

# **WE** *the* **STUDENTS**

BRI

(<http://www.billofrightsinsitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/BRI-We-The-Students-opt2-e1470417133658.png>)

## **2017-2018 We the Students Essay Prompt:**

***To what extent in the U.S. does the government—federal, state, and local—have the duty to monitor internet content?***

This year we are asking you to come up with some answers to one of the most pressing First Amendment issues of our time. This is a topic that touches on everything from cyberbullying in schools to issues of national security. Does your school have the right to monitor your social media? Does the federal government have the right to monitor the emails and social media accounts of ordinary citizens in the name of identifying potential international and domestic terrorism? Where does the line get drawn? You tell us!

In your answer, incorporate Constitutional principles and specific examples (including current events) that support your conclusion.

### **Bill of Rights Institute Educator Resources:**

Documents of Freedom – Bill of Rights (<https://www.docsoffreedom.org/readings/the-bill-of-rights>)

Voices of History – Freedom of Speech (<http://voicesofhistory.org/preserving-the-bill-of-rights/speech-limited-expanded-apply-school-2/>)

Voices of History – Reno v. ACLU (<http://voicesofhistory.org/supreme-court-document-based-questions/reno-v-aclu-1997/>)

### **Related News:**

Net Neutrality (<https://www.aclu.org/issues/free-speech/internet-speech/what-net-neutrality>) – ACLU

Net Neutrality 101 (<https://cei.org/content/net-neutrality-101>) – Competitive Enterprise Institute

Internet Freedom (<https://www.fcc.gov/restoring-internet-freedom>) – Federal Communications Commission

Internet Filtering at Schools (<https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2016/04/internet-filtering-hurts-kids/479907/>) – the Atlantic

Cyberbullying (<https://www.thefire.org/supreme-court-of-north-carolina-finds-cyberbullying-law-violates-first-amendment/>) – Foundation for Individual Rights in Education

Texting Suicide Verdict (<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2017/06/17/texting-suicide-verdict-could-set-bad-precedent-legal-experts-say/102956784/>)– USA Today

Free Speech on the Internet

(<http://www.npr.org/sections/alltechconsidered/2017/08/23/545320833/unlikely-allies-join-fight-to-protect-free-speech-on-the-internet>) – NPR

Charlottesville and Free Speech

(<http://money.cnn.com/2017/08/17/technology/business/charlottesville-silicon-valley-free-speech/index.html>) – CNN

## **Essay Writing Tips:**

**While you are writing:**

- Stay focused and minimize distractions.
- Write however you feel most comfortable—using a pen and paper or a computer.
- Let your topic guide your structure. Consider including an introductory paragraph, three supporting paragraphs, and a conclusion.
- Stay on track: if you find yourself getting off the topic, go back and revise.
- Remember all writing is re-writing.

**After you write, ask yourself:**

1. Have I answered all aspects of the question?

- Is it clear what I am discussing?
- Have I stated an opinion when asked for one?
- Have I provided examples where asked?
- Have I said what I wanted to say?

2. Is my essay well-written?

- Have I used paragraphs?
- Do all my paragraphs have a topic sentence?
- Do I fully develop one idea per paragraph?

3. Is my writing correct?

- Have I checked for spelling errors myself, without relying on spell-check?
- Have I checked for grammar errors without relying on a grammar checker?
- Have I checked my facts: dates, document titles, names, etc.?

**Other ideas:**

- Try reading your essay aloud to a family member. Does it sound like it flows easily? Can your audience member summarize your essay back to you in one or two sentences? (If they can't, try going back and clarifying your ideas.)
- Try putting your essay down for a day or two and coming back to it and re-reading it. Do you notice anything you'd like to change or add?

1310 North Courthouse Rd. #620 Arlington, VA 22201

703.894.1776

[info@billofrightsinstitute.org](mailto:info@billofrightsinstitute.org) (<mailto:info@billofrightsinstitute.org>)

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