

"freedom" definition essay essay sample

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Ask anyone, and they will tell you that they want to be free. However, when asked to define what freedom means, people usually have a difficult time coming up with a concrete definition. The common answer of freedom means doing whatever I want, whenever I want generates many conflicting questions. What if ones free actions are harmful to others? Should he then still have the freedom to keep acting that way? Freedom is too abstract of an idea to be defined accurately and precisely. The notion that someone can be unequivocally free is absurd. Most of the time, one persons freedom is another persons restriction.

Many great minds have tried to define freedom. Astrophysicist Andrew Galambos once said that Freedom is the societal condition that exists when every individual has full control over his property. I take that to mean that since ones body is his own property, he is free to do with it whatever he wants. So if he decides to smoke or take drugs, it should be his full right to do so, unless, that is, he does it around others without their consent.

Likewise, driving recklessly, hence endangering his life, should be his natural born right as well. However, that brings in the questions of ownership of the roads themselves, and the consideration of other individuals on the road at the time of his driving. Considering the implications of ones actions case by case certainly puts great limitations on an individuals freedom based on the idea of property rights.

The government is a hindrance to freedom, sometimes more often than necessary. In Turkey, the question of freedom touches on religious, hence

deeply personal issues. In recent attempts to westernize the country, the government has been trying to liberate women by persuading them to take off their headscarves, calling them old-fashioned symbols of oppression against women. However, to the very religious Turkish girls, the scarf is a significant part of being Muslim, because it is clearly demanded by the Quran. The debate over the headscarf issue has intensified to such a degree, that girls refusing to uncover their heads are denied entrances to educational facilities. Clearly in this case, people have failed to come to a consensus about what freedom actually means.

Does it mean shedding religious head covers through government orders and feeling liberated, or having the choice to stick to traditional beliefs?

During the Saddam era in Iraq, people were free to choose the candidate of their liking during elections. However, anyone who chose the wrong candidate would endanger his life or the lives of the ones close to him.

Technically, on paper, the people were free to make a choice, but that was not the case.

Thinking realistically, no society is or will ever be absolutely free. It is only free to act within the certain boundaries set by governments or other higher positions of power. Relatively speaking, the degree of freedom experienced in the United States and other developed countries is far greater than that of others. Basic freedoms of self-expression such as the freedom of speech or freedom of religion are unattainable by citizens of many other countries. But before one proclaims the United States as the country of freedom, it is important to actually think about how free the U. S. people actually are.

Many people tend to confuse democracy with freedom. However, it should not be forgotten that democracy is based on the concept of majority rule.

So how free exactly are the individuals in this country who happen to disagree with the majority? Moreover, the recent Patriot Act enables the government to freely tap into telephone lines and e-mails without the citizens knowing consent, hence violating civil liberties. Lately, with the current messy situation with the war in Iraq, the government is often criticized. More often than not, though, those who criticize the government are labeled un-American or unpatriotic. How free, then, are the people in this country if they are not even able to voice their opinions?

Absolute freedom can never be achieved. Nevertheless, it is important to strive towards it. In order for that to happen, there needs to be a balance between individual freedom, social order, and ecological awareness.

Absolute freedom can not be achieved no matter what changes we make in our society.