**The Coronavirus and Human Rights**

**Lesson Overview:**

During the course of this lesson we will analyse what is meant by the term human rights and explore how these rights are protected in UK law. We will examine the impact that emergency legislation to protect citizens during the ongoing coronavirus pandemic has had on these rights.

**Lesson Objectives:**

By the end of the session you will be able to:

* Explain what is meant by the term human rights and describe which of these rights are absolute and which can be limited in exceptional circumstances;
* Identify which human rights have been impacted by the global pandemic, and the extent of this impact;
* Justify whether or not you think that access to the internet should be a human right.

**How to use this booklet:**

Your teacher will provide an introduction to each activity using your school’s online learning platform and then ask you to complete the appropriate section in this student workbook.

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**Activity 1: What are Human Rights?**

Read through the following statements. In the final column record if you think the statement applies in **every case**, **most cases** or **some cases**. Justify your answers.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **Every, most or some cases?** |
| 1. | **Killing another person is wrong** |  |
| 2. | **Torture is wrong** |  |
| 3. | **A person accused of a crime should be tried by someone who has nothing to do with the case** |  |
| 4. | **After a certain age people should be able to marry whoever they wish** |  |
| 5. | **People should be allowed to have, or not have, whatever religious belief they wish** |  |
| 6. | **Everyone over a certain age should have the right to vote** |  |
| 7. | **People should be allowed to criticise the government** |  |
| 8. | **People should not be punished for something that wasn’t a crime when it was committed** |  |

The Human Rights Act 1998

In the early 1950s, the United Kingdom and a number of other countries signed the European Convention on Human Rights. This set out fundamental rights that everyone should have and was designed to protect people from excessive interference or control by the state. The Human Rights Act 1998 made these rights part of UK law. This means they must be followed by all government and public bodies. A few of these rights are **absolute**, i.e. they apply in **every case**, but the majority depend, to some extent, on the situation or circumstances of the person concerned.

The following rights apply in **every case**, they are **absolute**...

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Article 3** | No one should be tortured or treated in a way that is cruel or humiliating |
| **Article 4** | No one should be treated as a slave |
| **Article 7** | No one should be punished for doing something that was not against the law when they did it |

The following rights may be affected by **circumstances**,they are **limited**…

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Article 2** | Everyone has the right to life |
| **Article 4** | Everyone has the right not to be required to perform forced or compulsory labour |
| **Article 5** | Everyone has the right to liberty |
| **Article 6** | Everyone has the right to a fair trial and within a reasonable time |
| **Article 8** | Everyone has the right to respect for private and family life |
| **Article 9** | Everyone has the right to hold whatever beliefs they wish |
| **Article 10** | Everyone has the right to express their views and opinions |
| **Article 11** | Everyone has the right to get together with others in a peaceful way |
| **Article 12** | Everyone has the right to marry and have a family |
| **Article 13** | If people’s rights are violated they have the right to remedy (they can take their case to court) |
| **Article 14** | There must be no discrimination in the application of human rights on any ground |
| **Protocol 1**  **Article 1** | Everyone has the right to own property and enjoy their belongings |
| **Protocol 1**  **Article 2** | Everyone has the right to an education |
| **Protocol 1**  **Article 3** | Everyone has the right to vote in elections |

**Activity 2: Emergency legislation**

Read through the information on **slides 8-11** then complete the table below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Human Rights Act Articles** | **Has the article been impacted by the Coronavirus Act? How?** |
| **2.** Everyone has the right to life |  |
| **3.** No one should be tortured or treated in a way that is cruel or humiliating |  |
| **4.** No one should be treated as a slave.  Everyone has the right not to be required to perform forced or compulsory labour |  |
| **5.** Everyone has the right to liberty |  |
| **6.** Everyone has the right to a fair trial and within a reasonable time |  |
| **8.** Everyone has the right to respect for private and family life |  |
| **9.** Everyone has the right to hold whatever beliefs they wish |  |
| **10.** Everyone has the right to express their views and opinions |  |
| **11.** Everyone has the right to get together with others in a peaceful way |  |
| **12.** Everyone has the right to marry and have a family |  |
| **13.** If people’s rights are violated they have the right to remedy (they can take their case to court) |  |
| **14.** There must be no discrimination in the application of human rights on any ground |  |
| **Protocol 1, Article 1.**  Everyone has the right to own property and enjoy their belongings |  |
| **Protocol 1, Article 2.**  Everyone has the right to an education |  |
| **Protocol 1, Article 3.**  Everyone has the right to vote in elections |  |

**Q: If these rights are protected by law why do you think the Government was**

**able to create new legislation which restricts them?**

**Activity 3: Freedom to connect?**

Read through the information provided on **slides 14-22** then complete the table below.

**Q: Should all UK citizens have access to broadband which is free at the point of**

**delivery?**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Arguments for** | **Arguments against** |
|  |  |

**Q: Reviewing the arguments both for and against, do you think that all UK citizens**

**should have access to broadband which is free at the point of delivery?**

**Plenary**

Answer the following questions:

**Q: Write a short definition of what a human right is.**

**Q: Which three human rights are ‘absolute’?**

**Q: List three restrictions which have been used to prevent and control the spread of**

**Coronavirus and say which article(s) from the Human Rights Act they have**

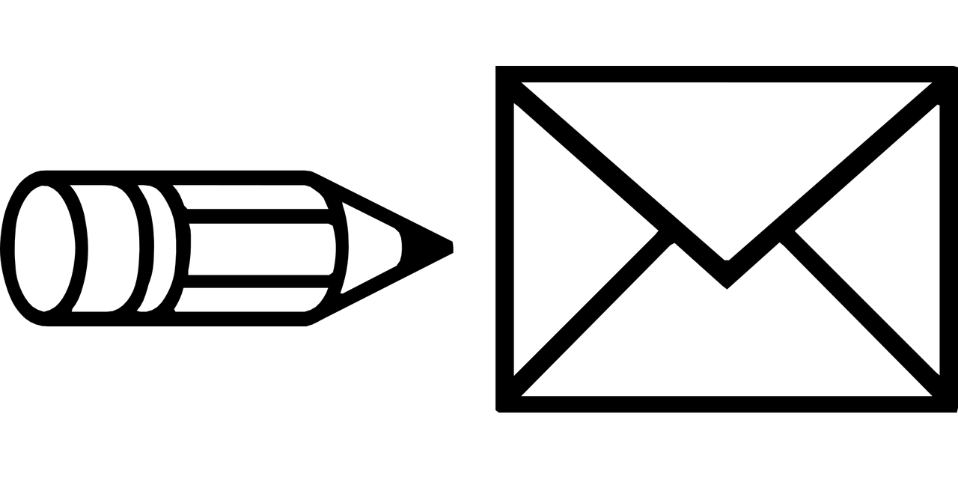
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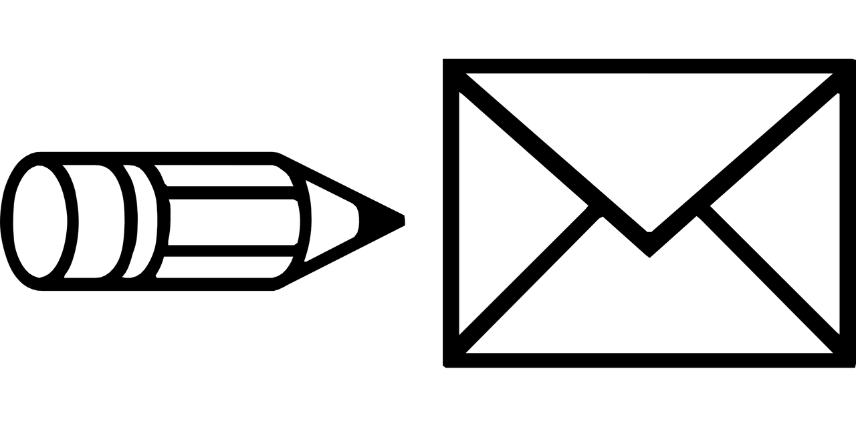
**Q: Describe one thing that you have learnt today that has surprised you.**

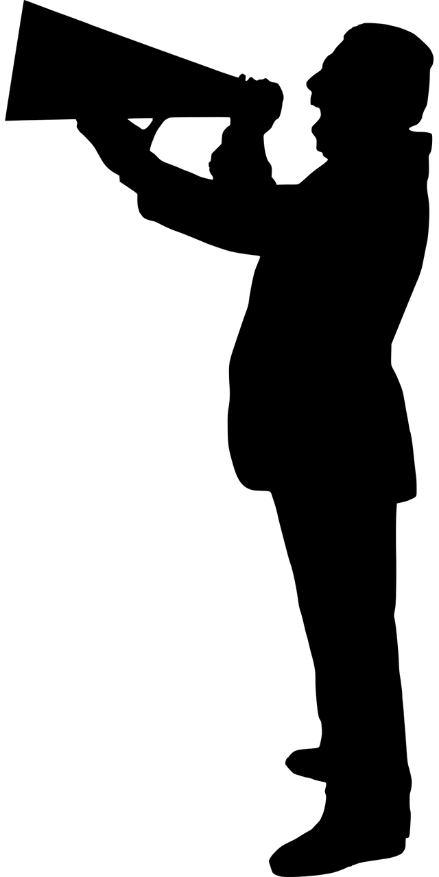
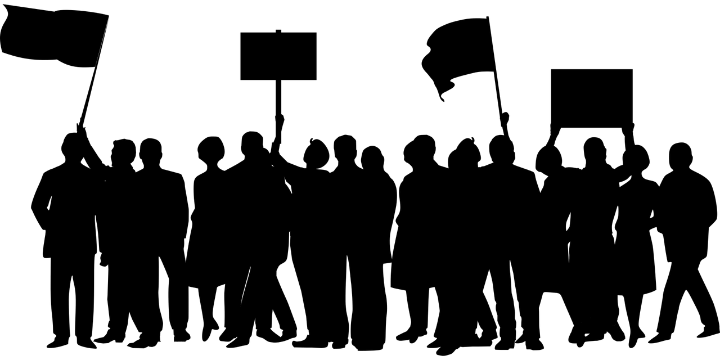
**Making my voice heard**

All citizens have the power to make their voices heard on matters which they feel are

important. You can …

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**E-mail your MP**

Part of an MPs job is to listen to their constituents and represent them in the House of Commons.

Find out more here: <https://www.parliament.uk/get-involved/contact-an-mp-or-lord/contact-your-mp/>

**Take part in a peaceful protest**

Come together with other people to peacefully express your views.

Due to the current coronavirus pandemic citizens are restricted from gathering together in person. However, peaceful protests could still take place virtually.

**Start or join a campaign**

Campaigning is all about raising

 public awareness of an issue in order to achieve a particular aim.

It not only educates the public about your issue, but also motivates them to speak and act in support of change.

**Petition the Government**

Any petition that gets 100,000 signatures or more will be considered for debate in the House of Commons.

Find out more here:

<https://petition.parliament.uk/>