



My Rights & Liberties: SS.7.C.3.6
**Constitutional Rights and
Their Impact**
VIDEO #2 SCRIPT



Impact of Constitutional Rights Video #2

1. Political, economic, and social systems of the United States are connected closely to the concept of individual rights, and in this video today, we're going to explore some scenarios and situations in which we practice our rights or the government may limit our rights.
2. After watching, you will be able to:
 - ✓ Use scenarios to recognize and/or evaluate options for exercising constitutional rights.
 - ✓ Evaluate the impact of the government upholding and/or restricting individual constitutional rights.
3. In order for the US government to work as our founding fathers intended, our constitutional rights must be protected. So let's spend a few minutes and remind ourselves just what our constitutional rights are according to the U.S. Constitution.
4. So let's do a little bit of review and look back on just how our Constitution protects our rights. Remember, the First Amendment includes the personal freedoms that include religious exercise, peaceable (peaceful) assembly, speech, press, and petition, while the Fourth and Fifth Amendments protect people accused of crimes from abuse of power by the federal government.
5. And remember the Fourteenth Amendment protects people accused of crimes from abuse of power by state governments. And finally, the government can't use eminent domain to take your property without paying you a fair price for it first.
6. Remember too that one of the central elements of the rights that we've just described is due process. Remember that due process means that the laws must be fair and must be followed properly before someone's life, liberty, or property is taken from them.
7. One of the most important questions we have as a society that we really need to answer is how we balance individual liberties and rights with community protections. The Founding Fathers thought about this question a lot, and knew that the needs of the public could change over time. In the Constitution, they gave the government the ability to either protect or limit individual rights. Sometimes, after all, there may be a need to limit these rights, such as during a war or national emergency.
8. For example, during the Civil War, the right of citizens to habeas corpus, or not to be jailed without trial, was often limited. At the end of the war, though, that right was restored. The government in this case balanced the needs of the public and the country with the need to protect the individual rights of the citizens.

9. So let's check in. What's the tough question about individual rights that government must sometimes answer?

10. ANSWER TO QUESTION

11. So let's take a look now at a couple of scenarios that show citizens practicing their rights, and the ways in which government tried to limit rights.

12. In 1965, two men, John Lewis and Hosea Williams, committed civil disobedience by refusing to obey certain laws as a form of political protest. Mr. Lewis and Mr. Williams were part of a larger group that got together and marched peacefully from Selma, Alabama to Montgomery, Alabama. They did this to make people more aware of voting discrimination against African-Americans. The Alabama State Police told the group that their assembly was against the law, but the protesters continued their march, even after the police began attacking them. They believed that it was important to practice their right to free speech and the freedom of peaceable assembly.

13. Another time we tried to practice our rights as the government was trying to limit them President Franklin Roosevelt during World War II, when issued Executive Order 9066. This order forced thousands of Japanese Americans into internment camps that they were not allowed to leave. This is called forced internment.

14. Fred Korematsu, a U.S. born citizen of Japanese descent was required to live in an internment camp. He believed that he was discriminated against because of his Japanese heritage, and he believed that the government did not have the right to force U.S. citizens into internment camps, so he went to court.

15. In *Korematsu v. United States*, decided in 1944, the Supreme Court decided that the government's action was reasonable to protect the country during wartime. Many years later, in 1988, the government apologized for its actions and paid money to the families of those that had been forcibly interned, which of course seems to say that they actually did something wrong. Many states even have a Fred Korematsu Day. Even though he lost the case, he fought hard for his individual rights.

16. So, without a doubt, our individual rights and liberties, provided through our Constitution, impact the social, political, and economic systems of the United States.

17. Ultimately, that question, of how do we balance individual rights with community protections, requires us to understand our rights and why they might be limited, and how we can practice our rights to make sure they are protected by our Constitution and Bill of Rights.

18. So let's recap – Try to answer for yourself the following questions:

19. Give an example of how the Constitution protects our individual political rights.

ANSWER TO QUESTION

20. When might there be limits imposed on our individual rights?

ANSWER TO QUESTION

21. As we think about how to answer that question, how do we protect our individual rights and liberties while still looking out for the community, we can look at Fred Korematsu, Hosea Williams, and John Lewis as examples of how we would want to be as citizens.

22. If you haven't done so already, be sure to check out our other video on 3.6, which covers individual rights in more detail.