



FREEDOM

“Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves.”

Abraham Lincoln (1809 – 1865), 16th president of the United States

1. Freedom Discussion

1. What is freedom? What freedoms do you have?
2. What are you not free to do? What would you like to have the freedom to do?
3. Which people in society have the most freedom? Which people have the least?
4. What determines whether a country can be considered free or not?
5. How free would you say your country is? Do some people enjoy more freedoms than others? Does the government restrict freedom in any way?
6. In which countries do the people enjoy the most freedom? In which countries do the people enjoy the least freedom?
7. Do freedom and democracy mean the same thing? Why or why not?
8. Is it necessary to reduce freedom in order to increase security? Which is more important for you?

2. Freedom Vocabulary

- **free as a bird** (adjective, idiom) – completely free without restrictions.
- **free spirit** (noun) – a person who thinks and acts in an uninhibited way without any cares or worries.
- **free will** (noun) – the ability of an individual to choose or decide what they do, independently of any outside influence or predetermined courses of action.
- **destiny** (noun) – a power that controls or determines future events; predetermined events or outcomes that will happen to a person in the future.
- **freedom of thought / conscience** (noun) – the ability to think whatever you want, or have whatever belief you want, no matter what others think.
- **artistic freedom / expression** (noun) – the freedom of an artist to create any work they want to express themselves without censorship or other interference or pressure.

Using the vocabulary words above, complete the following sentences (remember to use the correct form of the word, e.g. verb conjugation or plural noun)

1. After members of the minority religion were persecuted or forced to convert, the United Nations called on the government to respects people's **freedom of thought**.
2. If there is no **free will**, then we cannot blame any criminal for their actions.
3. My sister is such a **free spirit**! She says she never wants to get married or have children; instead, she wants to spend the rest of her life travelling the world.
4. Now that I'm retired, I'm **free as a bird**. I can finally see all the places in the world that I had planned to visit.
5. The president said it was his **destiny** to lead to country to glory.
6. When it comes to graffiti, we must balance **artistic freedom** with protecting people's property from vandalism.

Freedom vocabulary comprehension questions

1. Do you know any free spirits? Are you a free spirit? If not, would you like to be?
2. What would you do if you were free as a bird?
3. Do people really have free will? Why or why not?
4. Do you believe in destiny? What do you think your destiny is?
5. How do some governments try to limit people's freedom of thought?
6. Should there be any limits to artistic freedom? Why or why not?

3. Video: Free Will vs Determinism

You are going to watch a video by The School of Life called "Do We Have Free Will or Are We Predetermined?"

Watch the video here: <https://yourenglishpal.com/blog/esl-conversation-lesson-plan-freedom/>

Watch the video and answer the following questions:

Multiple choice

1. Who were the first people to debate the ideas of free will and determinism?
a) The Ancient Greeks b) The Romans c) Christian Philosophers
2. How is the debate between free will and determinism framed?
a) in subjective terms **b) in objective terms** c) in reactionary terms
3. Who would defeatist people blame when things go wrong?
a) themselves **b) other people** c) a predetermined fate
4. What do aspirational people believe?
a) everything can change b) nothing can change c) things change for a reason

Sentence completion

5. When things do not work out for aspirational people, it can lead to them experiencing feelings of resentment and **rage**.
6. People need to figure out how much of the **suffering** in their lives can be traced back to defeatism or reckless aspiration.
7. The oldest debate in philosophy should be answered more **personally**.
8. Stoic philosophers believed people always drift between a free and determined **state**.

Short answer

9. The stoics believed humans could be subjected to powerful what? **External necessities**
10. What animal did the Stoics use to explain how we only have limited free will? **A dog**
11. What allows humans to theorise about the path of destiny? **Reason**
12. Humans are powerless to alter what? **Certain events**

4. Freedom Conversation Questions

1. Is individual freedom more important than what the group wants (e.g., the family, the community, etc)? Why or why not?
2. Lord Acton said that the most certain test to see if a country is truly free is the amount of security enjoyed by its minorities. Is this true? Why or why not?
3. Philosopher John Stuart Mill, in his 'harm principle', argued that the only time a person's freedom should be limited is to prevent them from doing harm to others. Do you agree with this? Can you think of any exceptions?
4. Economist Milton Friedman said that without economic freedom (the freedom of businesses to operate without government interference), there can be no personal freedom (the freedom of individuals to live their lives without government interference). Do you agree? How might economic freedom reduce personal freedom?
5. Are there any truly free people in the world today? If so, who? If not, why is this?
6. Over your lifetime, has freedom around the world increased or decreased? How will this change in the future?
7. If people have their freedom unjustly taken away, what should they do?
8. How much of our lives are controlled by outside influences (e.g., by our family, our socioeconomic background, the government, etc)? How does this affect how free we really are?

5. Freedom Writing Task

Write about your opinion of freedom. Try to use some of the vocabulary you learned earlier in this class. In your answer, you could include some of the following topics:

- What it means to be free.
- Which countries are free, and which are not.
- How free you think your country is in comparison to other countries.

Alternative exam question

John Stuart Mills argued that people should be free to do whatever they want, as long as they do not harm other people. Do you agree or disagree with this?