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Constitutional Connections: How Individuals, Ideas, and Institutions Shape Our Constitutional Understanding.

(Collecting Research in the digital age or how to analyze a document or current event)

This is a strategy that can be used to research and categorizing constitutional connections in documents or current events and comes from a debate technique called “cutting cards”. (Before the digital age researchers used index cards.) It can be used to critically think through a single article or a document or collect information from multiple sources for a research paper.

The assignment:

In the example students are asked to research the First Amendment and Freedom of the Press. Once an applicable article is found students read the article and create a tag line, which is a short phrase that indicates the content of the article or the document. If many documents are being used this will help in organizing sources. Use only one **tag line** per page. If a more that one piece of information is gathered from the document or article a new tag line is created on a separate piece of paper.

Skip a line and cut and paste the entire **URL** so the original source can be located.

Choose an **excerpt** that helps illustrate the focus of the article. The excerpt chosen is in 12 font and is cut directly from the original. Quotations marks are used. The important phrases contained in the excerpt are highlighted.

The **analysis** is where the student processes the information. It is where the student explains what he or she thought about what was read.

The **connection** directly states the constitutional issue in the document or article. (See attached sample)

Research is a way to gather information. It is to learn something you don't already know or to gather evidence to support something you think you know or might suspect. Historical research often starts with a supposition. As the research progresses questions form and a more specific focus emerges. Directed research has a specific goal in mind and to help communicate that to the audience. Only some of what is gathered ultimately is used in the research paper. Encourage students to keep a file of the “cards” by research topic or issue.

Name
Date
Period

Freedom of the Press Campaign Contributions

<http://www.cnn.com/2013/05/16/politics/obama-scandals/>

Excerpt:

“Earlier, the White House announced its support for strengthening protections of journalists and confidential sources even as Attorney General Eric Holder evaded questions at a congressional hearing about how his Justice Department obtained phone records of The Associated Press from 2012 as part of an investigation of classified leaks.”

“The controversial actions began after the 2010 Supreme Court ruling in the Citizens United case that greatly expanded the ability of corporations, unions and other organizations to participate in election spending, though not through direct contributions to candidates or parties.”

“...continued for more than 18 months, the report said, declaring that “the IRS used inappropriate criteria that identified for review Tea Party and other organizations applying for tax-exempt status based upon their names or policy positions instead of indications of potential political campaign intervention.”

Analysis:

The targeting of conservative groups like the Tea Party by the IRS questioned the ability of groups that deal with political issues to obtain tax-exempt status. This would allow people who support the political leanings of an organization to contribute and be able to deduct the contributions from federal income tax. Currently political contributions are not tax deductible.

This appears to target conservative groups and President Obama has come under attack since he is a Democrat and these organizations are working against his agenda. This looks like a political motivated act by the Justice Department and has caused some people to call for Attorney General Eric Holder’s resignation.

Connection:

Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission (2010) allowed corporations to donate to Political Action Committees (PACs)

Cheryl 3/4/2015 10:02 AM

Comment [1]: Tag Line here: Constitutional Issue. 14 font, bold headings

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Comment [2]: URL

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Comment [3]: Copy excerpts that you think support your interpretation, then highlight most important

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Comment [4]: What do you think about what you read.

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Comment [5]: Connect this to your book or to the Constitution here.

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Comment [6]: Keep it to one page and make it succinct. Keep in mind that you will be able to expand on this later and it is ok to only understand part of what you are reading. Try and search out other articles that will help increase your understanding.