

## **Freedom of speech is necessary in a free society**

Decide whether you agree/disagree with the statement

Choose one of these approaches:

**State your position in the introduction and then justify it with arguments.** This may be more suitable if you feel strongly about the statement.

**Present the arguments first and then say what you think in the conclusion.** This may be better if you have no strong opinion but can put forward arguments on both sides.

### **Model answer**

In the last decade, there has been considerable debate over the role of free speech in a free society. Some object to absolute freedom of speech. Others advocate free speech, arguing that the freedom of speech is the single most important political right of citizens in a civilized society. **Whilst I believe that there are strong arguments on both sides, I would suggest that freedom of speech should be protected in all but extreme circumstances.**

The freedom of speech is important at all levels in a society. Yet it is most important for the governments. A government which does not know what the people feel and think is in a dangerous position. This is how the communist regimes of Eastern Europe were toppled in the 1980s. The same is happening again in other regions of the world today. The governments that muzzle free speech run a risk of pushing their people to behave destructively or to rebel.

Furthermore, without free speech no political action is possible and no resistance to injustice and oppression is possible. Without free speech elections would have no meaning at all. Policies of contestants become known to the public and become responsive to public opinion only by virtue of free speech. Between elections the freely expressed opinions of citizens help restrain oppressive rule. Without this freedom it is futile to expect political freedom or consequently economic freedom.

In conclusion, I believe that the importance of free speech as a basic and valuable characteristic of a free society cannot be underestimated. It may be challenging for society to allow differences of opinion out into the open; however, the consequences of restricting free speech are likely to be more damaging in the longer term.