

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Block: \_\_\_\_\_

### Freedom of the Press

DO NOW -

Thomas Jefferson wrote, "Our liberty depends on the freedom of the press, and that cannot be limited without being lost." What do you think he meant? Do you agree with him? Do you think press freedoms should be absolute, or do you think they should have limits?

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In the days after the shooting of Michael Brown, a number of journalists were detained, searched, or arrested as they attempted to cover the story, while many others reported being harassed, questioned, and threatened by police as well as by protestors and community members. As you view the video "Wesley Lowery's Arrest", in which Lowery talks about being detained in Ferguson while trying to do his job, answer the following questions in a small group of two or three.

What is at stake when a reporter is treated as he was?

Why do you think the police acted the way they did? Were they justified?

What information don't we have, with only Lowery's version of the story?

Is there any context in which his treatment would be justified? How does this treatment threaten his First Amendment rights?

Even though the scathing Justice Department report on the events underscored a fundamental pattern of racism and bias in Ferguson policing, it is important to hear the voices of the police describing their experiences.

On August 14, five days after the death of Michael Brown and following several days of peaceful and violent protest, Missouri State Highway Patrol Captain Ron Johnson, an African American officer, was put in charge of security operations in Ferguson. He held a press conference to address unrest on the evening of August 18. Though this was several days after Wesley Lowery was detained, Johnson's statement provides another point of view on the actions of police and the challenges they faced.

As you read the transcript, make note of at least one thing you find **Surprising**, **Interesting**, and **Troubling**

| <b>Surprising</b> | <b>Interesting</b> | <b>Troubling</b> |
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Exit Ticket: In 2-3 sentences, tell me whether you think that the need to keep the community safe should interfere with the freedom of press, or if press should never be repressed. Why?

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