, but only after a judge agrees to the request.
C. The owner is violating Jamal's freedom of the press, because the flyers are printed.
D. The owner is violating Jamal's freedom of speech, because flyers are protected speech.

3. An invented state passes a law that fines anyone who criticizes the governor in print. The First Amendment's wording names Congress. Does the amendment still limit this state?

A. No. The First Amendment limits only Congress, so states are free to pass laws like this one.
B. Yes, but only after Congress votes to apply the amendment to that particular state.
C. Yes. The Supreme Court has held that the Fourteenth Amendment applies these freedoms to the states.
D. No. The Tenth Amendment leaves all rules about speech and printing to the states.

4. At an invented public high school, students wear small buttons asking the city to plant more trees. Classes go on as usual, and no one is disrupted. The principal bans the buttons only because she dislikes their message. Is the ban allowed?

A. No, because students keep their freedom of speech at school unless they substantially disrupt it.
B. Yes, because a principal may ban any message that she personally disagrees with.
C. No, because students at school may say anything, at any time, with no limits at all.
D. Yes, because students give up their freedom of speech while they are at school.

5. In an invented case, a man angry about a parking spot leaves a note on his neighbor's door saying he will hurt her if she parks there again. He means it seriously. Is the note protected by the First Amendment?

A. Yes, because every written message is protected speech.
B. Yes, because the note was about a private parking dispute.
C. No, because any rude or angry note to a neighbor is illegal.
D. No, because a serious threat to hurt someone is not protected speech.

6. At a rally in an invented city, a speaker points to a store across the street and urges the angry crowd to smash its windows right now. People start picking up rocks. Is this speech protected?

A. Yes, because speech at a rally is always protected.

B. No, because any speech that makes listeners angry is unprotected.

C. Yes, because the speaker did not throw any rocks himself.

D. No, because it urges immediate lawbreaking that is likely to happen.

7. An invented newspaper prints a story claiming that a local baker put spoiled eggs in her cakes on purpose. The editors know the story is false, and the baker loses many customers. Does the First Amendment protect the newspaper from a lawsuit?

A. No. A newspaper can be sued over any story that upsets the person it describes.

B. Yes. Freedom of the press protects anything a newspaper chooses to print.

C. No. Knowingly printing a harmful falsehood about someone is defamation, which is not protected.

D. Yes. A newspaper can be sued only over stories about public officials.

8. Which TWO of these actions would violate the First Amendment's religion clauses? Select 2.

☐ A. A private company closes its stores on a religious holiday.

☐ B. A family prays together before dinner at home.

☐ C. An invented city bans members of one faith from holding worship services.

☐ D. A person decides not to follow any religion.

☐ E. An invented state names one church its official church and pays that church's ministers with tax money.

9. Officials in an invented city learn that the local newspaper plans to publish a story about how the city spent its road-repair money. Before the story runs, they order the paper not to print it. Is the order allowed?

A. No. Blocking a story before it is published, called prior restraint, is almost never allowed.

B. No, but only because the story is about public money rather than about people.

C. Yes, as long as the paper is allowed to print the story a year or more later.

D. Yes. Officials may stop any story about how their own city spends its money.

10. An invented public school adopts a rule that every student must stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance each morning, with no option to remain quietly seated. Does the rule follow the First Amendment?

A. No, because the pledge may not be led in public schools under any circumstances.

B. No. Freedom of speech includes the freedom not to speak, so students cannot be forced to recite it.

C. Yes. Public schools may require every student to say the pledge, since it honors the country.

D. Yes, as long as the school also teaches students about the history of the flag.