Lesson 2: Introduction to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

**Note:** The Introduction to Human Rights and Responsibilities resource has been designed as two unique lesson plans. However, depending on your students’ level of engagement and the depth of content that you wish to explore, you may wish to divide each lesson into two. Each lesson consists of ‘Part 1’ and ‘Part 2’ which could easily function as entire lessons on their own.

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**Suggested Curriculum Links:**

**Year 6 - Humanities and Social Sciences**

**Inquiry Questions**
- How have key figures, events and values shaped Australian society, its system of government and citizenship?
- How have experiences of democracy and citizenship differed between groups over time and place, including those from and in Asia?
- How has Australia developed as a society with global connections, and what is my role as a global citizen?

**Inquiry and Skills**

**Questioning**
- Develop appropriate questions to guide an inquiry about people, events, developments, places, systems and challenges ([ACHASSI122](#))

**Analysing**
- Examine different viewpoints on actions, events, issues and phenomena in the past and present ([ACHASSI127](#))

**Evaluating and Reflecting**
- Reflect on learning to propose personal and/or collective action in response to an issue or challenge, and predict the probable effects ([ACHASSI132](#))

**Knowledge & Understanding (History)**
- Experiences of Australian democracy and citizenship, including the status and rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, migrants, women and children ([ACHASSK135](#))
Lesson Overview

Over two lessons students will be introduced to the concept of ‘Human Rights’ and the strong link between rights and personal responsibility. They will design their own class charter and explore the broader topic of human rights and responsibilities through challenging and thought-provoking experiences.

Interactivity

These lessons are accompanied by online interactive activities to support the teaching of human rights. You can locate these activities at [https://www.humanrights.gov.au/introhumanrights/](https://www.humanrights.gov.au/introhumanrights/). These activities are accessible on any internet enabled device however they work particularly well using an interactive whiteboard.

Aim

Upon completion of An Introduction to Human Rights and Responsibilities, students will be able to demonstrate a basic understanding of the concepts encompassed by the term ‘human rights’ and underlying principles of freedom, equality, fairness and justice.

Learning Outcomes

In these lessons, students will:

- develop an understanding of what human rights are
- appreciate the relationship between rights and responsibilities
- analyse who is responsible for upholding human rights
- appreciate the meaning and significance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- apply the concepts of human rights to their own lives

Teacher Note

When teaching about human rights it is important to create a safe and positive classroom environment, which encourages participation and cooperation. The activities in these lessons are significant because they empower students to make rules about how they want to be treated by both teachers and their peers.

By helping to create an environment where rights are respected, students are encouraged to actively take part in advancing respect for the rights of others in the classroom and beyond.
Lesson 2: Introduction to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Introduction

Briefly summarise learning from the previous lesson.

Key points:

• What is a right? 'A moral or legal entitlement to have or do something.'

• Discuss the link between rights and responsibility. Explain that rights go hand in hand with responsibilities. When you have a right, you also have a responsibility to respect that others have that right.

• Explain that human rights are the rights we have as human beings. They belong to all of us, regardless of who we are or where we live, and they cannot be taken away.

Pre-Lesson Quick Quiz (10 minutes)

Note: You may choose to have the students complete the quiz independently (on computers or tablets), in small groups, or as an entire class.

Conduct the pre-lesson Quick Quiz.

1. Human rights first became internationally recognised after World War II.
   True. The ideas behind human rights have been present throughout history in many different societies and religions. However, the idea that there are basic rights that belong to all people was internationally recognised after World War II, with the creation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

2. People have the right to say whatever they want.
   False. While the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to express their ideas and opinions, this doesn’t mean you have a right to say whatever you want. Your right to express an opinion should not come at the cost of someone else’s right to be treated with respect.

3. All people have equal rights.
   True. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognises that everyone is born free and equal in dignity and rights. We should all be treated in the same way.

4. Do children have their own special rights, as well as other human rights?
   True. As well as the rights set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, children have extra rights that place a responsibility on adults to make sure children receive the special care and protection they need to grow up healthy and happy. These rights are written down in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

5. The police are the organisation responsible for making sure people in Australia have their human rights respected and protected.
   False. The main responsibility for upholding the rights of all people living in Australia lies with the Australian Government. However, many groups and organisations also have some responsibility to look after human rights. The police (as part of the justice system) look after people’s right to be safe and to be protected by the law.

Main Body of Teaching

Viewing activity: Introducing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (5 minutes)

• Introduce the concept and history of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by watching the video in the interactive lesson.

• Show students the next slide and briefly explain how the Universal Declaration of Human Rights came into being. Ask students to brainstorm why the Universal Declaration might have been important.
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Teacher Information:
Following the devastation of World War II, the governments of the world came together in 1945 to form an international organisation called the United Nations (UN), dedicated to upholding peace and security.

One of the first actions of the newly-founded UN was to draft a document outlining the basic human rights shared by all people, everywhere. This resulted in the creation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognises the dignity of all people, and asserts that human rights should apply equally to everyone, no matter who they are or where they live.

It consists of thirty articles that are the basis for human rights protection and promotion around the world. It includes civil and political rights, like the right to life, liberty, free speech and privacy. It also includes economic, social and cultural rights, like the right to social security, health and education.

It has been endorsed by all countries and many countries have included its provisions in their laws or constitutions.


An abbreviated version of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is included in the Teacher Reference Sheet at the end of this resource.

Interactive activity: ‘What human rights do we have?’ (15 minutes)

• Explain to students that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights protects our fundamental human rights, and it is important to know what these rights are.

• Use the interactive activity to explore and discuss the meaning of the rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

• As a class, consider the pictures presented in the interactive activity.

• Explain that each of the four rights displayed on the slide are rights from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

• Ask students to choose which of the four rights displayed is being represented in the picture. Explain to students that the picture may show a right being respected or not respected.

‘What human rights do we have?’ - Activity questions and answers

Which human right is represented in this picture?

Everyone has the right to education.

Correct! According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights you have the right to go to school and primary school education should be free. You should be able to learn a profession or continue your studies to whatever level you wish.
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Which human right is represented in this picture?

Everyone has the right to take part in the government of their country
Correct! Once we are over 18, we can exercise our right to vote in elections and decide the future of our country. Everyone should have a vote and all votes should be counted equally.

Which human right is represented in this picture?

Everyone has the right to seek asylum from persecution
Correct! If you are being harmed, or believe you are in danger of being harmed, in your own country, you have the right to go to another country and ask for protection.

Which human right is represented in this picture?

Everyone has the right to freedom of assembly and association
Correct! This means that you have the right to organise peaceful meetings or to take part in meetings. This includes peaceful protests.
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Which human right is represented in this picture?

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression
Correct! You have the right to have your own ideas and opinions and to express them to others. We exercise this freedom of speech whenever we text, tweet, or use any other forms of media to publicly express our opinion. However, this doesn’t mean you have a right to say whatever you want. Sometimes a situation can occur when a particular right may be in conflict with another right. For example, your right to express an opinion should not come at the cost of someone else’s right to be treated with respect.

Which human right is represented in this picture?

Everyone has the right to a decent standard of living
Correct! You have the right to the things you need to live a healthy and prosperous life. This includes food, clothing, housing and medical care and social services.

Interactive activity: Comparing the Classroom Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (10 minutes)

- As a class, ask students to think about the rights in their Classroom Charter of Rights and Responsibilities and the rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, explored in the previous activity.
- Ask individual students to name a particular right and as a class decide whether this right can be found in either the Classroom Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or both.
- Note down the right in the appropriate column on the interactive whiteboard.
- Continue this process until there are approximately equal numbers of rights under all three columns.
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Discussion Questions:

• Why do you think there are differences between the two documents? (Prompt students to think about who the two different documents are targeted at. Remind them that the Universal Declaration is a set of rules for national governments to protect their people)

• What are some of the underlying ideas and values that make them similar? (Refer students back to key values identified in the discussion of human rights in the last lesson, such as equality, respect, freedom, dignity and justice).

• Were there any rights in the Universal Declaration that you think should be added to the Classroom Charter?

Interactive Activity: ‘Who should be responsible?’ (10 Minutes)

• Remind students that in order to ensure their own rights are met, they must be responsible for their actions and how they affect others.

• Ask the students who they think should be responsible for making sure the rules in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are followed.

• Use the interactive activity to allow the students to discuss and decide who should be responsible for the right, and drag their chosen body (e.g. ‘Government’, ‘Individuals’) to the right.

• Explain to students beforehand that there are often multiple groups or organisations that have responsibilities to protect peoples’ rights and they may want to drag more than one group over in their answer. Ask students to explain why they think a group should be responsible for a particular right.

• The answers for this activity (shown in bold) correspond to an international human rights perspective. However, students may have other perspectives regarding who should be responsible. Encourage critical thinking by allowing students to question the answers and put forward their own ideas about responsibility.

Who do you think should be responsible for upholding the rights in the Universal Declaration? Look at these rights from the Universal Declaration and drag and drop the group (or groups) that should make sure that the right is protected and respected.

No one shall be subject to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Nobody has the right to put you in prison, to keep you there, or to send you away from your country unjustly, or without a good reason.

Judges and the Law Courts / Community / Businesses / Government / Individuals / The United Nations

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security.

You have the right to live, and to live in freedom and safety.

Police / Community / Your Family / Government / Judges and the Law Courts / Individuals

Teacher Note:

Ask students how different groups might be responsible for keeping people safe. For example, students, as members of the community, have a responsibility not to harm others. What role might other groups such as your family, the police or the government have to play in keeping you safe?
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Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion

You have the right to have your own religion or belief. This includes the right to change your religion or belief if you want, to practice your religion either on your own or with other people and to peacefully express your beliefs in teaching, practice and worship.

Community / the Media / Government / Individuals / Churches / The United Nations

Teacher Note:

Ask students what responsibilities a community might have to respect people’s religions or personal beliefs.

Explore how there are often many different religious and spiritual beliefs within a local community. A community has the responsibility to ensure that its members are able to practice their beliefs as they wish.

This can be extended to the Australian community as a whole. The Australian Government has the responsibility to protect people’s right to practice a religion, or not, as they choose.

Everyone has a right to privacy

You have the right to ask for protection if someone tries to harm your good name, enter your house, open your letters, or bother you or your family without a good reason.

Police / Government / Individuals / Business / Judges and the Law Courts / The Media

Everyone has the right to a decent standard of living

You have the right to the things you need to live a healthy and prosperous life. This includes food, clothing, housing and medical care and social services.

Government / Doctors and Hospitals / Community / Your Family / The United Nations / Individuals

• After completing all the slides ask students if they found it difficult to decide who should be responsible for ensuring people’s human rights.

• Explain to students that everyone has responsibilities to other people and to the community as a whole.

At the same time, the primary responsibility for upholding human rights lies with the government.

The Australian Government has a responsibility to respect and protect the rights of all people living in Australia.

This includes a responsibility to protect people’s right to certain freedoms (like freedom of religion, freedom of assembly, and freedom of speech) as well as a responsibility to fulfil people’s rights to certain things (like the right to education, health care and other social services, which are essential for people’s well-being).
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Conclusion

Explain to students that you want to see how much they learned so you are going to ask them the same questions from the first “Quick Quiz” at the beginning of the lesson.

Post-Lesson Quick Quiz (10 minutes)

Note: you may choose to have the students complete the quiz independently (on computers or tablets), in small groups, or as an entire class. If you divided students into small groups for the pre-lesson quiz, you might like to consider assigning them to different groups for the post-lesson quiz.

Conduct the post-test Quick Quiz.

1. Human rights first became internationally recognised after World War II.
   True. The ideas behind human rights have been present throughout history in many different societies and religions. However, the idea that there are basic rights that belong to all people was internationally recognised after World War II, with the creation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

2. People have the right to say whatever they want.
   False. While the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to express their ideas and opinions, this doesn't mean you have a right to say whatever you want. Your right to express an opinion should not come at the cost of someone else’s right to be treated with respect.

3. All people have equal rights.
   True. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognises that everyone is born free and equal in dignity and rights. We should all be treated in the same way.

4. Do children have their own special rights, as well as other human rights?
   True. As well as the rights set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, children have extra rights that place a responsibility on adults to make sure children receive the special care and protection they need to grow up healthy and happy. These rights are written down in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

5. The police are the organisation responsible for making sure people in Australia have their human rights respected and protected.
   False. The main responsibility for upholding the rights of all people living in Australia lies with the Australian Government. However, many groups and organisations also have some responsibility to look after human rights. The police (as part of the justice system) look after people's right to be safe and to be protected by the law.

Homework/ Extension task

• As well as the rights set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, children have extra rights to help them grow up healthy and happy. These rights are written down in a document called the Convention on the Rights of the Child. For information on this Convention, direct students to the Australian Human Rights Commission’s webpage ‘What Are Children’s Rights?’. This page includes links to child-friendly versions of the Convention.

• Ask students to examine the differences and similarities between the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

• Ask students to consider the rights in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and reflect on whether all children (in Australia and overseas) have these rights met.

• Ask students to identify a group/s of children that might not be able to enjoy their rights as easily as others. (For example, consider issues faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disability, children in developing countries, refugee and asylum seeker children, or even girls compared to boys) and conduct research into the issues that affect the rights of these children? (e.g. access to education and healthcare, experience of poverty, or bullying and harassment.)
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Suggestions for Additional/Extension Learning

Create a personalised, child-friendly, Universal Declaration of Human Rights for your classroom
- Ask the class to develop their own, more user-friendly, version of the UDHR, explaining each right in their own words
- Each student could do this individually or you could assign each student/pair 1-2 rights
- Collate and post in classroom

Create a personalised, child-friendly, Convention on the Rights of the Child for your classroom
- Ask the class to develop their own, more user-friendly, version of the CRC, explaining each right in their own words
- Each student could do this individually or you could assign each student/pair 1-2 rights
- Collate and post in classroom

Ask the class to develop their own glossary of key terms
- Assign each student/pair 1-2 terms and ask them to come up with their own definition of what these terms mean
- Collate and post in classroom

Introduce different human rights issues and examples of human rights violations, by showing stories or video clips related to currently relevant issues

Protecting and Promoting children’s rights
- Ask students to research the National Children’s Commissioner
  - Who is the Commissioner and what is their role?
  - How does/can the Commissioner help children?
  - How can you contact the Commissioner?
  - Ask students to write down the answers to these questions, then facilitate a discussion about what they have learned

Rights before Magna Carta
- Explain that the Magna Carta is just one document where early rights were enshrined. The idea of The Golden Rule’ or ‘treat others as you wish to be treated’ has been an integral part of many different philosophies and religions for centuries.
- Ask students to research one religion, philosophy or government that promoted and/or protected rights and report back to the class.

Useful resources for extended learning

RightsED (Australian Human Rights Commission)
- The Commission’s series of education resources - RightsED - are designed to help students gain a critical understanding of human rights and responsibilities, and to develop the attitudes, behaviours and skills to apply human rights in everyday life.

BTN (Behind the News)
- Behind the News is a high-energy, fun way for upper primary and secondary students to learn about current issues and events in their world.

TeachUNICEF
- TeachUNICEF provides educators with global learning resources and programs. Through a focus on global citizenship and child rights, TeachUNICEF engages students in an exploration of humanitarian issues and inspires them to take action to improve their world.

The World's Largest Lesson
- The World’s Largest Lesson is an initiative to introduce the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals to teachers and students around the world. There are a variety of lesson plans and creative resources available to support teachers.
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Glossary

Charter: A document that outlines the fundamental principles of an organisation.

Children’s rights: children’s rights are special rights that belong to all children under the age of 18. Children have the same human rights as everyone else but they also have extra rights that place a responsibility on adults to make sure that children receive the special care and protection they need to grow up healthy and happy. These rights are written down in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Citizen: A person who is a member of a political community, such as a state or a nation, that grants certain rights and privileges to its citizens and in return expects them to fulfil certain duties, such as to obeying the law.

Community: A group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic and a shared sense of identity in common.

Dignity: A value owed to all humans, to be treated with respect.

Discrimination: When a person is treated less favourably than another person in a similar situation because of a particular personal characteristic such as their; age, sex, race, nationality, or beliefs.

Equality: The quality of being equal. Equality is an important value in human rights and is the central idea behind all human beings having universal human rights.

Fairness: The quality of treating people in a way that is right or reasonable.

Freedom: The power or right to act, speak, or think as one wants. Or, the state of being free rather than in confinement or under physical restraint.

Global citizen: A person who understands that they have rights and responsibilities at a global level, beyond geographical or political borders, because they are part of the global human community. These rights and responsibilities do not have the same legal authority or sanctions that those conferred by a nation have.

Government: A group of people with the authority to govern a country or state.

Human rights: Rights that come from being human. They ensure people can live freely and that they are able to flourish, reach their potential, and participate in society. They ensure that people are treated fairly and with dignity and respect. You have human rights simply because you are human and they cannot be taken away.

Justice: The moral principle ensuring fairness in the way people are treated.

Law: A system of rules that a particular country or community recognises as regulating the actions of its members, and which it may enforce by an imposition of penalties and sanctions.

Respect: Taking into account the views and desires of others in how you treat people.

Right: A right is a moral or legal entitlement to have or do something.

Rights and responsibilities: Entitlements and obligations that are associated with living in any country with a democratic justice system. Rights and responsibilities are a cornerstone of modern democracies. While all people in Australia enjoy certain rights (for example, freedom of speech), there are also responsibilities (for example, paying taxes, jury service). Citizens also have the right to vote and the responsibility of voting at elections.

United Nations: An international organisation that was founded in 1945 by the governments of the world with the aim of promoting global peace and security, and human rights.


Values: Values are principles, ideals, standards, or world views which act as general guidelines for behaviour. They can also be points of reference in making decisions when evaluating beliefs or actions. Values are closely connected to personal integrity and personal identity.
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Teacher Reference Sheet: Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Article 1 – We are all born free and equal
Everyone is born free and equal in dignity and with rights. We should all be treated in the same way.

Article 2 – Human rights belong to everyone
Human rights belong to everyone, whatever our differences. You should never be discriminated against for any reason, including your race, skin colour, sex, language, religion, political opinion, nationality or social status.

Article 3 - Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security.
You have the right to live, and to live in freedom and safety.

Article 4 – No-one shall be held in slavery
Nobody has the right to force you into slavery and you should not make anyone else your slave.

Article 5 – No-one has the right to torture you
Nobody has the right to torture you or to punish you in a cruel or unfair way.

Article 6 – Everyone has the right to be treated as a person in the eyes of the law
You should be legally protected in the same way everywhere.

Article 7 – Everyone is equal before the law
You have the right to be treated by the law in the same way as everyone else. Everyone has a right to protection against violations of their human rights.

Article 8 – Everyone has the right to be protected by the law
If you are not treated fairly according to the laws of your country, you have a right to ask for legal help.

Article 9 – No-one shall be arrested, detained or exiled without a good reason.
Nobody has the right to put you in prison, to keep you there, or to send you away from your country unjustly, or without a good reason.

Article 10 – Everyone has the right to a fair and public trial
If you are accused of breaking the law, you have the right to a public trial. The people who try you should not be influenced by others.

Article 11 – Everyone is innocent until proven guilty
You should be considered innocent of committing a crime until it can be proven that you are guilty, in a fair trial. No-one should be charged with a crime for doing something that wasn’t a crime at the time that they did it.

Article 12 – Everyone has a right to privacy
You have the right to ask for protection if someone tries to harm your good name, enter your house, open your letters, or bother you or your family without a good reason.

Article 13 – Everyone has the right to freedom of movement
You have the right to come and go as you wish within your country. You have the right to leave your country to go to another one; and you should be able to return to your country if you want.

Article 14 – Everyone has the right to seek asylum from persecution
If you are being harmed, or believe you are in danger of being harmed, in your own country, you have the right to go to another country and ask for protection.

Article 15 – Everyone has the right to a nationality
You have the right to belong to a country and nobody can prevent you, without a good reason, from belonging to another country if you wish.

Article 16 – Everyone has the right to marry and raise a 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 also when they are separated.
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Teacher Reference Sheet: Universal Declaration of Human Rights

**Article 17 – Everyone has the right to own property**
You have the right to own things and nobody has the right to take these from you without a good reason.

**Article 18 – Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion**
You have the right to have your own religion or belief. This includes the right to change your religion or belief if you want, to practice your religion either on your own or with other people and to peacefully express your beliefs in teaching, practice and worship.

**Article 19 – Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression**
You have the right to have your own ideas and opinions and to express them to others.
You have the right to seek, receive and share information and ideas with people from any other country.

**Article 20 – Everyone has the right to freedom of assembly and association**
You have the right to organise peaceful meetings or to take part in meetings in a peaceful way. No-one can make you join a group if you don’t want to.

**Article 21 – Everyone has the right to take part in the government of their country**
You have the right to take part in your country’s political affairs either by belonging to the government yourself or by choosing politicians to represent you.
Governments should be voted for regularly, through free and fair voting procedures.
Everyone should have a vote and all votes should be counted equally.

**Article 22 - Everyone, as a member of society, has a right to social security**
You have the right to affordable housing, medicine, education, and childcare, enough money to live on and medical help if you are ill or old.
The society in which you live should help you to develop and to make the most of all the advantages that are offered to you.

**Article 23 – Everyone has the right to work and to fair working conditions**
You have the right to work. This includes the right to good working conditions, to fair pay and to join a trade union.

**Article 24 – Everyone has the right to rest and leisure**
You have the right to rest and relaxation time, including regular holidays with pay.

**Article 25 – Everyone has the right to a decent standard of living**
You have the right to the things you need to live a healthy and prosperous life. This includes food, clothing, housing and medical care and social services.
Those with particular needs such as mothers and children, older people and people with disability, have the right to extra care and assistance.

**Article 26 – Everyone has the right to education.**
You have the right to go to school and primary school education should be free. You should be able to learn a profession or continue your studies to whatever level you wish.

**Article 27 – Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community**
You have the right to share in your community’s arts and sciences, and in any good they do. Your works as an artist, a writer or a scientist should be protected, and you should be able to benefit from them.

**Article 28 – Everyone has the right to live in a free and fair world**
You have the right to live in the kind of world where your rights and freedoms are respected.

**Article 29 – Everyone has a responsibility to respect and protect human rights**
We all have a responsibility to respect and protect the rights of others.

**Article 30 – Everyone has human rights and they cannot be taken away**
No person or group should try to take your human rights and freedoms away.
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