# Paradox of Tolerance: Lesson Plan

**Topic**

The paradox of tolerance is summarized by the seemingly counterintuitive idea that “in order to maintain a tolerant society, the society must be intolerant of intolerance.” Essentially, if a so-called tolerant society permits the existence of intolerant philosophies, it is no longer tolerant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible subjects/classes</th>
<th>Time needed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government, Politics, Civics, Philosophy</td>
<td>30-45 minutes</td>
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**Video link:**

https://academy4sc.org/video/paradox-of-tolerance-to-tolerate-or-not-to-tolerate/

**Objective:** *What will students know/be able to do at the end of class?*

Students will be able to...
- Explain the paradox of tolerance.
- Identify the dilemmas the paradox of tolerance poses for society.

**Key Concepts & Vocabulary**

Freedom of speech, hate speech, The First Amendment

**Materials Needed**

Worksheet, Copies of the First Amendment text

**Before you watch**

**Turn & Talk:** The First Amendment guarantees the right to freedom of speech. Are there any situations in which a person should not be afforded this right? What are they? Why should a person not be afforded freedom of speech in that instance?

**While you watch**
Complete the Worksheet

After you watch/discussion questions

1. Should we tolerate intolerance on the basis of freedom of speech?
2. Are there certain contexts in which restricting freedom of speech is beneficial? Give specific examples.
3. Should the authority to limit intolerance be given to the government or the people? Why?

Activity Ideas

- Read the [First Amendment to the US Constitution](https://www.USHistory.org/). Write a clause that addresses intolerant speech and how it affects (or does not affect) Constitutional rights under the First Amendment. Defend your added clause in a paragraph or two.
- Split the class into two groups for a debate. One side argues that we must tolerate intolerance because of freedom of speech. The other side argues that the government should impose restrictions on intolerant speech.

Sources/places to learn more