

Think First

JEA  
press rights  
commission

Free expression  
through  
responsible  
journalism

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## Obscenity in student publication

### Overview and Rationale

Student journalists need to understand the vague legal definition of obscenity and their rights and responsibilities surrounding them.

### Goals for Understanding

- ✦ Essential Questions
  - What can a student publication print when it comes to profanity and vulgarity?
- ✦ Critical Engagement Questions
  - What is obscenity?
  - What is indecency?
    - What is vulgarity?

### Overviews and Timeline

#### Activity 1 (One half of a 90-minute class (45 minutes))

- ✦ The teacher will take the students through the Keynote presentation “Obscenity.”
- ✦ The students will read Chapter 14 from *The Law of the Student Press*.
- ✦ Take notes.

#### Activity 2 (One half of a 90-minute class (45 minutes))

- ✦ The students will access the links below:

- ✦ *Oyez, Miller v. California*

[http://www.oyez.org/cases/1970-1979/1971/1971\\_70\\_73/](http://www.oyez.org/cases/1970-1979/1971/1971_70_73/)

- ✦ Lesson plan on obscenity

[http://www.highschooljournalism.org/Teachers/Lesson\\_Plans/Detail.cfm?lessonplanid=67](http://www.highschooljournalism.org/Teachers/Lesson_Plans/Detail.cfm?lessonplanid=67)

- ✦ Getting down and dirty

[http://www.splc.org/report\\_detail.asp?id=994&edition=26](http://www.splc.org/report_detail.asp?id=994&edition=26)

- ✦ Hands off the high school paper

<http://www.journalism.org/node/4143>

- ✦ Where do student press rights start and stop?

<http://www.freedomforum.org/packages/first/Curricula/EducationforFreedom/L08main.htm>

# Think First

Materials were produced for this Web site by the Journalism Education Association (<http://jeapressrights.org>) and the Center for Scholastic Journalism (<http://jmc.kent.edu/csaj>).

## Free expression through responsible journalism

### • Media law 10

<http://www.studentpress.org/nsipa/trends/~law0801hs.html>

### • Take notes.

**Activity 3/Assesment (One half of a 90-minute class (45 minutes))**

- In groups of 5, the students will create hypothetical situations (one per group) that could actually appear in the paper that would cause the paper to come under scrutiny.
- Using the research done during Activity 2, the students will justify their publication of the language/image and include a well-written justification to administration and the community for their decision.



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