
Human Rights

WORKSHEET A

When the Second World War ended in 1945, many countries in the world learnt about the terrible human rights abuses that had happened during the conflict, and most governments thought it would be a good idea to establish an international standard for human rights that every country should try to achieve in future.

One of the main aims of the United Nations (UN), created in 1945, was to promote respect for human rights all around the world. The organization soon decided it needed a document stating the human rights that all countries should respect, and on 10th December 1948 it adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The UN had to respect national sovereignty, so the UDHR was not a law that countries had to obey. It was, however, an important list of principles, and in the years since 1948 it has formed the basis for UN treaties on the subject of human rights. Many countries have signed these treaties, thereby committing themselves to following the rules they contain.

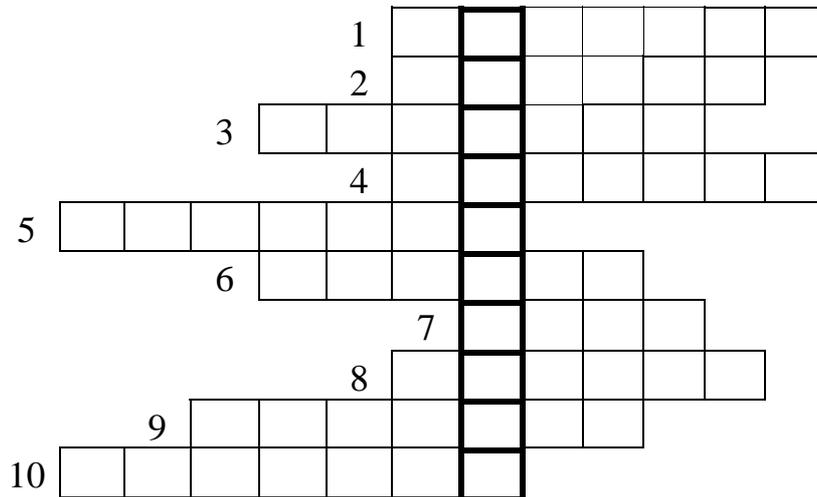
Some of the rights in the UDHR are so fundamental that it is easy to take them for granted. Perhaps we should remember, therefore, that a hundred years ago most of the world's governments respected only a few of the rights in the UDHR, and also that many human rights abuses are still taking place in the world today.

The UDHR begins by stating that people should have the same rights regardless of their race, sex, language or religion. It then gives a list of basic rights including the right to be free from slavery and torture, the right to own property, the right to an education, the right to privacy at home, and the right to a fair trial.

As you might expect, there have been some arguments about some parts of the UDHR. For example, some countries have suggested that the document expresses a more 'western' view of the world, ignoring other religious and cultural traditions. One fact everyone seems to agree on, however, is that the UDHR exists in more languages than any other written document in the world – more than 300 in total!

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Fill the gaps below to find another of the principles in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – the right to freedom of _____.



1. A hundred years ago, most governments in the world did not _____ many of the principles in the UDHR.
2. The UDHR _____ in more than 300 languages.
3. The UN _____ the UDHR in December 1948.
4. In some countries it is easy to take human rights for _____.
5. The UDHR establishes the right to be free from _____.
6. Unfortunately, many human rights _____ are still happening.
7. One of the first things the UDHR says is that every person should have the _____ rights.
8. Many countries have _____ human rights treaties since 1948.
9. The UN tries to _____ respect for human rights.
10. Some countries have suggested that the UDHR only expresses _____ cultural and religious traditions.

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WORKSHEET C

'I know that not everyone agrees **(1) in** everything **(2) about** the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, but it is still a very important **(3) take** and has formed the **(4) worst** of UN human rights **(5) document** for almost 60 years. It establishes **(6) basis** principles that most countries say they are **(7) respected** to. It contains rights **(8) with** certain things, like privacy and freedom of expression, and also the rights to be **(9) free** from certain things, like **(10) fundamental** and torture. If all the **(11) governments** in the world **(12) committed** the UDHR, I certainly think the world would be a better place. I also think a lot of people like to imagine that human rights **(13) abuses** mostly happen in other countries, far away from where they live, but that isn't always true. In Europe we might like to think that we can teach the world **(14) to** human rights, but we shouldn't forget that in the 1930s and 40s some of the **(15) slavery** abuses in the world were happening in European countries. Unfortunately, the things that are happening in the world today, and the things that happened in the recent past, mean that we can't **(16) treaties** human rights for granted.'