



# RESOURCE SHEET 1 (v2)

## Human Rights Day newspaper article

### WORLD UNITES TO MARK HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

Nations around the world are today marking Human Rights Day, with parades, conferences and exhibitions to commemorate the moment when the world's governments signed up to respect 30 basic human rights.

Young people in the UK are being asked to do their bit too, with a special Amnesty International-inspired competition to find the best young human rights reporter of the year.

The 30 universal human rights include the right to speak freely, the right to adequate standards of living and health, the right to education, and the right not to be jailed unfairly, or tortured.

Everyone in the world, no matter what their gender, race, religion or sexual orientation, is entitled to have his or her rights respected and not abused.

These rights were laid out in a landmark document called the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (or UDHR). The document was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, just as the world was recovering from the horrific loss of life and freedom during the Second

World War.

'...In a world still reeling from the horrors of the Second World War, the Declaration was the first global statement of what we now take for granted -- the inherent dignity and equality of all human beings,' the current Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon said in 2008, during the 60th anniversary celebrations of the UDHR.

But human rights abuses still go on in many parts of the world, affecting millions of people.

Hundreds of people are in prison because of their beliefs or opinions. Torture is practised in more than 100 countries. People die from preventable illnesses because of poverty and a lack of vaccines. In some countries, children are forced to work instead of going to school. Some are forcibly removed from their families and sent to work abroad.

The UDHR is not a law, but its principles are the basis of many legally binding international treaties that aim to stop abuse of human rights.

One of these international treaties is the United Nations

Convention on the Rights of the Child. This defines 42 different children's rights including the right to education, the right to play and the right to a family – and the duty of states and families.

The UDHR has been the foundation stone for many countries' own laws to protect human rights, such as the UK's Human Rights Act 1998.

Human Rights Day, which takes place every year on 10 December, reminds people of the importance of human rights to everyone. It also underlines how easily many human rights are abused in many places.

Getting young people to think about human rights is key to ensuring these rights are better protected and respected in the future.

The Amnesty International Young Human Rights Reporter of the Year competition, held in conjunction with The Guardian newspaper and MA Education, aims to encourage young people to write about human rights issues from their perspective.

■ To find out more, see [amnesty.org.uk/youthawards](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/youthawards)