

# Sedition act of 1798

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



Article on the Sedition Act of 1798 John Zenger's article in the New York Weekly Journal specifically presents the arguments about libel and therefore indirectly opposes the Sedition Act of 1798. The author, in disagreement with the Act, states that "The exposing therefore of Publick Wickedness, as it is a Duty which every Man owes to the Truth and his Country, can never be a Libel in the Nature of Things?" (Zenger par 4). The author argues that every man ought not to be considered libelous if they expose public wickedness or the wrongs done by senior government authorities considering that telling the truth is part of their honorable duty to the country. In the article, the author takes a strong position in condemning what the authorities consider to be libel. In fact, he considers libels against the people (probably government leaders and federalists who were in favor of the Sedition Act) as the true libels.

Zenger's articulates his opinion without fear even though such expressions as he used would put him in danger of being apprehended for breaking the law. At the time the newspaper was written, freedom of expression in the United States of America was under threat even as the federalists felt the need to prevent the people from expressing anti-government sentiments publicly as presented by Early America (par 2). At this time, journalists seemed to focus on the real issues facing society (in this case freedom of speech and information) as opposed to today's focus on politics. Today, journalists tend to be afraid of expressing strong sentiments that go against the government or law.

#### Works Cited

Early America. Peter Zenger and Freedom of the Press. Nd. Web. <http://www.>

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[earlyamerica.com/earlyamerica/bookmarks/zenger/](http://earlyamerica.com/earlyamerica/bookmarks/zenger/)

Zenger John. The New York Weekly Journal. February 25, 1733. XVII. Web.  
<http://www.earlyamerica.com/earlyamerica/bookmarks/zenger/zenger1.html>

Subject: Journalism, mass media and communication, Assignment

Topic: Sedition Act of 1798

Instructions:

-your exploration into original newspaper coverage during the early years of the United States. The subject this time is the Sedition Act of 1798. I want you to find, read, and discuss one original newspaper account relating to this law and its enforcement. I then want you to compare the journalistic style illustrated in this article to current-day notions of journalism and to post your findings, by replying to an earlier post about the same publication that you reviewed and adding your findings and reactions or by initiating a new conversation if your article comes from another publication.

-The concept of “ news” during and after the American Revolution has to be understood within the context of that time. Examining the newspaper coverage relating to the Sedition Act of 1798 will give us a sense of how news reflected the concerns of those editors and their society, and how the concept of news then differs from news today.

-Feel free to search for online publications published during this time period (1798 to 1804) in other collections

-Be sure to copy the link (url) and the name of the collection for the article. If you have trouble copying the link or are not sure that it

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will work, feel free to copy the document into a Word or a PDF file and include that, along with the bibliographic citation (e. g., publication name, location, date, headline (if any), writers name (if listed), and page number (if listed) when you post your comments.

-Once you've found an original article (be sure that it's not a transcript of the law itself - several newspapers just printed the text of the law), then write a brief summary (one or two sentences) and include whether the piece conveyed a partisan tone. In other words, could you tell whether the writer agreed with the Sedition Act and supported the Federalist cause and President John Adams or disagreed with it and supported the anti-Federalist (Republican) cause and Thomas Jefferson? Give at least one example from the article to support your conclusion.

Instructions files attached:

Level: Undergraduate

Style: MLA

Language Style: English (U. S.)

Grade: n/a

Pages: 1

Sources: 2