

WHAT ARE HUMAN RIGHTS?

Human rights defined

While some dictionaries define the word right as “a privilege,” when used in the context of “human rights,” we are talking about something more basic.

Every person is entitled to certain fundamental rights, simply by the fact of being human. These are called “human rights” rather than a privilege (which can be taken away at someone’s whim).

They are “rights” because they are things you are allowed to be, to do or to have. These rights are there for your protection against people who might want to harm or hurt you. They are also there to help us get along with each other and live in peace.

Many people know something about their rights. Generally they know they have the right to food and a safe place to stay. They know they have a right to be paid for the work they do. But there are many other rights.

When human rights are not well known by people, abuses such as discrimination, intolerance, injustice, oppression and slavery can arise.

Born out of the atrocities and enormous loss of life during World War II, the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights was signed in 1948 to provide a common understanding of what everyone’s rights are. It forms the basis for a world built on freedom, justice and peace.

Learn more about this UN Declaration!

www.UN.org/en/Universal-Declaration-Human-Rights

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Simplified Version

This simplified version of the 30 Articles of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* has been created especially for young people.

1. We Are All Born Free & Equal. We are all born free. We all have our own thoughts and ideas. We should all be treated in the same way.

2. Don’t Discriminate. These rights belong to everybody, whatever our differences.

3. The Right to Life. We all have the right to life, and to live in freedom and safety.

4. No Slavery. Nobody has any right to make us a slave. We cannot make anyone our slave.

5. No Torture. Nobody has any right to hurt us or to torture us.

6. You Have Rights No Matter Where You Go. I am a person just like you!

7. We’re All Equal Before the Law. The law is the same for everyone. It must treat us all fairly.

8. Your Human Rights Are Protected by Law. We can all ask for the law to help us when we are not treated fairly.

9. No Unfair Detainment. Nobody has the right to put us in prison without good reason and keep us there, or to send us away from our country.

10. The Right to Trial. If we are put on trial this should be in public. The people who try us should not let anyone tell them what to do.

11. We're Always Innocent Till Proven Guilty. Nobody should be blamed for doing something until it is proven. When people say we did a bad thing we have the right to show it is not true.

12. The Right to Privacy. Nobody should try to harm our good name. Nobody has the right to come into our home, open our letters, or bother us or our family without a good reason.

13. Freedom to Move. We all have the right to go where we want in our own country and to travel as we wish.

14. The Right to Seek a Safe Place to Live. If we are frightened of being badly treated in our own country, we all have the right to run away to another country to be safe.

15. Right to a Nationality. We all have the right to belong to a country.

16. Marriage and Family. Every grown-up has the right to marry and have a family if they want to. Men and women have the same rights when they are married, and when they are separated.

17. The Right to Your Own Things. Everyone has the right to own things or share them. Nobody should take our things from us without a good reason.

18. Freedom of Thought. We all have the right to believe in what we want to believe, to have a religion, or to change it if we want.

19. Freedom of Expression. We all have the right to make up our own minds, to think what we like, to say what we think, and to share our ideas with other people.

20. The Right to Public Assembly. We all have the right to meet our friends and to work together in peace to defend our rights. Nobody can make us join a group if we don't want to.

21. The Right to Democracy. We all have the right to take part in the government of our country. Every grown-up should be allowed to choose their own leaders.

22. Social Security. We all have the right to affordable housing, medicine, education, and childcare, enough money to live on and medical help if we are ill or old.

23. Workers' Rights. Every grown-up has the right to do a job, to a fair wage for their work, and to join a trade union.

24. The Right to Play. We all have the right to rest from work and to relax.

25. Food and Shelter for All. We all have the right to a good life. Mothers and children, people who are old, unemployed or disabled, and all people have the right to be cared for.

26. The Right to Education. Education is a right. Primary school should be free. We should learn about the United Nations and how to get on with others. Our parents can choose what we learn.

27. Copyright. Copyright is a special law that protects one's own artistic creations and writings; others cannot make copies without permission. We all have the right to our own way of life and to enjoy the good things that art, science and learning bring.

28. A Fair and Free World. There must be proper order so we can all enjoy rights and freedoms in our own country and all over the world.

29. Responsibility. We have a duty to other people, and we should protect their rights and freedoms.

30. No One Can Take Away Your Human Rights.