

“The Arizona Gun Safety Program”
Enabling Act: A.R.S. §15-714.01

**The Role of Firearms in
the Preservation of Peace and Freedom**

A.R.S. §15-714.01(C)(4)
[Third Draft; by Alan Korwin; 3/3/07]

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Introduction

There is scant research on “the role of firearms in the preservation of peace and freedom,” a required subject for the Arizona Gun Safety Program.

The following curriculum material takes the form of a textbook chapter, to acquaint both the teacher and the student with the complex role the use of force plays as both an enabler of and threat to personal and national peace and freedom.

Throughout history, the struggle for state and individual sovereignty and peace is the story of the use of force. The most sophisticated and effective tools available in each time period have been taken up in the pursuit of aggression and defense, conquest and resistance, crime and crime deterrence, and have been equally wielded by the guilty and the innocent.

War making and defensive planning have evolved and continue to do so. Civilization has progressed from rocks and clubs, to walls and battering rams. The metal ages gave us swords, lances and armor. Ingenuity brought us from the bow and arrow to the crossbow and catapult. Technology and oriental wisdom brought us gunpowder, the ability to defend or attack at great distances, and the heart of the Arizona Gun Safety Program.

The struggle to use the power of tools to preserve freedom or take it away is not likely to go away, given the present nature of humanity. This eternal struggle is summed up by the Cooper Conundrum, discussed in the next section.

Part 1: What Is Peace?

“You can’t separate peace from freedom because no one can be at peace unless he has his freedom.”
–**Malcolm X, Speech, New York City, 1965**

“You can have peace. Or you can have freedom. Don’t ever count on having both at once.”
–**Lazarus Long, in *Time Enough For Love*, by Robert Heinlein, 1973**

“Liberty means responsibility. That is why most men dread it.” –**George Bernard Shaw, 1856-1950**

“The concept of peace ranks among the most controversial in our time. Peace undoubtedly carries a positive connotation; almost nobody admits to opposing peace; world peace is widely seen as one of the most noble goals of humanity. Various groups, however, differ sharply about what peace entails, how best to achieve it, and even if peace is truly possible.” en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peace

The Cooper Conundrum

Col. Jeff Cooper is generally considered “the father of the modern technique of shooting.” Prior to his research and the training programs he developed from it, people were taught to shoot sidearms with one hand. Even police officers would practice with one hand behind their backs and a single hand on the firearm. (Long guns, due to weight, center of gravity, and the leverage caused by their length, cannot be effectively fired with one hand with any consistent degree of accuracy—they are two-handed devices by their nature).

Today, a two-handed grip is widely accepted as the correct basic way to safely and accurately handle a sidearm, due to Cooper’s pioneering work. Training and qualification in sidearm proficiency will often include practice in strong- and weak-hand techniques, since in emergencies these may be necessary. Under normal conditions however, Cooper’s two-handed approach is the way the modern world turns.

In his classic short book, *The Principles of Personal Defense*, Cooper begins by observing that, **“Some people prey upon other people. Whether we like it or not, this is one of the facts of life... the peril of physical assault does exist, and it exists everywhere and at all times.”**

Wish as we may there is no end in sight to this unhappy condition, the Cooper Conundrum, the

main reason lasting peace is so elusive. For this reason, the innocent must, if they are to be spared the injustice of homicide, theft or enslavement, be prepared to defend themselves against other people who would take what is not theirs to take, including innocent life. Preserving your personal peace and freedom requires the use of force. People can do it themselves, or organize or hire others to do it for them.

The Concept and Principles of Self Defense

No one is legally obligated to defend against an assault, but everyone has legal protection to do so.¹ You are free to put up no resistance to an attack, and perish, if you so choose. Some religious teachings endorse praying for your attacker as you are slain.

However, legal recognition of a right to self defense goes back as far as recorded law exists, to the Code of Hamurabai, in 1750 B.C. In the United States, legal recognition of the right to defend yourself (or loved ones or other innocents) against an illegal assault goes back to before the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

Whatever method is employed to provide this protection for an individual or for the entire population—police, military, militia, civil, mercenary, personal or other—the protection can be seen as necessary for the good of society.

Until the nature of the human condition changes, peace will require some form of strength to resist aggression, if life and property have value. Moral arguments are made that you actually have a duty to protect your own life because it is precious, and to protect the life of your family members and even other innocents if you are able.

People bent on aggression, on preying upon their fellow citizens, on bringing death and destruction against their neighbors, naturally seek the best means at their disposal to accomplish their evil, or at least aggressive goals. They may be mean, angry, greedy, wicked, deranged or just hungry, but this is not to say they are stupid. It is in their best interests to use the most effective, powerful and lethal tools they can obtain to attain their ends. They understand this instinctively, and arm themselves accordingly.

So we arrive at **the fundamental paradox of peace on planet Earth:** *The most deadly and effective tools that can be used to stage an attack are the same ones defenders need to protect themselves.* Whatever improvements either side can muster, the other side must quickly adopt. The sword, in classic terms, is double-edged. Gunfire operates in both directions.

[NOTE: Specific issues of personal self defense are outside the scope of this class. The laws involving use of force are complex, subject to change, and class instructors are not generally qualified to discuss personal use-of-force issues with competence. Use-of-force questions that may arise in this segment of the curriculum should be referred to qualified legal advisors and certified trainers. Teachers must resist any temptation to enter into dialog about how to act during a criminal confrontation, or to discuss hypothetical or actual cases of assault and defense.]

Utopia And The Role Of Force In Preserving Peace

In the days before gunpowder, castles and moats provided effective defense against many forms of attack. In terms of preserving peace and relative freedom within the walls, a properly constructed fortress kept out those who would prey on the people inside. This model worked well and lasted for centuries.

The invention of gunpowder ended that. Cannon fire could reach inside, and breach the walls no matter how carefully constructed. Invention of the long bow defeated the defense provided by armor. The crossbow was such a major advancement it was the nuclear weapon of its age, considered improper for use in civilized warfare. The Iron Age supplanted weaponry made of wood and stone. Defenses against those who would prey on others continually migrate forward to new tools and tactics, while evil keeps a watchful eye.

In humanity's interminable struggle for the peace of personal safety, an evolution of defensive technology inexorably advances.

The gradually escalating balance of power is humanity's quest for peace as well as the very bane of its existence. It may seem ugly, or counterintuitive, but it accurately describes what has taken place over the full course of human history. Of all the definitions of peace, the practical ones recognize a need to preserve peace. This preservation only comes through the use of, or ability to threaten the use of, force. This is generally called *peace through strength*. The modern U.S. Marines frame it a little more bluntly, as, "peace through superior firepower."

Utopian notions of peace recognize a possibility of peace without force, and without even the potential to threaten force, in a world of true enlightenment and enduring tranquility, abundance and prosperity. This of course requires a fundamental shift in human nature across the planet, and does not appear likely any time soon. When people who pray completely supplant people who prey, we might arrive. The

Cooper Conundrum must evaporate before utopian ideals can be realized.

For utopian peace to arrive, we need a world where no one is angry, hungry, stupid or wicked. A world where no one takes your stuff by force—even by “legitimate” taxation—to give to someone else. Even if modern technology holds the promise to eliminate hunger (and it’s not clear that it does—or that the will exists to do so), no means for alleviating the other three human traits (angry, stupid, wicked) is known, all of which conspire to deny true lasting peace for us all.

Other Ideas About Peace

A more practical approach presumes that peace is not an end place or destination humanity will arrive at “some day,” but that peace always exists in varying degrees at various times. It is not static and immutable, a thing that exists only in some complete uncompromised way. Peace exists now, to some extent, and is partially conditioned on how you personally choose to view it.

In his controversial and thought-provoking book, *Report From Iron Mountain on the Possibility and Desirability of Peace*, author Leonard C. Lewin proposes that peace is neither attainable nor desirable. Cleverly presented as a secretly leaked government research document, it addressed subjects that might have been summarily dismissed if released in another fashion.

He argues that the true nature of war is not the advancement of political goals, but economic in nature. The degree of adjustment that would have to take place to achieve a true condition of peace—absence of war and the machinery for making war in all its forms—would require a retooling of economies larger than anything ever attempted, and a collapse of the nation-state system that no one really wants.

Lasting peace would not be in the best interests of a stable society, Lewin posits, because armies are actually indispensable social welfare systems, needed to manage certain elements of the population. The perpetual threat of war is the fundamental organizing force behind government and the ultimate reason for people’s adherence to its rule. Spending vast sums of money on war readiness is only remotely related to defense—it is the only flywheel of sufficient size, that can be adjusted arbitrarily at political will, to balance a nation’s economy. In that sense, it mimics certain precepts of Marxism. Yes, controversial.

The need for arms to ensure peace has a lot to do with peoples’ intent, and personal intent does not easily submit itself to management. It has been said that if the Arabs surrounding Israel laid down their arms, there would be peace, but if the Israelis laid down their arms, there would be no more Israel.

On a smaller scale, “keeping the peace” in the modern world typically falls to a police force of some sort—government agents specifically tasked with monitoring the public and attending to problems that arise. Police are by their nature a coercive force that limits freedom. They do this, in a free society, with the willing cooperation of the majority of the public. In repressive societies they do so typically against the will of the people. Whether they rely primarily on social pressure or actual force depends on many factors.

In more turbulent societies, or those with higher numbers of sociopaths, police are armed. For this purpose, historically, police are provided with the very latest arms, yet frequently they complain that criminals (who of course cannot legally have any weapons) are more numerous or better armed than the police are. Once again, criminals may be mean or evil, but they are not stupid.

This last point is a crucial one. In an effort to preserve domestic peace and tranquility, societies all outlaw possession of any sort of arms by criminals, but this doesn’t have the desired effect. Criminals arm themselves because—that’s what they do. Laws fail to prevent it, and at best, can only penalize a small number of neer-do-wells, and only if and after they are caught. Even under the most repressive regimes, those who would resist or fight against the social order take up arms, despite any laws to the contrary.

The havoc criminals and other internal anti-social individuals play on the peacefulness of a nation is not abated by law, and though the amount of havoc is in some poorly understood way affected by social programs, poverty, living conditions, culture and numerous other factors, it is only countered directly by the use of force.

Part 2: What Is Freedom?

“Freedom is participation in power” –Cicero

“The enemies of freedom do not argue. They shout and they shoot.” –Dean Inge (1954)

“It is criminal to teach a man not to defend himself when he is the constant victim of brutal attacks.”
–Malcolm X (1964)

“The natural progress of things is for liberty to yield and government to gain ground.”–Thomas Jefferson

In a classical sense, as the Founders approached it, freedom is the ability to do as you please of your own free will, as long as you do not harm others. The proper role of government then is primarily to preserve freedom for those governed. Government derives its just powers from the consent of the governed. It may sound pretty basic today, but these were radical concepts when first introduced.

Freedom is not universally recognized as a desirable condition. Under socialism and other totalitarian models, the desire or need to manage the public and achieve stated goals conflicts directly with the idea of free choice, individual liberty, and freedom for society as a whole.

Until the invention of consent of the governed at the formation of the United States, the idea of personal freedom barely existed, let alone enjoyed status as the most highly desirable living conditions a person could aspire to. People were typically subjects, ruled by their betters, mere peons who existed at the whim and will of the king or other autocrat. Classical Greece and Rome moved beyond such repressive models, but only for a privileged elite.

Even today, many people distrust freedom, and prefer central constraints that to some extent remove uncertainty and provide for “the common good.” To the extent that a perceived good conflicts with a person’s freedom to act without coercion, freedom is compromised. Clearly, a state of pure freedom is unachievable in a population of any size.

A natural tension exists between the concepts of peace and freedom. To preserve peace, and help ensure freedoms of every description, people of their own accord form governments. Examples of people living in any sizeable communities without governance of some form are essentially non-existent.

Yet government rule depends upon coercion and force, and limits freedom. Government has been defined in many ways. Author, businessman and libertarian candidate for President Harry Browne, in his seminal book, *How I Found Freedom In An Unfree World* defines government effectively for the purpose here—**government is a way for one group of people to impose its will on another group of people.**

Whether for good or bad (however you might care to define those terms), people, through government, decide how things ought to be, and then enforce those decisions on everyone through rule making (laws), and enforcement techniques (primarily police and courts).

Even under basically democratic principles, where each person has a say in how things will be, the freedom to act—for everyone in the system—is constrained by the laws created. Your freedom is limited by the very institution established to protect it.

A single Mountain Man, living in the fenceless expanses of the American West of the 1830s, was probably about as close to free as the world has ever seen. He could holler, make fires, dig holes, dam up a stream, do anything he pleased, and there were no rules or constraints placed on his actions, other than the immutable laws of physics and nature.

In the modern world, with the needs and presence of countless other people impinging upon us in every moment of our existence, even while we sit at home alone, pure freedom is an illusion.

Perhaps one of the greatest freedoms remaining in this country is freedom to travel. Yes, strict rules, fines and prison terms control access to a driver’s license, possession of a vehicle, and use of public roads. But from within the framework society has deemed appropriate, a person can travel to most any spot, at any time, as often as desired, with no need for schedules, permits, permission, prior planning or anything but the means to do so. You can buy all the gas you want and go. The freedom of the road tugs at the wanderlust in us all.

The Weaponless World and Balancing Power

Because most freedoms are maintained and implemented through the use of force on those around us, a lasting condition of real peace (weaponless, utopian, flowery total absence of war or the ability to exert force) apparently cannot exist while we enjoy any measure of freedom.

A magical world where weapons cease to exist—where by a wave of a wand America is suddenly gun-free—does not get us any closer to peace or freedom. In fact, it makes matters worse. The good guys, it turns out, need to be able to protect their freedoms.

Contemporary images of a gun-free America may envision an entirely disarmed public, but do not go so far as to imagine an entirely disarmed state—the police, the military and officials remain armed in such scenarios. Even in the hoplophobic² fantasies of the most ardent anti-gun-rights advocates, police are armed to protect us from criminals who do not disappear with an imaginary gun evaporation.

Somewhere deep inside, the idea of solving problems of peace and freedom by simply eliminating weapons, nags. How would that work? The fascists, the radicals, the hardened criminals, religious zealots, sociopaths and psychopaths, would-be dictators and tyrants—they do not become peaceful or go away merely because we disarm and make ourselves defenseless.

Instinctively we recognize this. Strategically, people charged with protecting freedom understand this. In fact, the problems supposedly solved by blanket disarmament get worse, since we can pretty much rely on bad actors picking up clubs, or knives, or enough machine tools to start making guns again.

So the gun-free-society model generally presupposes a heavily armed government presence—drug enforcement agents, secret service, air marshals, border patrol, customs officers, coast guard, postal inspectors, and of course, local sheriffs and police. Not to mention a National Guard and armed forces of Army, Navy Air Force and Marines. Plus private detectives and some bodyguards. And maybe even a militia (a subject covered in the history of the Second Amendment portion of this class).

Would American society be the bastion of freedom, the linchpin of liberty on the entire face of the Earth, if the government was armed to the teeth and the public was completely disarmed? It is such a massive change from the way this country has always been, it is difficult to imagine the scope and effect of the change. The hopeful do dream of a world where hostility ends when government is fully in control at last. The skeptics aren't so sure.

How would “the proper authorities” treat the populace, knowing the people were defenseless, and that all coercive power was concentrated in their own hands? Were the Founders correct about the deterrent effect of an armed populace? Officer Friendly might not change one bit. Or maybe he would. Or maybe he would over time. Or maybe his

evil twin, Officer Bullybully, would give vent to some darker motivations. Police, it should be noted, have a higher incidence of domestic violence than almost any other demographic group.³ Some people exhibit very little trust of police in their communities, borne out of hard experience.

We can look at one such population that was indeed completely disarmed by force of government, with all power held in official hands, and it is not a pretty picture. It is the picture of slavery in early America.

Possession of a weapon by a slave was unthinkable and outlawed, with the death penalty for violations. It is easy to see that, had slaves been able to take up arms, there would be no way to keep them slaves. Placing the power of force in their hands would have set them free just as surely as denying it to them helped keep them locked in bondage.

It is possession of the means to enforce your freedom that foils oppression, while it simultaneously compromises peace, in a delicate balance with no ideal resolution.

Genocide and Democide

History has made clear that genocide, that horrible desecration of all things humane, is perpetrated by the very governments ostensibly in charge of peoples' security. In practically every case, genocide is preceded by government-enforced disarmaments of the public—the intended victims. (Check jpfo.org for horrific details; their video, *Innocents Betrayed*, graphically portrays the sordid history of government-sponsored genocides of the 20th Century and is a recommended adjunct to this course).

Tyrants realize, and little argument need be made, that a government bent on murdering a portion of its citizens can do so easiest if the citizens are first disarmed and rendered helpless. That's why they all take that step.

It turns out that the greatest killers of human beings are their own governments, a phenomenon known as *democide*. Democide, and genocide (the attempted extermination of an entire race or identifiable group of people), were responsible for 262 million deaths last century alone (Notre Dame Law Review, *Is Resisting Genocide a Human Right*, Vol. 81, No. 4, May 2006, Kopel, Gallant and Eisen, citing U.N. and other sources).

With such a shocking number as a base, it's hard to imagine how any increase in civilian deaths that might result from expanding private gun ownership (such as increased crime, acts of anger, accidental

discharges, recklessness, negligence, etc.), could be a problem of similar scale. In net, millions upon millions of lives would be saved, if genocidal regimes faced a noncompliant populace.

Some observers attribute the fact that the awesomely powerful and pervasive U.S. government has basically never turned on its own people, to the high percentage of citizens who keep and bear arms.⁴ The Founders repeatedly stated this as a primary purpose for establishing an armed citizenry—as a deterrent to tyranny. Based on the record, it seems to have worked. (This is a complex and intricate analysis that requires comparisons with other nations, none of which are in the world-leadership position of power that the United States is, and is beyond the scope of this program.)

Domestic examples where the powerless were oppressed, such as blacks living in the southern states, and labor riots in the early 1900s, are indeed examples where the people did not own arms to defend themselves. Many of the roots of civilian disarmament, what is often referred to as “gun control,” are well known and well documented acts of racism. (See, for example, *Gun Control and the Constitution*, edited by Robert J. Cottrol, Garland Publishing, NY.)

Although it will likely always remain a subject of debate, this is why it is said that, “Guns are why America is still free.” The natural tension between freedom and peace is an unfortunate fact of life, and not about to end.

Part 3: A Gun-Free World

It’s easy to picture a gun-free world. Just go back in time to before guns, and look at history. You find a more violent, less stable and less safe world than we enjoy today. In a gun-free world, instead of stick-up men, gang bangers, Al Capone, Josef Stalin and Mao tse-Dung, you have highwaymen, Attila the Hun, Genghis Khan and Julius Caesar. They wiped out entire civilizations, and raped, pillaged and plundered, with impunity, without guns. It was times like those when you really needed a gun. Or two.

Eliminating guns merely shifts the balance of power to the strong and the brutish. It does not eliminate the Four Horseman of Sociopathology—Angry, Hungry, Stupid and Wicked. And it does not provide peace or enhance personal or national freedom. Until those horsemen are somehow defeated (and no one has even a remote idea on how to do that) the good guys need their guns. For safety. For protection. For deterrence. For the children.

If guns suddenly disappeared by magic, the good guys would have to reinvent them, and quickly. It wouldn’t be hard—Communist China, Brazil, Italy, Russia and other high-quality gun-producing nations would simply flood the market with product (at higher prices, since price increases as supply and limitations increase). Well intentioned desires to disarm America typically overlook and would do nothing to stop weapon production abroad. (In fact, our own Army currently relies on the Italian Berretta for all its sidearms).

Import restrictions would have roughly the same effect on guns as they do on illegal drugs and immigrant workers, namely nothing. If you like the war on drugs, you’re going to love the war on guns.

Pragmatic plans to eliminate guns, or types of guns, focus on the innocent, by enacting laws to ban or severely restrict legal possession. These ignore the criminal element, who are armed and remain armed despite countless laws passed to stop them.

In an irrational dash to “stop the violence” and “make you safe,” well meaning but misguided efforts attack property owned by honest people, who haven’t done anything wrong, and leave the status quo for bad actors. Such efforts may seem clever, or feel good, but are reckless, dangerous, and expose decent people to enormous risk. Disarming an innocent person is an act of violence.

You can wish it wasn’t so, but peace and freedom depend on a balance of power and the threat and use of force, in this best of all possible worlds.

The people who would enslave you, rob you of your freedoms, and take what’s yours, including your life, are held at bay by brute, naked force, and nothing else yet devised will do the job.

America is armed to the teeth, and remains the freest nation on the planet, a magnet to people everywhere. Few people are running to escape from America, because it’s the best place to be. Guns save lives. Guns stop crime. Guns are good. And guns are why America is still free. (4,296)

“People sleep peaceably in their beds at night only because rough men stand ready to do violence on their behalf.” –George Orwell

AREAS FOR FURTHER STUDY:

Standing army v. militia
Defense of shores and borders

Despotism, Tyranny, Dictatorship, Totalitarianism
Advances in weaponry
Incarceration, loss of rights
Recent weapon, self defense and use of deadly force
legislation; castle doctrine
Current threats to peace and freedom
e.g., socialism, communism, capitalism, islamists,
internal discord and polarization, lack of civility,
loss of federalism, activist judiciary, abandonment
of constitutional principles, moral decay, mental
illness, effects of media violence, crime, more

Quotes About Peace

Each student should select one of the following quotes, write an essay on the principle it expresses, and be able to defend the essay verbally in class.

Peace is not the absence of conflict, it is the ability to handle conflict by peaceful means.
–Ronald Reagan

People sleep peaceably in their beds at night only because rough men stand ready to do violence on their behalf. –George Orwell

War is peace. Freedom is slavery. Ignorance is strength. –George Orwell

“True peace is not merely the absence of tension: it is the presence of [justice](#).”
–Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

A bad peace is even worse than war.
–[Aelianus Tacticus](#)

All we are saying is give peace a chance.
–[John Lennon](#)

Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God.
–[Yeshua \(Jesus Christ\)](#) Matthew 5:9

Cooperation + Tolerance = Peace –[Adi Da Samraj](#)

I think a pillow should be the peace symbol, not the dove. The pillow has more feathers than the dove, and it doesn't have a beak to peck you with.
–[Jack Handey](#)

I think that people want peace so much that one of these days government had better get out of their way and let them have it.
–[Dwight David Eisenhower](#)

If everyone demanded peace instead of another television set, then there'd be peace. –[John Lennon](#)

If you want to make peace, you don't talk to your friends. You talk to your enemies. –[Mother Teresa](#)

If you wish for peace, understand war.
–[Basil Liddell Hart](#)

Justice is not revenge - it's deciding for a solution that is oriented towards peace, peace being the harder but more human way of reacting to injury. That is the very basis of the idea of rights. –[Judith Butler](#), Interview *The Believer Magazine* - Issue 2

Pacifists are objectively pro-fascist. –[George Orwell](#)

Peace can only last where human rights are respected, and where individuals and nations are free. –[Dalai Lama](#)

Peace hath her victories no less renown'd than war.
–[John Milton](#)

Peace is a resistance to the terrible satisfactions of war. –[Judith Butler](#), *The Believer Magazine* - Interview - Issue 2

Peace is more than the absence of war.
–[Bonabes, Comte de Rougé](#)

Peace is not the absence of anything. Real peace is the presence of something beautiful. Both peace and the thirst for it have been in the heart of every human being in every century and every civilization. –[Maharaji](#); Address to faculty, students and guests at Harvard University's Sanders Theater (August 2004)

Peace is the time before birth, and the time after death, in between is chaos. –Jason Campbell

Sometimes there's truth in old cliches. There can be no real peace without justice. And without resistance there will be no justice. –[Arundhati Roy](#), Speech on Accepting the Sydney Peace Prize (7 November 2004) [Sydney IMC article - Peace?... Full speech](#)

The environment is very important in the aspects of peace because when we destroy our resources, they become scarce and we fight over that.
–[Wangari Maathai](#)

There is no way to peace; peace is the way.
–[Mohandas Gandhi](#)

These were my guys. Fighting the dull fight. Soldiers with nothing to kill except time. They know that war is hell; but peace, peace is fucking boring. –“Ray Elwood” in [Buffalo Soldiers](#)

Truth is [justice's] handmaid, freedom is its child, peace is its companion, safety walks in its steps, victory follows in its train... –[Sydney Smith](#)

When you find peace within yourself, you become the kind of person who can live at peace with others. –“Peace Pilgrim” Mildred Lisette Norman

Peace sells... But who's buying? –Megadeth

The word *peace* traces back to the Latin *pax*, meaning, to agree. The Romans believed peace was *absentia belli*, the absence of war.

The Merriam Webster definition includes five main elements:

- 1: a state of tranquillity or quiet: as **a:** freedom from civil disturbance **b:** a state of security or order within a community provided for by law or custom <a breach of the *peace*>
- 2: freedom from disquieting or oppressive thoughts or emotions
- 3: harmony in personal relations
- 4**a:** a state or period of mutual concord between governments **b:** a pact or agreement to end hostilities between those who have been at war or in a state of enmity
- 5: used interjectionally to ask for silence or calm or as a greeting or farewell

Quotes About Freedom

Each student should select one of the following quotes, write an essay on the principle it expresses, and be able to defend the essay verbally in class.

Freedom or Death! –Greek War cry during their war of independence.

“Give me Liberty or give me Death!” –Patrick Henry

“Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains.” –Jean-Jacques Rousseau

“My definition of a free society is a society where it is safe to be unpopular.” –Adlai E. Stevenson Jr.

“Freedom from hunger is the most basic freedom for which all people deserve.” –Clint Borgen

“Freedom is just Chaos, with better lighting” –Alan Dean Foster

“Everything that is really great and inspiring is created by the individual who can labor in freedom.” –Albert Einstein

“The basis of a democratic state is liberty.” –Aristotle

“They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety.” –Benjamin Franklin

“It is better to die with a sword in your hands, than a chain over your wings.” –Richard Rahl

“If you want to be free, there is but one way; it is to guarantee an equally full measure of liberty to all your neighbors. There is no other.” –Carl Schurz

“Freedom is participation in power” –Cicero

“We hold in our hands, the most precious gift of all: Freedom. The freedom to express our art. Our love. The freedom to be who we want to be. We are not going to give that freedom away and no one shall take it from us!”

–Diane Frolov and Andrew Schneider

“Only the educated are free.” –Epictetus

“In the truest sense, freedom cannot be bestowed; it must be achieved.” –Franklin D. Roosevelt

“Freedom means the freedom to say two plus two equals four. If that is granted all else follows.” –George Orwell

“Free societies are hopeful societies. And free societies will be allies against these hateful few who have no conscience, who kill at the whim of a hat.” –George W. Bush, Washington, D.C., Sep. 17, 2004

“Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains” –Jean-Jacques Rousseau

“Freedom is not the power to do what one wants. Freedom is the power to do what is right.” –Pope John Paul II

“Patterning your life around other's opinions is nothing more than slavery.” –Lawana Blackwell

“While the State exists, there can be no freedom. When there is freedom there will be no State.” –Vladimir Lenin

“Liberty is not a means to a higher political end. It is itself the highest political end.” –Lord Acton

“Nobody can give you freedom. Nobody can give you equality or justice or anything. If you're a man, you take it.” –Malcolm X

“You can't separate peace from freedom because no one can be at peace unless he has his freedom.” –Malcolm X

"It is by the goodness of God that in our country we have those three unspeakably precious things: freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, and the prudence never to practice either of them."
–Mark Twain

"Self-reliance is the only road to true freedom, and being one's own person is its ultimate reward."
–Patricia Sampson

"I would rather be exposed to the inconveniences attending too much liberty than to those attending too small a degree of it." –Thomas Jefferson

"Man is free at the moment he wishes to be"
–Voltaire

"The love of liberty is the love of others; the love of power is the love of ourselves." –William Hazlitt

"Before you seek one's freedom, you must assume that any individual, in and of itself, has that quality called freedom, meaning that he can act according to his own free choice." –Yehuda Ashlag

"That which you call your soul or spirit is your consciousness, and that which you call 'free will' is your mind's freedom to think or not, the only will you have, your only freedom, the choice that controls all the choices you make and determines your life and your character." –Ayn Rand

"Intellectual freedom cannot exist without political freedom; political freedom cannot exist without economic freedom; a free mind and a free market are corollaries." –Ayn Rand

"A political man can have as his aim the realization of freedom, but he has no means to realize it other than through violence." –Jean-Paul Sartre

"'Eternal Vigilance is the Price of Liberty' used to mean we watched the government –not the other way around." –Bill Stewart

"Freedom is slavery." –George Orwell

"Freedom is free of the need to be free." –Funkadelic

"Freedom is very many choices." –William Rafti

"Freedom is something that dies unless it is used."
–Hunter S. Thompson

"Freedom means you are unobstructed in living your life as you choose. Anything less is a form of slavery." –Wayne Dyer

"Freedom? Oh, freedom, well, that's just some people talking, your prison is walking through this world all alone." –The Eagles in 'Desperado'

"Give me your blood, I will give you freedom!" –
Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose

"Hydarnes, you have not equally weighed each side in your advice to us. For you have tried the one which you advise, the other has remained untried by you. You know what it means to be a slave, but you have never yet tried freedom, to know whether it is sweet or not. For if you had tried it, you would have advised us to fight for it, not merely with spears, but also with axes." –Spartans Sperthia and Bulis to Persian satrap Hydarnes

"Easy isn't for the free. Easy is for the willfully confined. So how easy do you want it?"
–Matthew Good

"If a nation values anything more than freedom, it will lose its freedom and the irony of it is that if it is comfort or money it values more, it will lose that, too." –W. Somerset Maugham

"Freedom is over rated" –Chasse Gunter

"Don't wait for your grandchildren to ask why you watched fundamental American freedoms being stripped away and did nothing." –Alden Loveshade

"Terrified people do not want to be free, they want to be protected. If you can keep the people in a state of terror, you won't have to take away their freedom—they'll give it to you willingly."
–Alden Loveshade

"Necessity is the plea for every infringement of human freedom. It is the argument of tyrants. It is the creed of slaves." –William Pitt

"The illusion of freedom will continue as long as it's profitable to continue the illusion. At the point where the illusion becomes too expensive to maintain, they will just take down the scenery, they will pull back the curtains, they will move the tables and chairs out of the way, and you will see the brick wall at the back of the theatre." –Frank Zappa

"This nation will remain the land of the free only so long as it is the home of the brave." –Elmer Davis

"Those who desire to give up freedom in order to gain security, will not have, nor do they deserve, either one." –Benjamin Franklin

"Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet deprecate agitation, are men who want rain without

thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the roar of its many waters.” –[Frederick Douglass](#)

“Value your freedom or you will lose it, teaches history. “Don’t bother us with politics,” respond those who don’t want to learn.” –[Richard Stallman](#)

“What is freedom of expression? Without the freedom to offend, it ceases to exist”
–[Salman Rushdie](#)

“Without freedom, life is not worth living.”
–Manuel Belgrano

“With the first link, a chain is forged. The first speech censored, the first thought forbidden, the first freedom denied, chains us all irrevocably.”
–Aaron Satie

“We who lived in concentration camps can remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of human freedoms—to choose one’s attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one’s own way.”
–[Victor Frankl](#)

“You can have peace. Or you can have freedom. Don’t ever count on having both at once.”
–[Lazarus Long](#)

“Liberty means responsibility. That is why most men dread it.” –[George Bernard Shaw](#)

“If you're not ready to die for it, take the word "freedom" out of your vocabulary.” –Malcolm X

“Rightful liberty is unobstructed action according to our will within limits drawn around us by the equal rights of others.” –[Thomas Jefferson](#)

See also

[Freedom](#)

[Liberty](#)

[Libertarianism](#)

[Freedom of Speech](#)

[Freedom of thought](#)

[Political usages of the term freedom](#)

QUOTES ABOUT FREEDOM FROM THE AMERICAN FREEDOM ESSAY CONTEST

Liberty lies in the hearts of men and women. When it dies there, no constitution, no law, no court can save it. –[Judge Learned Hand](#)

If a nation values anything more than freedom, it will lose its freedom; and the irony of it is that if it is comfort or money that it values more, it will lose that, too. –[Somerset Maugham](#)

The natural progress of things is for liberty to yield and government to gain ground. –[Thomas Jefferson](#)

The history of liberty is the history of the limitations placed on the government. –[Woodrow Wilson](#)

My fellow citizens of the world: ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man. –[John F. Kennedy](#)

The eyes of the world are upon you. The hopes and prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with you. –[Dwight D. Eisenhower \(June 6, 1944\)](#)

When liberty is taken away by force, it can be restored by force. When it is relinquished voluntarily by default, it can never be recovered.
–[Dorothy Thompson](#)

When the government fears the people, that is liberty. When the people fear the government, that is tyranny. –[Thomas Jefferson](#)

What is ominous is the ease with which some people go from saying that they don't like something to saying that the government should forbid it. When you go down that road, don't expect freedom to survive very long. –[Thomas Sowell](#)

There are more instances of the abridgment of the freedom of the people by the gradual and silent encroachment of those in power, than by violent and sudden usurpation. –[James Madison](#)

Tyranny is always better organized than freedom.
–[Thomas Paine](#)

Necessity is the plea for every infringement of human freedom. It is the argument of tyrants; it is the creed of slaves. –[William Pitt \(1783\)](#)

I intend no modification of my oft expressed personal wish that all men everywhere could be free.
–[Abraham Lincoln](#)

Today, we need a nation of Minutemen: citizens who are not only prepared to take arms, but citizens

who regard the preservation of freedom as the basic purpose of their daily life and who are willing to consciously work and sacrifice for that freedom.

–**John F. Kennedy**

Few men desire liberty; most men wish only for a just master. –**Sallust (1st Cent. B.C.)**

God grants liberty only to those who love it, and are always ready to guard and defend it

–**Daniel Webster (1834)**

The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants

–**Thomas Jefferson**

Extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice. Moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue.

–**Barry Goldwater (1964)**

I would rather be exposed to the inconveniences attending too much liberty than those attending too small a degree of it. –**Thomas Jefferson (1791)**

Liberty is not a means to a political end. It is itself the highest political end. –**Lord Acton**

Political freedom means the absence of coercion of a man by his fellow men. –**Milton Friedman**

If ye love wealth better than liberty may your chains set lightly upon you, and may posterity forget that ye were our countrymen. –**Samuel Adams**

Life, liberty, and property do not exist because men have made laws. On the contrary, it was the fact that life, liberty, and property existed beforehand that caused men to make laws in the first place.

–**Frederic Bastiat**

The only thing that saves us from bureaucracy is inefficiency. An efficient bureaucracy is the greatest threat to liberty. –**Eugene McCarthy**

The only things government can do are regulate and redistribute, prohibit and penalize, confiscate and command. Are these the things that liberty is made of? Somebody else's money and an endless list of Thou Shalt Nots? –**James Bovard**

The strongest reason for the people to retain the right to keep and bear arms is, as a last resort, to protect themselves against tyranny in government.

–**Thomas Jefferson**

The saddest epitaph which can be carved in memory of a vanished liberty is that it was lost because its possessors failed to stretch forth a saving hand while yet there was time.

–**Justice George Sutherland (1938)**

They that can give up liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety.

–**Benjamin Franklin**

Those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom must, like men, undergo the fatigues of supporting it.

–**Thomas Paine**

Guard with jealous attention the public liberty. Suspect everyone who approaches that jewel. Unfortunately, nothing will preserve it but downright force. Whenever you give up that force, you are ruined. –**Patrick Henry**

The greatest glory of a free-born people, is to transmit that Freedom to their Children.

–**William Havard**

Liberty is the only thing you cannot have unless you are willing to give it to others. –**William Allen White**

It is a cruel hoax to seek to persuade the American people that the Bill of Rights should be watered down in response to rising crime rates.

–**Nicholas Katzenbach (1968)**

Perhaps the fact that we have seen millions voting themselves into complete dependence on a tyrant has made our generation understand that to choose one's government is not necessarily to secure freedom. –**F.A. Hayek**

The enemies of freedom do not argue. They shout and they shoot. –**Dean Inge (1954)**

So free we seem, so fettered fast we are.

–**Robert Browning**

As government regulations grow slowly, we become used to the harness. Habit is a powerful force, and we no longer feel as intensely as we once would have [the] constriction of our liberties that would have been utterly intolerable a mere half century ago. –**Judge Robert Bork**

Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!

–**Patrick Henry**

No man is entitled to the blessings of freedom unless he be vigilant in its preservation.

–**Douglas MacArthur**

It is criminal to teach a man not to defend himself when he is the constant victim of brutal attacks.

–**Malcolm X (1964)**

Nothing will ruin the country if the people themselves will undertake its safety. And nothing can save it if they leave their safety in any hands but their own. **–Daniel Webster**

The greatest dangers to liberty lurk in insidious encroachment by men of zeal, well-meaning but without understanding.

–Justice Louis Brandeis (1928)

To disarm the people is the best and most effectual way to enslave them. **–George Mason**

Democracy extends the sphere of individual freedom, socialism restricts it. Democracy attaches all possible value to each man; socialism makes each man a mere agent, a mere number. Democracy and socialism have nothing in common but one word: equality. But notice the difference: while democracy seeks equality in liberty, socialism seeks equality in restraint and servitude.

–Alexis de Tocqueville

God grants liberty only to those who love it, and are always ready to guard and defend it.

–Daniel Webster

When the rights of any individual or group are chipped away, the freedom of all erodes.

–Justice Earl Warren (1955)

In the beginning of a change, the patriot is a scarce man, brave, hated and scorned. When his cause succeeds however, the timid join him, for then it costs nothing to be a patriot. **–Mark Twain**

Liberty has never come from the government. Liberty has always come from the subjects of it. The history of liberty is a history of resistance.

–Woodrow Wilson

The average man's love of liberty is nine-tenths imaginary. It takes a special sort of man to understand and enjoy liberty – and he is usually an outlaw in demo-cratic societies. **–H.L. Mencken**

Do not criticize your government when out of the country. Never cease to do so when at home.

–Winston Churchill

A government big enough to give you everything you want is a government big enough to take from you everything you have. **–Gerald R. Ford**

We are fast approaching the stage in the ultimate inversion: the stage where the government is free to do anything it pleases, while the citizens may act only by permission; which is the stage of the darkest period of human history; the stage of rule by brute force. **–Ayn Rand**

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND ON PEACE

Other definitions of **peace** include:

The state prevailing during the absence of war; harmonious relations; freedom from disputes; the absence of mental stress or anxiety; the general security of public places; a treaty to cease hostilities. wordnet.princeton.edu/perl/webwn

Continuing from Wikipedia:

Peace is commonly understood to mean the *absence of hostilities*. Other definitions include freedom from disputes, silence, harmonious relations, or inner contentment and **serenity**, as the meaning of the word changes with context.

Peace (used as an interjection) can also be a greeting or farewell, or a request for silence.

Peace may refer specifically to an agreement concluded to end a **war**, or to a lack of external **warfare**. It can also refer more generally to quietude, such as that common at night or in remote areas, allowing for **sleep** or **meditation**. Peace can be an **emotion** or internal state. And finally, peace can be any combination of these definitions.

In its most apocalyptic meaning, peace denotes a state of complete harmony, ending conflict not only between man and man but between man and the natural world, and among the creatures of the natural world.

The symbol of the **Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament**, which has grown to become a widely-recognized **peace symbol**.

Another widely used symbol for peace is a white dove, featuring an **olive branch** in the dove's beak.

Peace can be voluntary, where potential agitators choose to abstain from disturbance, or it can be enforced, by suppressing those who might otherwise cause such disturbance. Since 1945 the world has only been 26 days [1] [1] without war.

Although prehistory and history are rife with conflict, some peoples, regions and nations have enjoyed periods of peace that have lasted generations. The following are some examples:

Sweden (1814–present). Sweden is the present-day **nation state** with the longest history of continuous peace. Since its **1814** invasion of **Norway**, the Swedish kingdom has not engaged in war.

[Switzerland](#) (1848–present). A hard stance on neutrality has given [Switzerland](#) fame as a country for its long-lasting peace.

[Costa Rica](#) (1949–present). Following a 44-day civil war in 1944, in 1949, Costa Rica abolished its army. Since then, its history has been peaceful, especially relative to those of neighboring Central American states. This has earned the country the nickname, “Switzerland of the Americas.”

[Pennsylvania](#) (1682–1754). The colony of Pennsylvania enjoyed 72 years of peace, maintaining no army or militia and fighting no wars. Under the proprietorship of [William Penn](#) (1644–1718), a member of the [Religious Society of Friends](#), the colony earned a reputation for religious and personal freedom, as well as for respectful dealings with [Native Americans](#). Although somewhat a utopian experiment, the colony was not a [utopia](#), marred with [slavery](#), [indentureship](#) and [class conflict](#). In addition, William Penn’s heirs dealt less fairly with the [Native Americans](#), especially in the [Walking Purchase](#) of 1737. Nevertheless, the colonial experience of [Pennsylvania](#) bears study as an example of a peaceful society.

[Amish](#) (1693–present). A sect of [Anabaptists](#) or [Mennonites](#) of predominantly Swiss/German descent, the Amish practice a peaceful lifestyle that includes religious devotion, resistance to the pernicious effects of technology, and [nonresistance](#). They rarely defend themselves physically or even in court; in wartime, they take [conscientious objector](#) status. Today over 150,000 Amish live in close-knit communities in 47 states in the [United States](#), as well as [Canada](#) and [Belize](#).

Constraining the concept of peace strictly to the absence of international war masks internal [genocide](#), [terrorism](#), and other [violence](#). Few would describe the Congolese genocide of the 1890s as an example of peace, even though it technically occurred within the personal domain of [King Léopold of the Belgians](#). Some, therefore, define “peace” as an absence of violence: not merely the absence of war, but also of [evil](#).

Many believe that peace is more than the absence of certain societal maladies. From this perspective, peace requires not only the absence of violence but also the presence of justice, as articulated by [Mahatma Gandhi](#). In this conception, a society in which one group is oppressed by another lacks peace even in the absence of violence, because the oppression itself constitutes evil.

In the sense of absence of hostilities, peace and justice may be viewed as antitheses in practical terms, as **the only way to prevent injustice is to forcibly prevent it, and therefore justice requires hostilities, which preclude peace**. The description of the reconciliation of Justice and Peace in the Psalms—“Justice and Peace shall kiss”—is therefore describing the apocalyptic inauguration of a Golden Age.

Apocalyptic

Peace, in its most apocalyptic meaning, denotes a state of complete harmony, ending conflict not only between man and man but between man and the natural world, and among the creatures of the natural world. This may be represented by the lion lying down with the lamb, an image loosely derived from the apocalyptic vision in Isaiah 11:6: “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.”

Plural peaces

Some “peace thinkers” choose to abandon the idea of one definition of peace; rather, they promote the idea of many peaces. They think that no singular, correct definition of peace can exist; peace, therefore, should be seen as a plurality.

For example, in the [Great Lakes region of Africa](#), the word for peace is *kindoki*, which refers to a harmonious balance between human beings, the rest of the natural world, and the cosmos. This is a much more broad vision of peace than a mere “absence of war” or even a “presence of justice” standard.

Many of these same thinkers also critique the idea of peace as a hopeful or eventual end. They recognize that peace does not necessarily have to be something the humans might achieve “some day.” They contend that peace exists, we can create and expand it in small ways in our everyday lives, and peace changes constantly. This view makes peace permeable and imperfect rather than static and utopian.

Inner peace

One meaning of peace refers to [inner peace](#); a state of mind, body and soul, which is said to take place within ourselves. People that experience inner peace say that the feeling is not dependent on time, people, place, or any external object or situation, asserting that an individual may experience inner peace even in the midst of war. [Elizabeth Harley](#) may have put this well when she talked about the peacechain being for both inner peace and world peace.

Some people believe peace is a way to slip through self consciousness, as with hippies in the 1960’s. An

affirmative definition for the concept of peace, one that expresses the condition as a state unto itself, rather than as the lack of its antithesis, is, "Peace is the state or condition of restfulness, harmony, balance, equilibrium, longevity, justice, resolution, timelessness, contentment, freedom, and fulfillment, either individually or simultaneously present, in such a way that it overcomes, demolishes, banishes, and/or replaces everything that opposes it." (by Sevi Regis)

Anti-violence and Pacifism

There is a wide spectrum of views about whether, or if so when, [violence](#) and [war](#) are ever necessary. Followers of [Jainism](#), for example, go to great lengths to avoid harming all living creatures including insects, and [pacifists](#), such as [Christian anarchists](#), see any sort of violence as self-perpetuating. Other groups take a wide variety of stances, with many maintaining a [Just War theory](#).

Historical examples and counter examples

Allied propaganda billed the [Great War](#) in Europe as the "war to end all wars." Although the Allies won the war, the resulting "peace" [Treaty of Versailles](#) only set the stage for the even bloodier [World War II](#). Before the Allied victory, the [Bolsheviks](#) promised the Russian people "peace, land, and bread." Although [Vladimir Lenin](#) ended the disastrous war against the [Central Powers](#), the ensuing civil war resulted in a loss of over a million people. These failures illustrate the problems of using war in an effort to attain peace.

Proponents of the [democratic peace theory](#) claim that strong empirical evidence exists that [democracies](#) rarely make war against each other. An increasing number of nations have become democratic since the [industrial revolution](#), and thus, they claim [world peace](#) may thus become possible if this trend continues. However, it can also be argued that this could equally be explained by a number of other factors related to the wealth, power, and stability of nations that tend to become democracies, ranging from becoming reliant on strong global [trade connections](#) to [Mutually Assured Destruction](#). Another possible counter-argument would be to point out that there has never been a war between two fascist states, and although there have been some limited conflicts and border clashes, there has never been a major war between two "communist" states.

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND ON FREEDOM

Freedom

The Merriam Webster definition includes two main elements:

1: the quality or state of being free: as **a:** the absence of necessity, coercion, or constraint in choice or action **b:** liberation from slavery or restraint or from the power of another: **INDEPENDENCE** **c:** the quality or state of being exempt or released usually from something onerous <freedom from care> **d:** **EASE, FACILITY** <spoke the language with freedom> **e:** the quality of being frank, open, or outspoken <answered with freedom> **f:** improper familiarity **g:** boldness of conception or execution **h:** unrestricted use <gave him the freedom of their home>

2a: a political right **b:** **FRANCHISE, PRIVILEGE** **synonyms** **FREEDOM, LIBERTY, LICENSE** mean the power or condition of acting without compulsion. **FREEDOM** has a broad range of application from total absence of restraint to merely a sense of not being unduly hampered or frustrated <freedom of the press>. **LIBERTY** suggests release from former restraint or compulsion <the released prisoner had difficulty adjusting to his new liberty>. **LICENSE** implies freedom specially granted or conceded and may connote an abuse of freedom <freedom without responsibility may degenerate into license>.

Liberty

The Merriam Webster definition includes four main elements:

Etymology: Middle English, from Anglo-French *liberté*, from Latin *libertat-*, *libertas*, from *liber* free—more at **LIBERAL**

1: the quality or state of being free: **a:** the power to do as one pleases **b:** freedom from physical restraint **c:** freedom from arbitrary or despotic control **d:** the positive enjoyment of various social, political, or economic rights and privileges **e:** the power of choice

2a: a right or immunity enjoyed by prescription or by grant: **PRIVILEGE** **b:** permission especially to go freely within specified limits

3: an action going beyond normal limits: as **a:** a breach of etiquette or propriety: **FAMILIARITY** **b:** **RISK, CHANCE** <took foolish liberties with his health> **c:** a violation of rules or a deviation from standard practice **d:** a distortion of fact

4: a short authorized absence from naval duty usually for less than 48 hours

Definitions of **freedom** on the Web:

The condition of being free; the power to act or speak or think without externally imposed restraints; exemption: immunity from an obligation or duty
wordnet.princeton.edu/perl/webwn

Freedom refers, in a very general sense, to the state of being free (i.e.: unrestricted, unconfined or unfettered). en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom

Freedom is the right, or the capacity, of self-determination, as an expression of the individual will. [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_\(political\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_(political))

Continuing from Wikipedia:

Political freedom is the [right](#), or the capacity, of self-determination as an expression of the individual will.

The concept of political freedom is closely allied with the concepts of [civil liberties](#) and [human rights](#). Most [democratic](#) societies are characterized by various freedoms which are afforded the legal protection of the [state](#). Some of these freedoms include (in alphabetical order):

[Freedom of assembly](#)

[Freedom of association](#)

[Freedom from government sanctioned discrimination](#)

[Freedom of education](#)

[Freedom of movement](#) (or travel)

[Freedom of the press](#)

[Freedom of religion](#) (or belief)

[Freedom of speech](#)

[Freedom of thought](#)

The [constitutions](#) of many nations specifically codify some of these freedoms in a [bill of rights](#).

Various groups along the [political spectrum](#) naturally differ on what they believe constitutes “true” political freedom. [Friedrich Hayek](#) famously noted that “liberty” and “freedom” have probably been the most abused words in recent history.

In [libertarianism](#), freedom is defined in terms of lack of government interference in the individual pursuit of happiness, as long as others’ freedom is not thereby harmed; for example, [capitalists](#) place a high value on freedom from government interference in the economy. Libertarians call for freedom from governmental coercion on both social and economic levels.

On the other hand, those on the [political left](#) place more emphasis on freedom as the ability of the individual to realize one’s own potential and pursue happiness. Freedom in this sense may include freedom from want, poverty, deprivation, or oppression.

Many [anarchists](#) with the exception of [individualist anarchists](#), [anarcho-capitalists](#), and particularly anarchists that don’t qualify their type of anarchism see negative and positive liberty as complementary concepts of freedom. Anarchists that recognize the concepts of negative and positive liberty tend to be left-leaning anarchists such as [communist anarchists](#).

Some treat freedom as if it were almost synonymous with [democracy](#), while others see conflicts or even opposition between the two concepts.

[Environmentalists](#) often argue that political freedoms should include some social constraint on use of [ecosystems](#). They maintain there is no such thing, for instance, as “freedom to pollute” or “freedom to deforest” given the [downstream consequences](#). The popularity of [SUVs](#), [golf](#), and [urban sprawl](#) has been used as evidence that some ideas of freedom and [ecological conservation](#) can clash. This leads at times to serious confrontations and clashes of [values](#) reflected in advertising campaigns, e.g. that of [PETA](#) regarding [fur](#).

There have been numerous [philosophical](#) debates over the nature of freedom, the claimed differences between various types of freedom, and the extent to which freedom is desirable. [Determinists](#) argue that all human actions are pre-determined and thus freedom is an illusion. [Isaiah Berlin](#) saw a distinction between [negative liberty](#) (freedom from coercion and the authority of others) and [positive liberty](#) (the ability to act to fulfill your potential and achieve your goals).

In [jurisprudence](#), freedom is the [right](#) to autonomously determine one’s own actions; generally it is granted in those fields in which the subject has no [obligations](#) to fulfill or [laws](#) to obey, according to the interpretation that the hypothetical natural unlimited freedom is limited by the law for some matters.

In modern times the expansion of “freedom” around the world is considered by some to be synonymous with increased participation in [democratic political systems](#).

During the 20th century overall, there was a dramatic growth in democracy, especially among the [more developed countries](#), and decline in autocracy and colonialism. However, there was also an increase in various types of [authoritarian](#) regimes, and currently 33 to 40% percent of people in [less developed countries](#) live in countries subject to some kind of authoritarian rule which lacks political freedoms.

¹ Moral arguments exist to suggest that although there is no *legal* duty to defend yourself, you have a *moral* duty to protect yourself, your loved ones, and even other innocents, based on the sanctity of life, and a duty to remain available to your family. Personal survival at the expense of an aggressor. The moral argument also exists to practice a utopian form of pacifism, forgo defense of yourself or anyone else, offer no resistance, and perish in the face of a lethal attack. Pray for your enemy as he slays you. Legally or forcibly requiring either approach would be generally seen as amoral. The decision is up to the individual.

² **Hoplophobia**, n. Irrational, morbid fear of guns (coined by Col. Jeff Cooper, from the Greek *hoplites*, weapon. May cause sweating, faintness, discomfort, rapid pulse, hypertension, nausea, sleeplessness, more, at mere thought of guns. A significant portion of the opposition to the right to keep and bear arms is related to this poorly understood medical condition, yet is often erroneously attributed to matters of law, legislation, precedent, custom, history, and other rational matters. Hoplophobes are common and often self-involved in attempting to set gun policies. Because arms are fundamental to the preservation of peace and freedom, hoplophobic behavior is potentially quite dangerous, threatening the innocent with defenselessness. When confronted, hoplophobes typically go into denial, a common characteristic of the affliction. Often helped by training, or by coaching at a range, a process known to psychiatry as *desensitization*, useful in treating many types of phobias. People suffering from hoplophobia deserve sympathy, and should seek treatment as much as, for example, hyperactive children need medication.

³ Get cites.

⁴ The actual percentage is disputed, and because gun ownership has existed since the nation's founding and is essentially a private matter, the percentage is not known with certainty. Estimates place it as low as 25% and as high as 50% or more. One widely quoted statistic suggests that 72 million American homes have at least one gun, which would be 65% of the nation's estimated 110 million households. Some states are believed to have higher rates of ownership than others (in Montana, it is jokingly said that everyone has a gun except for a few crackpots). New retail gun sales, easily tallied due to the federal background check required under the Brady law, run between 8–10 million per year, but many of these are known to be to people who already own firearms. Statistics compiled by SAAMI, The Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers' Institute (saami.org), indicate that Americans purchase between 5–9 billion rounds of ammunition each year. When compared to crime statistics, this indicates that, though largely unreported, 99.98% of all gun activity in the country is for legal purposes (0.0002, or two ten-thousandths, of gun activity is illegal and subject to punishment).