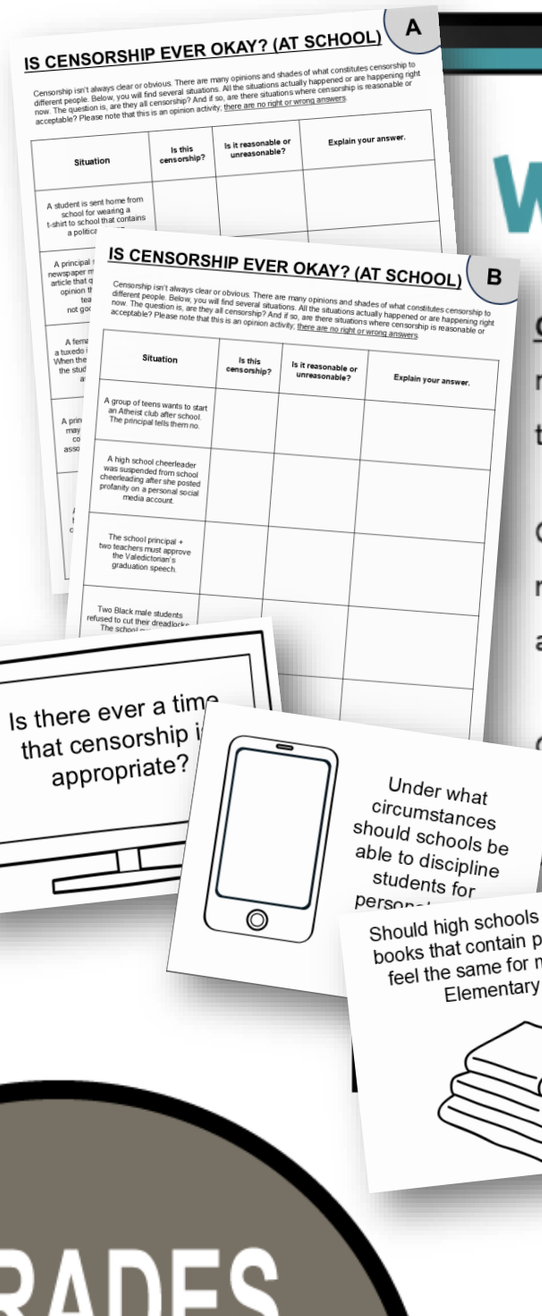
INCLUDES GOOGLE™ SLIDES

CENSORSHIP

STRAIGHT FROM THE NEWS



WHAT IS CENSORSHIP?

Censorship: the suppression or prohibition of any parts of books, films, news, etc. that are considered obscene, politically unacceptable, or a threat to security.

Censorship can also be applied to: art, music, stand-up comedy, theatre, clothing, and more.

Censorship also includes altering content to prevent others from accessing it (such as tearing out pages, changing or marking out drawing shorts on nude figures).

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GRADES 8+

Great for Banned Books Week!

Mrs. READER PANTS

DAY ONE: PRESENTATION

This 8-slide presentation includes the First Amendment, definition of “Censorship,” whose speech is protected, and how First Amendment court cases are decided.

DAY ONE: PRESENTATION

DISCUSSION NORMS

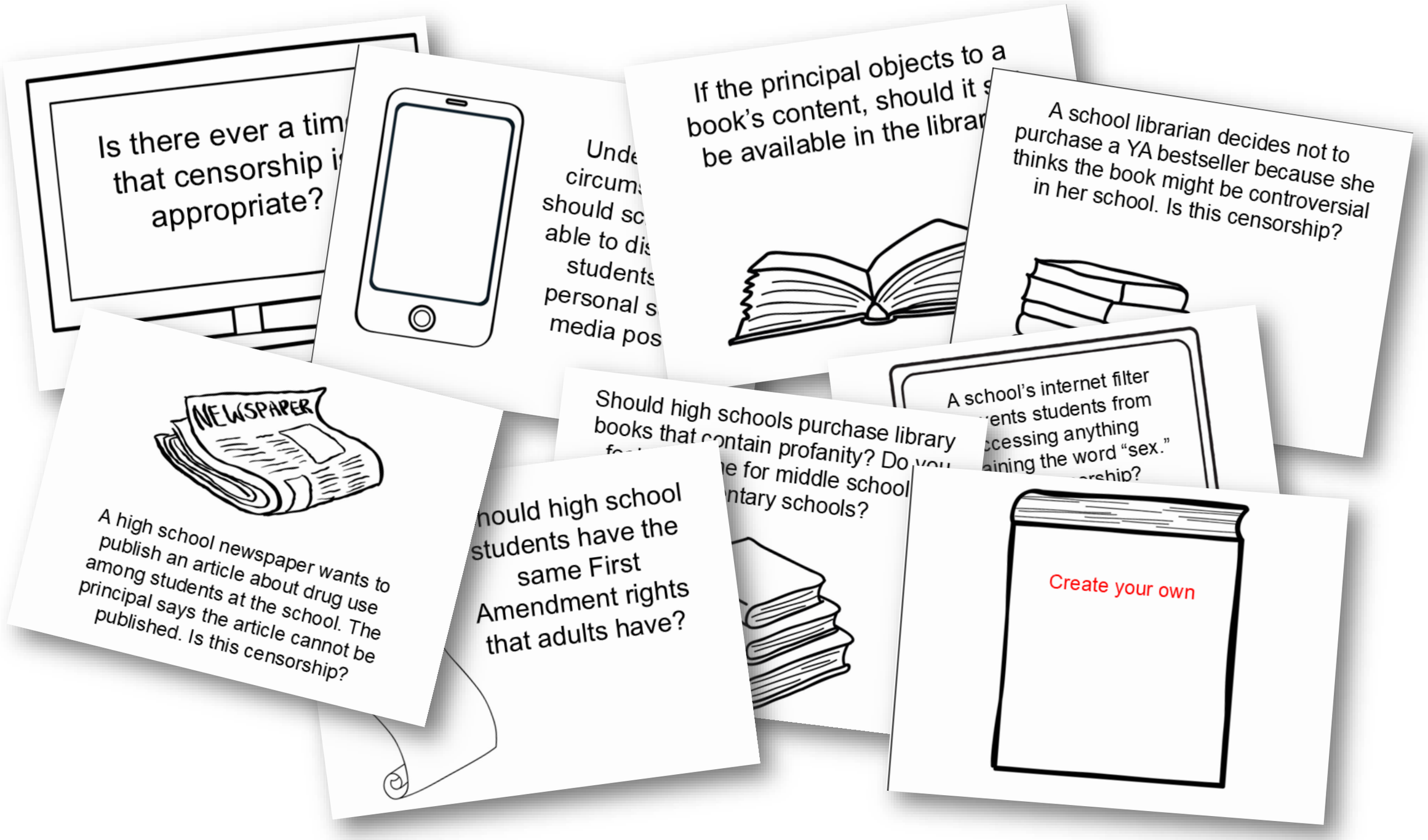
To ensure polite discussion:

1. Be respectful of different opinions. You are not all going to agree, and that is fine.
2. Let others speak. Do not talk over another person.
3. Listen more than you speak.
4. Keep an open mind. Try to see the stories from different perspectives.
5. There is no right or wrong opinion. You can always agree to disagree.
6. If you feel a particular discussion is getting too heated, it is okay to pause your discussion. You might switch to a different real-life news story, or you might take a break to stand up and stretch or walk around the room.

Censorship Discussion ©MrsReaderPants 2024

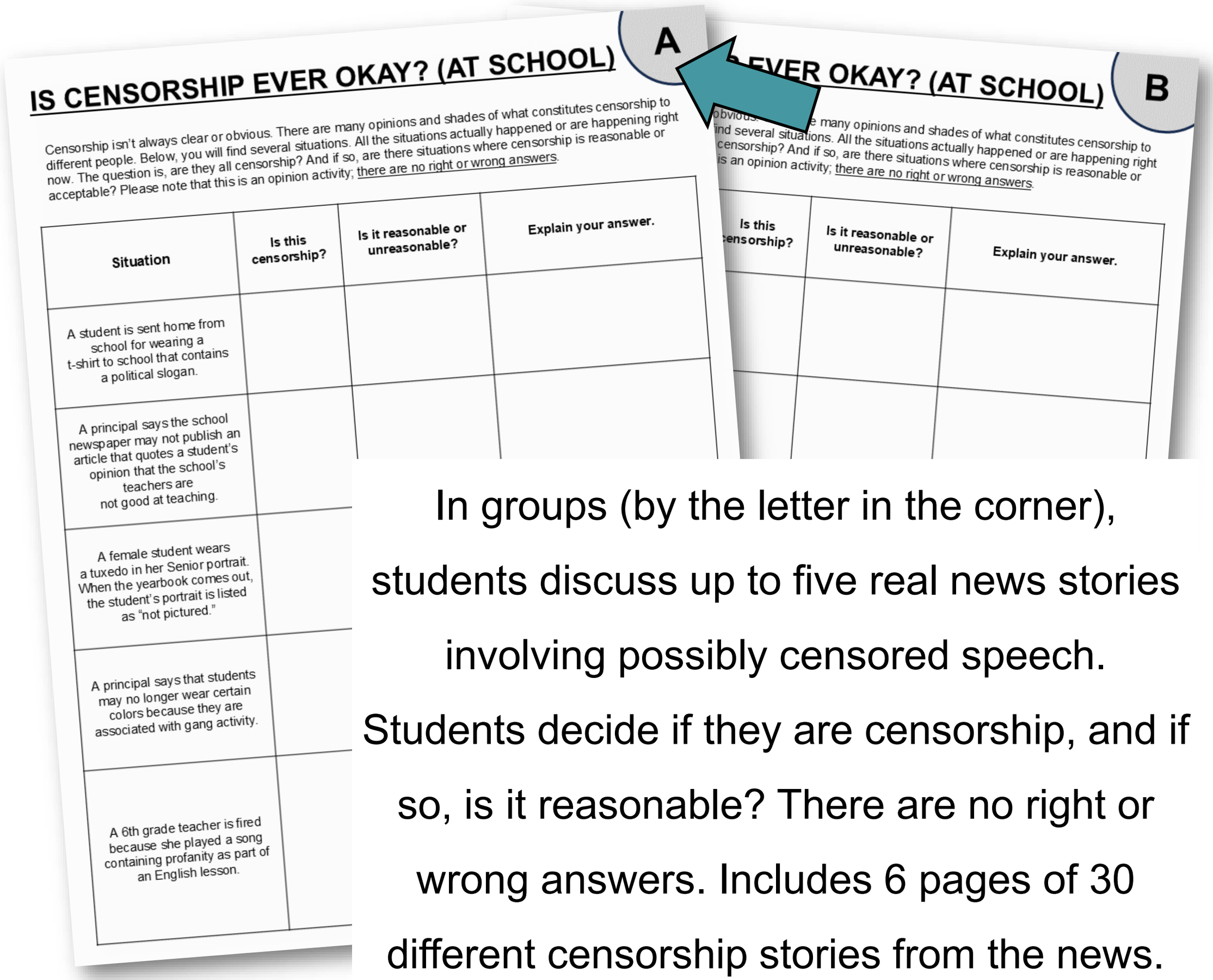
Presentation includes a “Discussion Norms” slide at the end. Leave this slide up during the discussion activities to remind students of the importance of respectful disagreement.

DAY TWO:
8 DISCUSSION CARDS



In groups, students discuss one of 8 prompts about censorship. Includes 4 extra templates to make additional prompts. All text is editable on all cards.

DAY 3: "IS CENSORSHIP EVER OKAY?"



In groups (by the letter in the corner), students discuss up to five real news stories involving possibly censored speech. Students decide if they are censorship, and if so, is it reasonable? There are no right or wrong answers. Includes 6 pages of 30 different censorship stories from the news.

30 NEWS STORIES

IS CENSORSHIP EVER OKAY? (AT SCHOOL)

C

Censorship isn't always clear or obvious. There are many opinions and shades of what constitutes censorship to different people. Below, you will find several situations. All the situations actually happened or are happening right now. The question is, are they all censorship? And if so, are there situations where censorship is reasonable or acceptable? Please note that this is an opinion activity; there are no right or wrong answers.

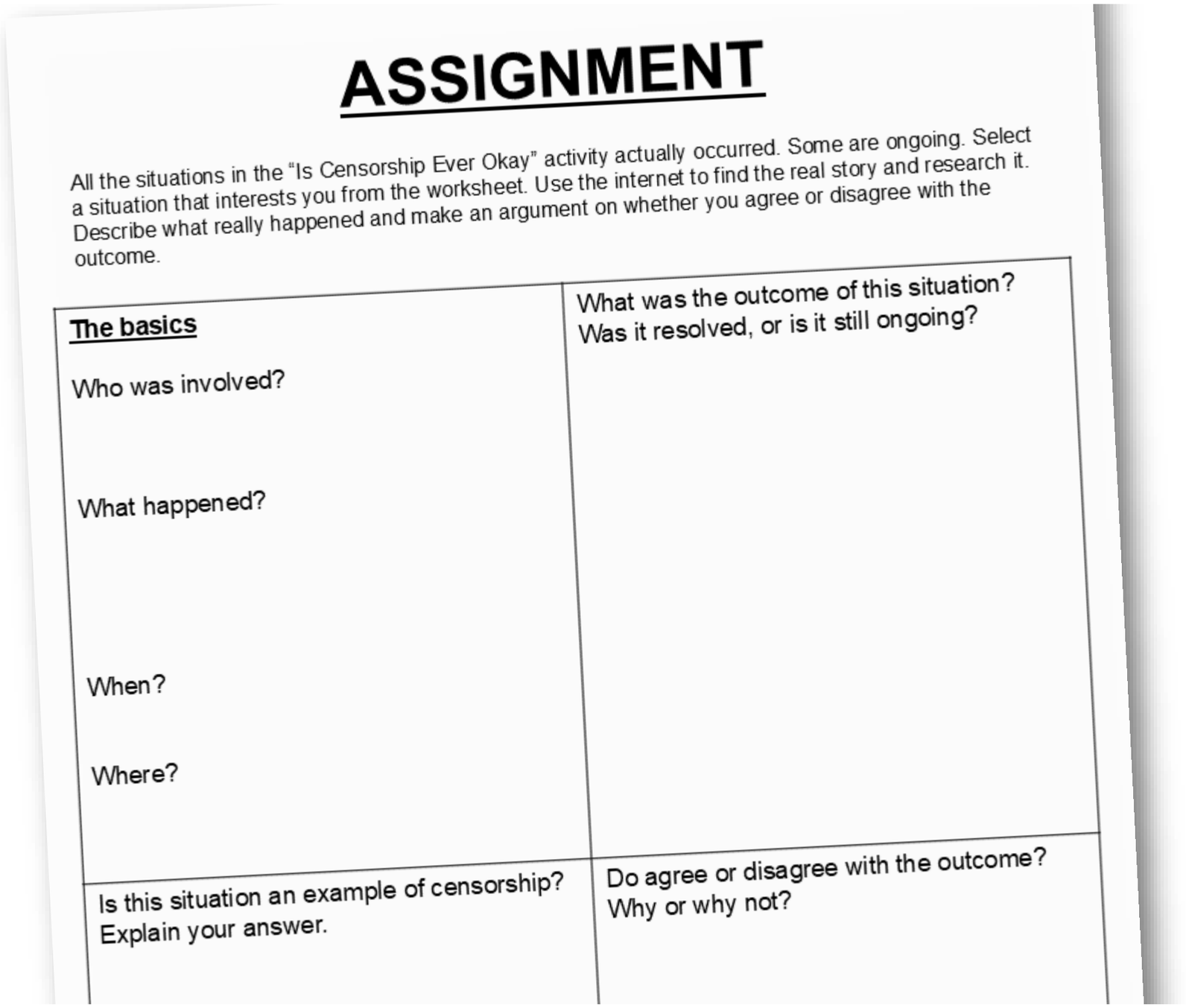
Situation	Is this censorship?	Is it reasonable or unreasonable?	Explain your answer.
After parent complaints, three YA books were removed from the high school's summer reading list.			
A high school principal temporarily suspends yearbook distribution over a Black Lives Matter section in the yearbook.			

20 stories are “at school” situations;

10 stories are “outside school” situations

All 30 stories are from real news headlines!

DAYS 4-5 REAL-LIFE NEWS STORIES



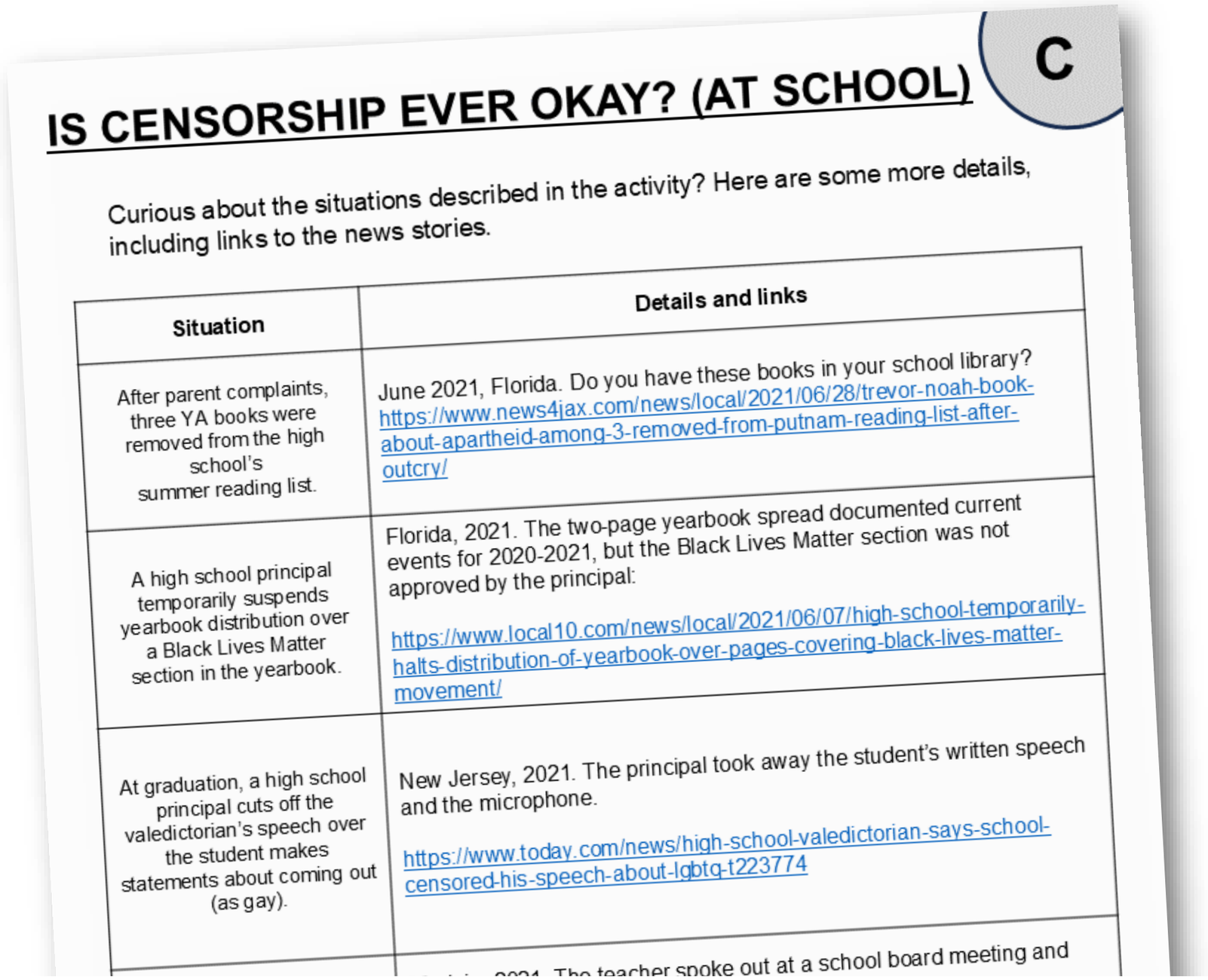
ASSIGNMENT

All the situations in the "Is Censorship Ever Okay" activity actually occurred. Some are ongoing. Select a situation that interests you from the worksheet. Use the internet to find the real story and research it. Describe what really happened and make an argument on whether you agree or disagree with the outcome.

The basics Who was involved? What happened? When? Where?	What was the outcome of this situation? Was it resolved, or is it still ongoing?
Is this situation an example of censorship? Explain your answer.	Do agree or disagree with the outcome? Why or why not?

Students select a situation that interests them and research the real-life situation (or a similar situation in the news – there are many that are similar)

DAYS 4-5 - NEWS LINKS ARE INCLUDED



IS CENSORSHIP EVER OKAY? (AT SCHOOL)

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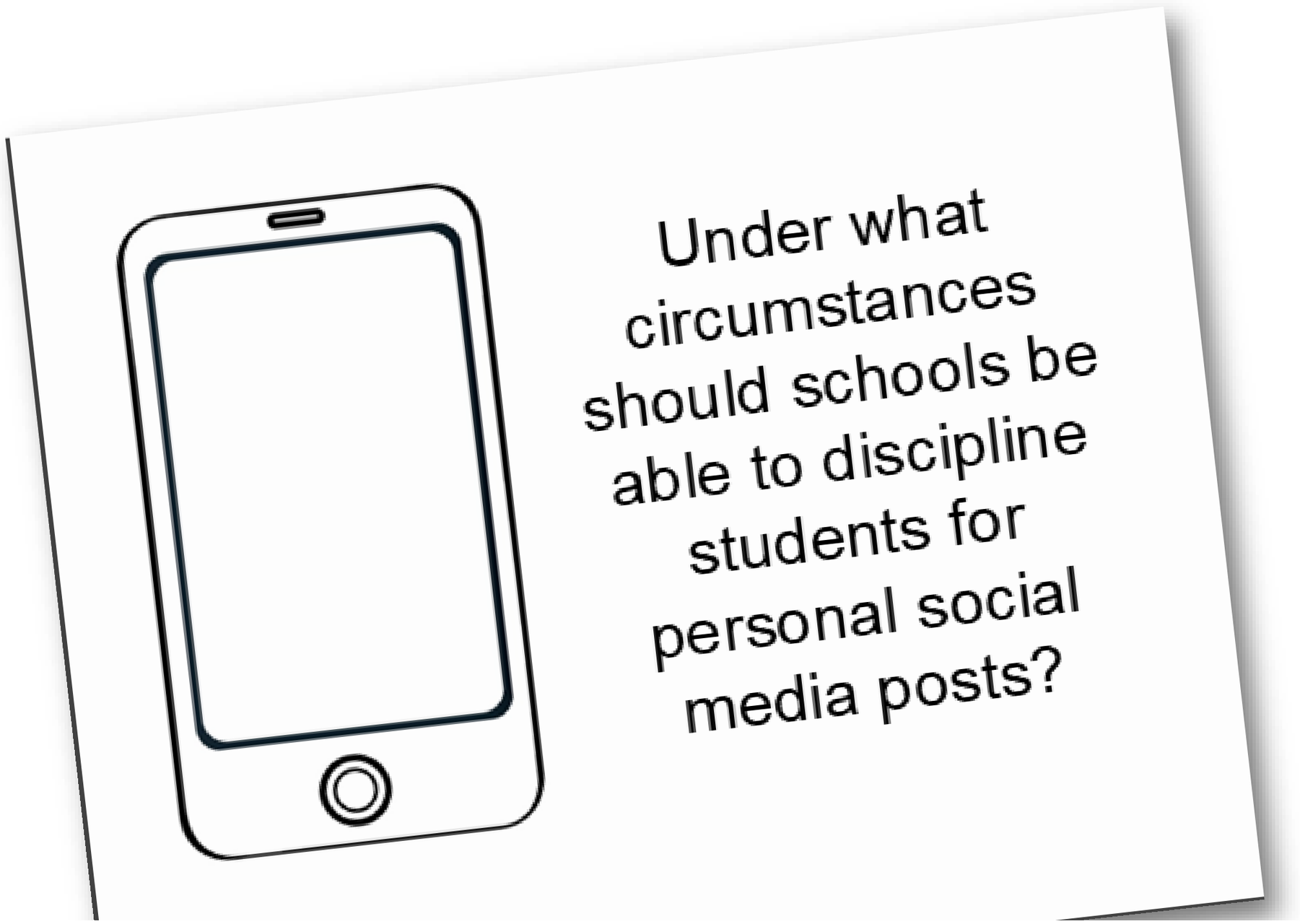
Curious about the situations described in the activity? Here are some more details, including links to the news stories.

Situation	Details and links
After parent complaints, three YA books were removed from the high school's summer reading list.	June 2021, Florida. Do you have these books in your school library? https://www.news4jax.com/news/local/2021/06/28/trevor-noah-book-about-apartheid-among-3-removed-from-putnam-reading-list-after-outcry/
A high school principal temporarily suspends yearbook distribution over a Black Lives Matter section in the yearbook.	Florida, 2021. The two-page yearbook spread documented current events for 2020-2021, but the Black Lives Matter section was not approved by the principal: https://www.local10.com/news/local/2021/06/07/high-school-temporarily-halts-distribution-of-yearbook-over-pages-covering-black-lives-matter-movement/
At graduation, a high school principal cuts off the valedictorian's speech over the student makes statements about coming out (as gay).	New Jersey, 2021. The principal took away the student's written speech and the microphone. https://www.today.com/news/high-school-valedictorian-says-school-censored-his-speech-about-lgbtq-t223774
	2021. The teacher spoke out at a school board meeting and

All 30 news stories include news links.

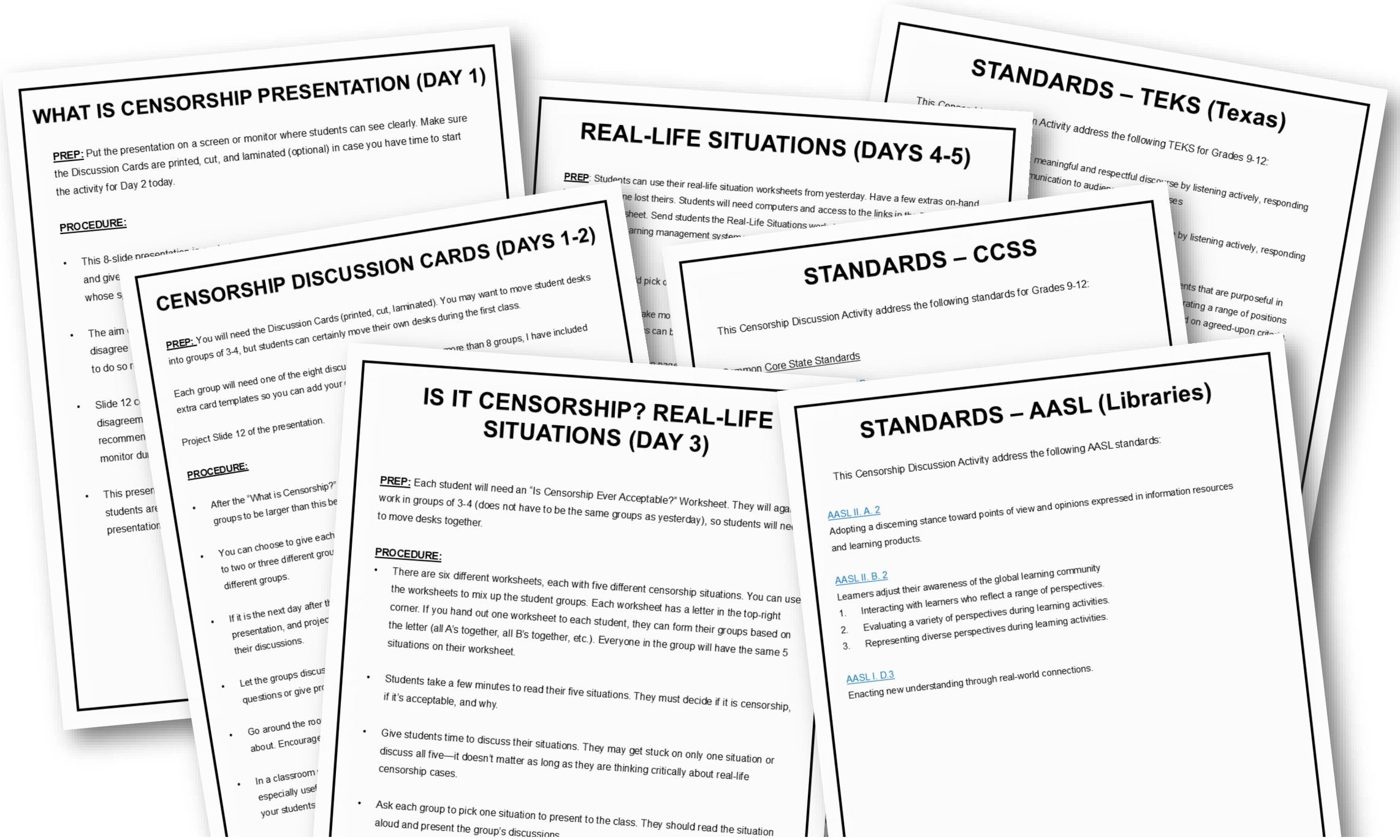
Links are checked periodically to ensure they are still active, but it is always a good idea to double-check.

EDITABLE IN THREE FORMATS



All documents come in PDF, PPT, and Google Slides formats. All text is editable in all three formats.

LESSON PLAN ALIGNED WITH STANDARDS



Includes day-by-day instructions for each part of the lesson.

If you use all parts, these lessons should last 4-5 class periods. Standards include CCSS, TEKS, and AASL.