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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
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Money Talks: First Amendment Freedom of Speech and Campaign Finance

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“Money Talks: First Amendment Freedom of Speech and Campaign Finance,” is a curricular unit designed for a fifth-grade social studies class, and could be adapted for American Government classes as well. To be taught for three weeks for approximately forty-five minutes per day, the objective of “Money Talks” is to teach students about the fundamental principles of the U.S. government and legislative system, as established in our Constitution, and how the past forty-four years of campaign finance reform altered the political landscape, in spite or because of these Constitutional principles—especially the Freedom of Speech, as established in the First Amendment to the Constitution.

As such, “Money Talks” will necessarily begin with foundational lessons on the major provisions of the United States Constitution as a whole, and the Bill of Rights more specifically, with particular emphasis on First Amendment Freedom of Speech. Students will examine fundamental principles of the U.S. government including the separation of powers among the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial branches of government; the system of checks and balances between the three branches of government; and the competing and separate powers of the Federal and state governments, and their distinct spheres of control.

(Developed for Social Studies, grade 5; recommended for Social Studies, grade 4, and English Language Arts, grade 5)

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