

A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide consists of two overlapping parallelograms. The front one is blue and the back one is a light green. They are positioned diagonally, with the blue one partially covering the green one.

Freedom of Speech

Why Open Expression Matters in a Free Society



Why Freedom of Speech Matters

One of the most important ideas in modern Western society

Rooted in Christian emphasis on truth (Proverbs 12:19)

Essential for criticism of authority, debate, and progress

“You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free” (John 8:32)



Limits on Free Speech

Misinformation should **not** be protected

Incitement to violence should be restricted

The challenge is keeping limits narrow to avoid censorship

 Readers added context they thought people might want to know

The Hillsborough Law has not been delivered, as the Public Office (Accountability) Bill remains at an early stage in the House of Lords after being sent from the Commons on 16 July 2026. bills.parliament.uk/bills/4019
[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hillsboro...](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hillsborough_Law)

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Historical & Philosophical Roots

Protestant Reformation's challenge to authority

John Stuart Mill: Even wrong opinions help us understand truth

The opinion might actually be true History shows many ideas that were once condemned as dangerous or false later turned out to be correct. If we silence opinions we disagree with, we risk suppressing truth.

Even if the opinion is false, it helps us better understand and defend the truth Debating a wrong idea forces us to examine why we believe what we believe. It sharpens our own reasoning and makes our grasp of the truth stronger.

Without open debate, truth becomes dead dogma If an idea is never challenged, people stop really understanding why they believe it. It becomes a prejudice rather than a reasoned conviction.

Christian influence: Individual conscience and moral agency



The “Hate Speech” Debate

Hate speech = attacks based on race, religion, sex, etc.

Should hateful opinions be protected?

Voltaire ideal: “I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend your right to say it”

Danger: Governments using “hate speech” laws to silence opposition



Social Media Complications

Anyone can reach millions instantly

Positive: Ordinary people have a voice

Negative: Misinformation spreads faster

Censorship by big tech is a real concern (example: COVID vaccine debate)



My View

Protect speech as widely as possible

Only limit it in extreme cases (direct incitement to violence)

Open debate is healthier than enforced silence