

# Lesson 3: When Governments Ignore Unalienable Rights

Teacher Version

# Essential Question

*What happens when governments ignore unalienable rights?*

# Lesson Bridge

## Review Lesson 2:

- Governments exist to protect unalienable rights
- Power comes from the consent of the governed

## Bridge Question:

- What happens when a government ignores those rights?

# Key Vocabulary

Paragraph	Word	How it Will be Taught	Student-Friendly Definition
2	<b>Oppression</b>	Word parts: <i>op-</i> (against) + <i>press</i> (to push down) Context: Unfair treatment by people in power that limits freedom.	Unfair treatment by people in power that limits freedom.
2	<b>Consent of the Governed</b>	Word parts: consent (permission) + govern (rule) Context: Government power depends on the people's approval.	The idea that people give the government permission to rule.
3	<b>Sedition</b>	Word origin: <i>sedition</i> (to stir up) Context: Laws punishing people for criticizing the government.	Resisting or revolting against the government.
4	<b>Liberty</b>	Context: Free speech and press protected in the Bill of Rights.	The freedom to share ideas and make choices without unfair control.

# Word Sort Activity

Have students sort the word list below into two categories:

## **PROTECTED SPEECH and GOVERNMENT PUNISHMENTS**

Students sort and place key vocabulary and concepts under the correct column. The terms in the two columns do not need to be connected.

### ***Terms to include:***

- Opinion
- Criticism
- Protest
- Arrest
- Jail
- Fine

# Text Coding Guide

R = Rights Ignored

C = Consent of the Governed

E = Effects / Consequences

G = General Information

- Students read and code the text
- Teacher models paragraphs 1–3
- Students complete paragraphs 4–7

# Directed Note-Taking Graphic Organizer:

## How the government ignored key unalienable rights during the enforcement of the Sedition Act

Students track:

- Unalienable right or principle
- Evidence of government action
- Why it matters today

Unalienable Right/Principle	Student-Friendly Definition	Evidence from Text Showing Government Action (include paragraph numbers)	Why This Matters Today
Life	Life in this text aligns with the concept that safety, survival, and security are at risk under government power.		
Liberty	Liberty in this text includes freedom of speech and press.		
Pursuit of Happiness	Pursuit of happiness in this text aligns with the concept that people are free to work, participate, and live without fear.		
Consent of the Governed	Consent of the governed in this text aligns with the ability to criticize leaders, agree to the rules, and hold government accountable.		

# Video and Group Discussion

National Constitution Center clip “The Consent of the Governed” with teacher supports and a student viewing guide.

**Prompt:** “As you watch, think about how consent of the governed connects to people’s ability to express ideas and criticize the government.”

Teacher pauses with questions and students jot down notes while watching.

# Group Discussion

**Prompt:** “Which unalienable right or principle—Life, Liberty, Pursuit of Happiness, or Consent of the Governed—was most threatened by the Sedition Act, and why?”

Partners select one principle and identify **two pieces of evidence** from the text showing how the government’s actions threatened that principle during the enforcement of the Sedition Act.

In whole group, students defend their position using text evidence.

Teacher pushes reasoning and synthesis.

# Final Writing Prompt

**Prompt:** *How did the actions of the federal government during the enforcement of the Sedition Act show that leaders were ignoring unalienable rights and the consent of the governed?*

Students must:

- State a claim connecting a specific government action (such as limiting speech or punishing criticism) to a violated principle (Life, Liberty, Pursuit of Happiness, or Consent of the Governed)
- Provide at least two pieces of textual evidence with paragraph numbers
- Explain how that action denied or threatened the selected right or principle

# Closure

- **Connection to Today**—Turn-and-talk:  
“The Constitution was created to protect people’s rights and ensure government power comes from the people. What evidence from the video or text suggests this is still something our country must work to protect today?”
- **Exit Ticket**—“Write one example of how a U.S. citizen uses **consent of the governed** today.”