

4.1 HUMAN RIGHTS

4.1.1 HUMAN RIGHTS: NEEDS AND FREEDOMS



Human rights include the right to life, the right to believe what you want and the right to have a family. Governments do not give citizens these rights, so they cannot take them away either. Everyone has these rights from birth. We have them because we are human.

Human rights are related to our basic needs. 'Basic needs' are things that people need to survive. These needs include having enough food to eat, having clean water to drink and having access to healthcare when we get sick.

These needs also include some basic freedoms. Basic freedoms refer to things that people need to be able to do to live free, happy lives. These include the freedom to express our opinions and to practice our religion. Having access to resources (e.g. food, water and shelter) and enjoying these freedoms are our basic rights as human beings.

The most important document related to human rights is the United Nations' Universal **Declaration** of Human Rights (UDHR).



Rights from birth	Rights from the government
<p><u>Example answer:</u> 2. Everyone has the rights in this declaration regardless of race, gender, colour, language or political beliefs.</p>	<p><u>Example answer:</u> 26. Right to free basic education that promotes understanding and tolerance.</p>

Exercise

Put the rights from the UDHR into a table. Some rights can go in more than one column.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

- All human beings are born equal with freedom, dignity, reason and conscience.
- Everyone has the rights in this declaration regardless of race, gender, colour, language or political beliefs.
- Right to life, liberty and security.
- Right to freedom from slavery.
- Right to freedom from torture, cruel, inhuman, or degrading punishment.
- Right to recognition as a person before the law.
- Right to equality and protection before the law.
- Right to compensation for violation of fundamental rights.
- Right to be free from **arbitrary** arrest, detention or exile.
- Right to a fair and public hearing (trial).
- Right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty.
- Right to privacy and freedom from interference in home and family.
- Right to freedom of movement and residence and to leave or return to a country.
- Right to seek **asylum** from persecution.
- Right to nationality.
- Right to freedom of consenting marriage and equality within marriage. The right to have a family.
- Right to own property and not be arbitrarily deprived of it.
- Right to freedom of thought, conscience and religious beliefs.
- Right to freedom of opinion, **expression** and to give or receive information.
- Right to freedom of **assembly** and **association**.
- Right to take part in government and to vote in regularly held elections. The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government.
- Right to social security, economic, social and cultural development.
- Right to employment, fair working conditions, equal pay and to join unions.
- Right to rest, leisure and holidays.
- Right to an adequate **standard of living**, food, clothing, housing and medical care.
- Right to free basic education that promotes understanding and tolerance.
- Right to participation in cultural life, arts and sciences of the community.
- Right to a social and international order that recognises these rights.
- Everyone has duties and responsibilities to respect the rights and freedoms of others.
- Nothing in this declaration permits (allows) acts that destroy any of the rights and freedoms established in it.

Activity

Needs and Freedoms



1. In groups, identify your six most basic needs.
Example: food, shelter
2. Identify your six most basic freedoms.
Example: speech, marriage and children
3. Look at the UDHR on page 95. Identify which rights are related to these needs and freedoms.

Discussion

1. Is there anything that stops people from meeting their basic needs in your community?
2. What would need to change in your community to make sure that everyone's basic needs are met?
3. Is there anything that stops people from enjoying basic freedoms in your community?
4. What would need to change in your community to make sure that basic freedoms were available to everyone?

Reflection

1. What things are most important for you in life? Which human rights support or protect those things?
2. Have you or someone close to you ever been the victim of a human rights abuse? What happened? How did it make you feel?

4.1.2 HUMAN RIGHTS AND COMMUNITY

PREVIEW

Why are human rights important in a community?

It's very important that people know about their human rights.

Why?

Because this is the first step in defending them.

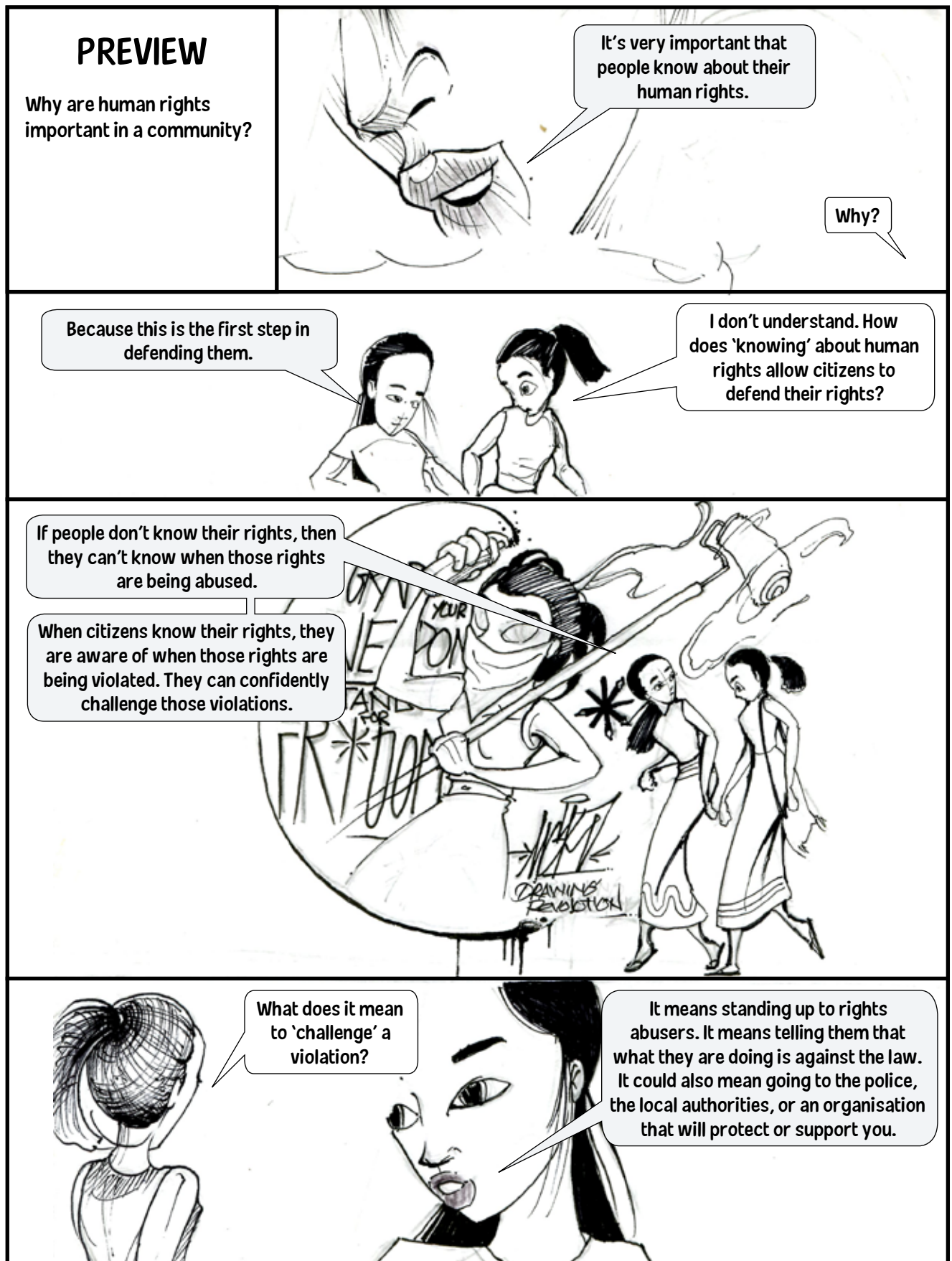
I don't understand. How does 'knowing' about human rights allow citizens to defend their rights?

If people don't know their rights, then they can't know when those rights are being abused.

When citizens know their rights, they are aware of when those rights are being violated. They can confidently challenge those violations.

What does it mean to 'challenge' a violation?

It means standing up to rights abusers. It means telling them that what they are doing is against the law. It could also mean going to the police, the local authorities, or an organisation that will protect or support you.





Exercise

Even though every person is born with human rights, these rights are often violated. These rights might be violated by other individuals, businesses or governments. When people do not know what their rights are, it is much easier for others to violate their human rights without any consequences.

Myanmar has signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Therefore, if a Myanmar citizen's rights are abused, they can use this document to show that the government is neglecting one of its responsibilities.

Myanmar has also signed other important documents related to human rights. These include:

- The International Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- The Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women;
- The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Match the list of violations with rights in the UDHR on page 95.

- a. Soldiers force people to leave their homes to build a factory on that land.
Example answer: 3, 13, 17, 25
- b. A factory pours waste into the river. This pollutes the village water supply. The water becomes unsafe for villagers to drink.
- c. A fishing boat forces its workers to work 16 hours per day, seven days a week in dangerous conditions.
- d. The people in a village are told to leave the area because the land is being used for a new farm.
- e. A journalist is arrested because she reported on a corrupt politician.
- f. Organisers of a peaceful demonstration are told that they will be sent to prison if they don't cancel the event.
- g. Someone is held in prison for a month without being accused of any crime.
- h. **Activists** are prevented from forming an organisation that raises awareness about social and political issues.
- i. Members of a religious minority are not allowed to teach in government schools.



Focus on Myanmar

Myanmar National Human Rights Commission

Extract from the mandate of the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission.

1. Duties and Powers of the Commission are as follows:

- (a). providing information and education to increase awareness of human rights and reduce discrimination;
- (b). making sure that international and national human rights laws are followed;
- (c). listening to and investigating citizen's complaints about human rights violations;
- (d). visiting the places where these human rights violations may have happened;
- (e). investigating the places where human rights violations may have happened (including prisons and jails);
- (f). working together with civil society organizations, businesses, labour organizations, ethnic organizations, minorities and academic organisations on human rights issues;
- (g). working with other national, regional and international human rights organisations;
- (h). working on human rights issues sent to the Commission by the Government;
- (i). working on human rights issues sent to the Commission by the President;
- (j). writing reports about the activities of the Commission;
- (k). carrying out any other tasks related to the activities of the Commission;
- (l). writing a yearly report on the situation of human rights in Myanmar;
- (m). writing special reports on human rights issues to the President;

3. The Commission will have the right to:

- (a). act independently on matters that it is responsible for;
- (b). act independently on financial management and administrative matters according to the law;



Myanmar National Human Right Commission (2015), "Duties and Powers of the Commission", available from <http://mnhrc.org.mm/en/about/mandate/>

Answer the questions.

1. What does the MNHRC do to raise awareness about human rights?
2. What kinds of things does the MNHRC do if someone complains about a rights abuse to them?
3. Which other organisations does the MNHRC work with?
4. Why is it important that the MNHRC can act independently?

Exercise

Activity

Mapping Human Rights

- In groups, draw a map of your town or neighbourhood. Include:
 - homes, major public buildings (e.g., parks, post office, city hall, schools, places of worship);
 - public services (e.g. hospitals, fire department, police station, cemetery);
 - any other places that are important to the community (e.g. grocery stores, cinemas, petrol stations).
- What human rights do you associate with different places on your maps? e.g.
 - a place of worship (e.g. pagodas, mosques, temples or churches) – freedom of thought and religion;
 - a school – the right to education;
 - a post office – the right to information, to privacy, and to expression.
- As you identify these rights, look up the relevant article(s) in the UDHR. Write the article number(s) next to that place on the map.
- Discuss these questions:
 - Are there any places in this community where people's rights are protected?
 - Are there any places in this community where people's rights are violated?
 - What happens in this community when someone's human rights are violated?
- Present your map to the class.

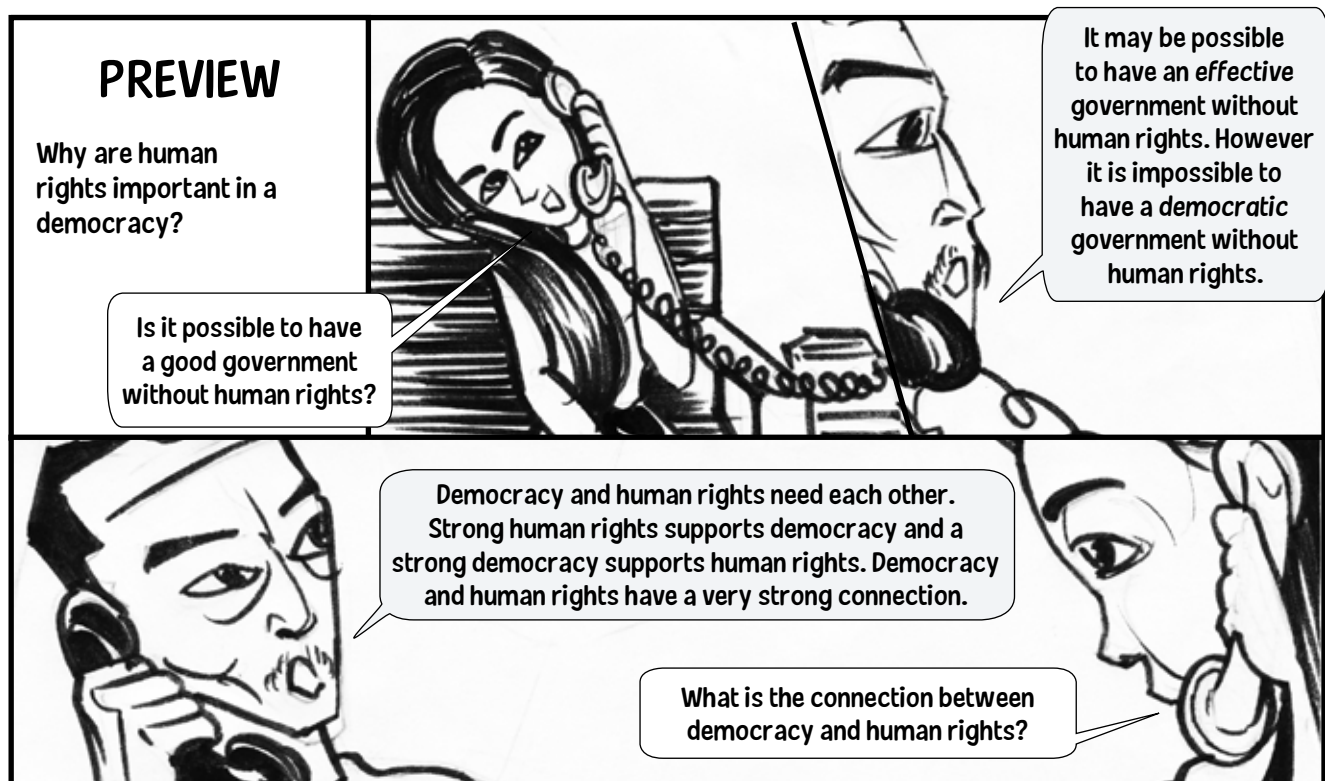
Discussion

- What are the most important human rights that people have in your community?
- Which human rights are weak in your community?
- What can be done to protect or strengthen those rights in your community?

Reflection

- Do you do anything to strengthen human rights in your community? Give examples.
- Do you do anything to weaken human rights in your community? Give examples.

4.1.3 HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY



Human rights are one of the foundations of democracy. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights includes democratic government as a human right. It says that 'the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government' (Article 21).

Democracy cannot work without human rights. Human rights guarantee that all people have the same rights to take part in decisions that affect their communities. These include the right to vote and to stand as a candidate in elections.

A. FREEDOM RIGHTS (FREEDOM TO...)

Freedom rights give citizens the *freedom to* do something. They include freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of association and freedom from discrimination. These rights are necessary for citizens to participate in a democracy. For example:

- Without freedom of speech, candidates cannot explain to their community why they should be elected.
- Without freedom of assembly, people cannot gather together to hear candidates speak or debate issues.
- Without freedom of association, people cannot work together to form political parties and civil society organisations.
- Without freedom from discrimination, some people can be excluded from taking part in decision-making.

Exercise

Classify the following as either abuses of, or good uses of freedom rights.

- A journalist gets messages that tell her to be quiet or her family will be hurt.
Example answer: *abuse*
- A group of farmers gather in the town centre to tell people about the effects of pollution on their farmland.
- The government makes it illegal to be a member of a workers' rights organisation.
- The government makes a law that requires all courts to have translators for people who cannot speak the majority language well.
- Government jobs are only given to members of the majority ethnic group.
- A group of musicians and poets organise a concert called "Songs against Corruption". They sing songs about human rights and democracy.



B. SECURITY RIGHTS (FREEDOM FROM...)

Security rights protect citizens from abuse. They give citizens *freedom from* unfair treatment. Democracy needs citizens to participate without fear of violence or unfair punishment. This requires confidence and security. Security rights support democracy by protecting citizens from harm and empowering them to participate.

Security rights protect citizens from being illegally threatened, harmed or arrested by the government. They make sure that the government can only arrest or punish people according to clear legal processes that are followed in the correct way. These legal processes might include:

- A person who is arrested and put in prison must be told the reasons for their arrest.
- A person who is arrested appear in a court within 24 hours of their arrest.
- A person who is **detained** has the right to see a lawyer.

These rights (and the laws that protect them) protect citizens from inhumane treatment. This includes freedom from:

- unfair actions of the government, military or police;
- being punished without a good reason;
- torture;
- being searched or arrested without a good reason;
- being denied access to a lawyer/due process;
- corruption;
- violence and intimidation.

Security rights protect people from fear, intimidation and violence. Citizens will not express their views freely if they are living in fear. Security rights give citizens the confidence to take part in democracy, express their ideas freely and criticise government. Without them, democracy cannot survive.

Are the statements true or false? If false, explain why.

- Security rights support democracy by making citizens afraid to criticise the government.
- Security rights make it harder for the police to arrest someone without a good reason.
- Security rights do not protect people from violence and intimidation if they are unpopular in the community.
- Security rights protect citizens from abuses of power.
- Security rights include the right to see a lawyer if you are arrested.
- Security rights can be ignored if people don't have enough money to pay a bribe.



Exercise



Focus on Myanmar

On Human Rights, from *Civics for High School*, 1953

Sometimes people are **brainwashed** by leaders and powerful groups to have one opinion or one belief. This only benefits those leaders and powerful groups. It is bad for society. Therefore, people must have the right to have diverse thoughts and opinions.

Everyone has beliefs that they feel strongly about. If those thoughts do not disturb the peace, the government should allow people to have them. It is especially important to let people freely practice their religion. The Constitution of Myanmar allows citizens to practice traditional spirit worship and other major religions. If citizens want the right to freely practice their own religion, they should also allow others to do so. People should not say that their religion is better than others. They should not say that other religions' beliefs are false.

People have different ideas. They want to talk about those ideas freely in public. If the government does not allow citizens to speak freely, they will be angry and **riot**. Therefore, we should allow freedom of speech. However, some kinds of speech can create misunderstanding or conflict among races or nations. Some speech can attack the dignity of the country, or groups or of individuals. This kind of speech should be controlled.

Freedom of speech, freedom of assembly and freedom of association are all very important for democratic discussions. Citizens should be free to express their ideas in newspapers and journals.

It is important that the law applies equally to everyone. It should treat rich and poor, and majority and minorities in the same way.

The opportunity to have good education should be for all citizens, not only for the rich and powerful. It is the responsibility of the government to remove any obstacles that stop people from getting an education.... The government should also offer fair work opportunities. It should make sure that poor people do not need to do hard labouring jobs which hurt their bodies.

Ba Pe (1953), 'Civics for High Schools', KEM Burma Pg 23-36 (Myanmar Version)



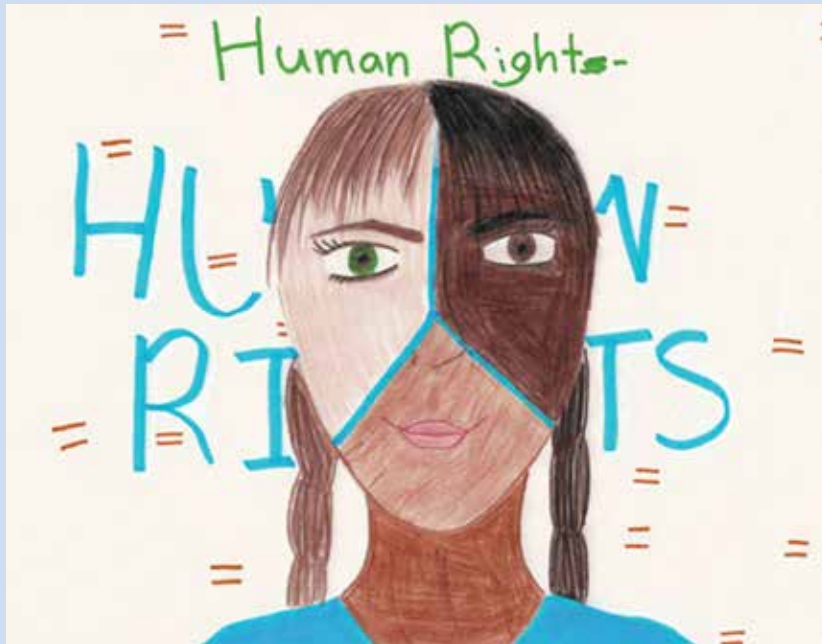
Exercise

1. Which rights does U Ba Pe say are important in a democracy?
2. Which responsibilities does U Ba Pe say comes with these rights?
3. What does U Ba Pe say that the government should do to help people enjoy these rights?

Activity

Human Rights Poster

1. In groups, choose one of the rights in the UDHR that is related to democracy.



Make a poster with:

- the title/text of the right (on the back of the poster);
 - a picture that shows why this right is important for democracy (the front of the poster).
2. Write your right on the back of your poster, and put it on the wall.
 3. Walk around the room and decide which right in the UDHR each poster is about.

Discussion

1. Why is democracy good at protecting human rights?
2. Why are freedom rights important in a democracy?
3. Why are security rights important in a democracy?
4. What can people do to defend their human rights in a democracy?

Reflection

1. What makes you feel empowered to take part in decision-making?
2. Which rights can protect or strengthen your empowerment?

4.2 FREEDOMS OF SPEECH, ASSEMBLY, ASSOCIATION, AND EQUALITY

4.2.1 FREEDOM OF SPEECH

PREVIEW

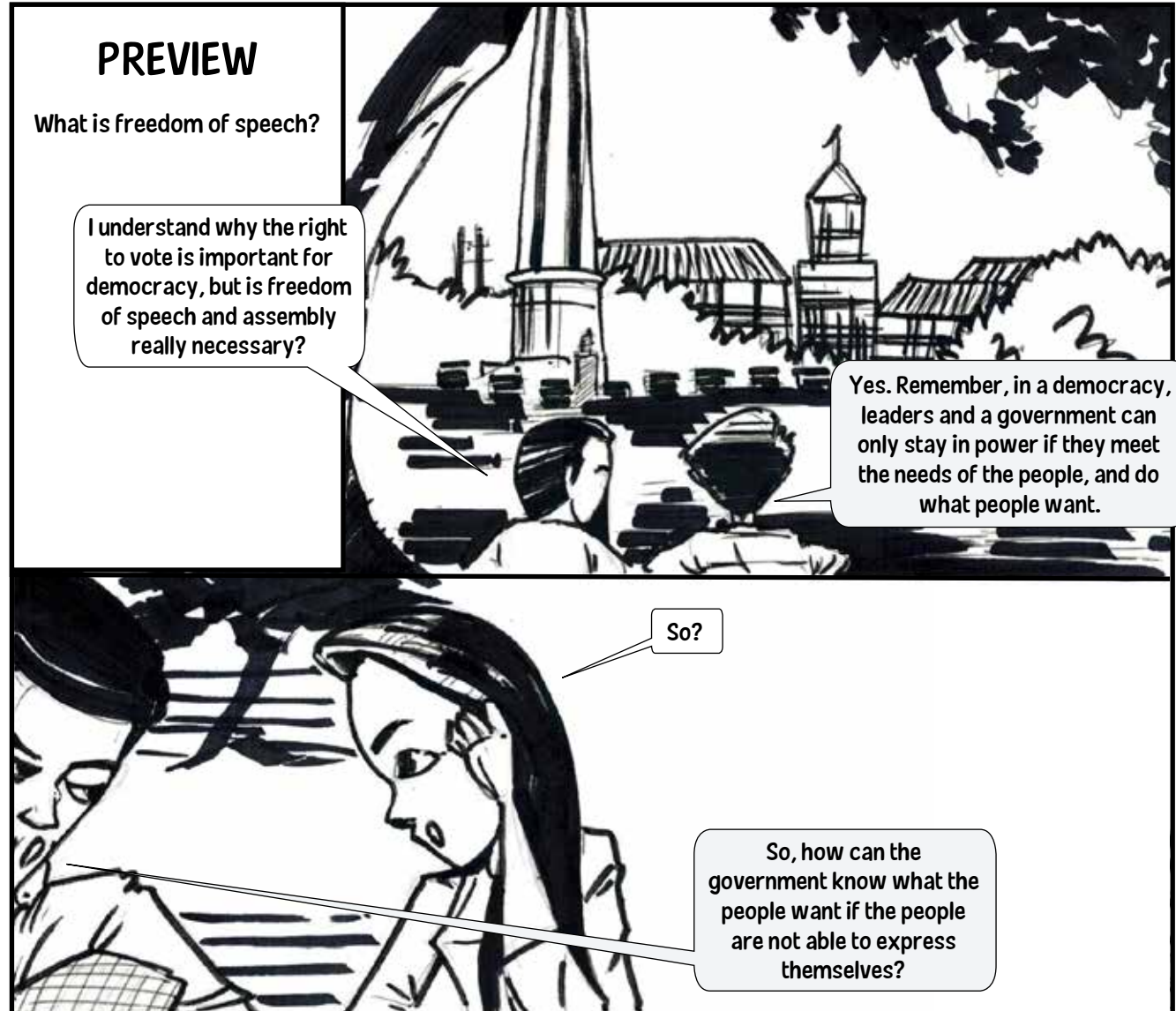
What is freedom of speech?

I understand why the right to vote is important for democracy, but is freedom of speech and assembly really necessary?

Yes. Remember, in a democracy, leaders and a government can only stay in power if they meet the needs of the people, and do what people want.

So?

So, how can the government know what the people want if the people are not able to express themselves?



Freedom of speech (freedom of expression) is necessary for democracy. It makes sure that every citizen has the right to be heard. It should never be limited without a very good reason (e.g. speech that encourages violence or puts people in danger). Freedom of speech includes the right to communicate information and ideas to others (e.g. giving speeches, commenting on social media and writing articles or a **blog**). It also includes the right to receive information and ideas.

Freedom of speech supports democracy in the following ways:

- It makes sure that everyone's ideas can be heard. This allows the best ideas to win debates. It also helps everyone to understand other people's situations and viewpoints, which can reduce conflict.
- It allows citizens to become informed about what is happening in their country. Informed citizens can make better decisions. This is important because democratic citizens are responsible for choosing their government.
- Freedom of speech is also necessary because it allows communication between the government and the people. Citizens must be able free to write and speak freely about the government. The government can see how popular their actions and decisions are, and change their policies if necessary.

However, freedom of speech does not mean that people can say anything they want. For example, hate speech (when someone makes speeches that encourage people to use violence) is not protected by freedom of speech. These limits on freedom of speech are often written in a country's constitution.



1. Which of the following is NOT a benefit of freedom of speech in a democracy?
 - a. It leads to more ideas to help solve problems.
 - b. It helps citizens to understand each other's needs better.
 - c. Only the most educated can express their opinions.
2. Which of the following is NOT a positive result of freedom of speech?
 - a. Citizens can make more informed decisions.
 - b. The government can understand the people's needs better.
 - c. Citizens with unpopular views can't express their opinions.
3. Which of the following does freedom of speech NOT allow?
 - a. speech that encourages violence
 - b. criticism of democracy
 - c. criticism of the government

Exercise



Focus on Myanmar

Freedom of Speech vs. Hate Speech

Blogger and activist Nay Phone Latt started the Panzagar (flower speech) **campaign** last week, which aims to oppose hate speech. Hate speech involves attacking a person or group on the basis of race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation.

Q: What made you start this campaign?

A: The conversations on the internet are becoming bad. When we **advocate** for free speech, reducing hate speech is included. ... Speech calling for hitting or killing someone is hate speech, it can spread hate among people and is a risk for society.

Hate speech is not only found on social media. It is also included in some public talks and print media. Those groups who are trying to spread hate speech are causing violence and conflicts in our country.

I discussed this issue with other civil society groups, to start an anti-hate speech campaign. First we released the slogan, “Let’s not use our speech to spread hate among people”, then we named our organisation “Panzagar” (flower speech).

Q: What kind of activities does Panzagar do to achieve its goals?

A: We distribute stickers, posters and pamphlets in Yangon, and also in other states and regions. We are trying to spread the campaign message among the public first, but we are also focusing on powerful local leaders. If the people get the message, they will oppose those who are using dangerous hate speech.

Q: Does stopping hate speech harm freedom of speech?

A: Everyone has right to free speech but not to spread dangerous [hate] speech. We need to use our words responsibly. Limits on freedom of speech is a danger to freedom, but hate speech is also a danger to freedom.

There is a need to explain ourselves clearly. Some think that we are trying stopping the freedom of speech. The Panzagar campaign is not trying to limit freedom of speech, we are just asking people not to make hate speech that can harm society.

Adapted from: Aung, SU (2014), “Hate Speech Pours Poison into the Heart” Interviewed with Nay Phone Latt, The Irrawaddy (April 9, 2014), <http://www.irrawaddy.org/interview/hate-speech-pours-poison-heart.html>



Exercise

1. What is hate speech?
2. Why did Nay Phone Latt start the Panzagar campaign?
3. Is Nay Phone Latt trying to limit freedom of speech?

Activity

Protecting Freedom of Speech

Examine these cases. Should they be protected by freedom of speech? Why or why not?

- a. An activist burns the country's flag to protest against human rights violations.
Example answer: *Yes, because she is expressing herself without harming people.*
or
No, because burning the flag disrespects the country and weakens national unity.
- b. A political leader asks her followers to kill the leader of another political party.
- c. A journalist writes an article about a township official. It says that he is corrupt and that people should protest to try to get him removed from his position.
- d. An activist writes on their Facebook page that people should not pay their taxes to protest against the government.
- e. A newspaper writes an article that says that people from one cultural group should not be allowed to wear their traditional clothes or celebrate their festivals in public.
- f. A religious leader makes speeches saying that people of other religions should be forced to leave the community.
- g. A group of students start a debate club to debate current political issues. They start a Facebook page to promote their discussions and share their views with the community.
- h. The local government removes books from the public library. It says that they insult the country and its culture.
- i. A violent revolutionary group distributes an article that encourages people to join their fight against the government.

Discussion

1. Why is freedom of speech important in a democracy?
2. Why is freedom of speech important in your community?
3. Is there anything that stops people from expressing themselves in your community?
4. Does anyone use freedom of speech in an irresponsible way in your community? What effect does this have?

Reflection

1. Has anyone ever said something that hurt you or someone you know?
2. Have you ever heard anyone say anything that caused violence or hatred?
3. In either of these cases, do you think that what they said should be banned? Why?

4.2.2 FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AND FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

PREVIEW

1. What is freedom of association?
2. What is freedom of assembly?

What is freedom of association?

Democratic citizens have the right to express their opinions. This leads to people with similar beliefs joining together in groups. This is why freedom of association and freedom of assembly are so important in a democracy.

The right to freedom of association protects the right to join or form associations, such as political parties and CSOs.

Why is that necessary for a democracy?

Associations allow groups of citizens to work together. This gives people a louder voice to let the government know what they want. Associations can also make democratic politics more organised.

Can you explain more?

A. FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

Freedom of association means that people have the right to form or join organisations. These include **civil society organisations**, community groups, **faith-based** groups, trade unions and political parties. Freedom of association also means they have the right to not join or support organisations if they don't want to.

Freedom of association protects the rights of individuals to work towards shared goals. It allows active citizens to group together when there is a common problem or need to be met. For example:

- Factory workers form a labour union to promote their rights and interests.
- Villagers form an association to protest against corruption or pollution.

Citizens have more power when they are united in a group. Free associations allow citizens to have a louder voice in public debates. This helps to balance the power of the people and the government. This can strengthen transparency, accountability and participation.



The right to association also includes the right to *not* be a member of a group. For example, this right protects people from being forced to join a political party or trade union if they don't want to. This helps prevent discrimination against people who are not members of a group, or groups forcing people to become members when they don't want to.

Are the statements true or false? If false, explain why.

- Freedom of association does not include the right to join religious organisations.
- Freedom of association helps citizens to achieve their goals by working together.
- Freedom of association gives citizens a louder voice when expressing their concerns to the government.
- Freedom of association includes the right not to join an organisation.

Exercise



Exercise

Match the violations with the four rules in 4.2.2 B.

- a. The organisers of a protest tell participants to bring weapons to show how powerful they are.
Example answer:
3. Manner, because protesters should not carry weapons with them at a peaceful protest.
- b. A big celebration is planned during the funeral of a popular religious leader.
- c. A group of football supporters gather to fight against supporters of the other team.
- d. An anti-immigrant group plans a protest march through a neighbourhood where many immigrants live.

B. FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

Freedom of assembly means that people have the right to meet peacefully without interference from others. This includes meetings, political speeches, marches and demonstrations.

Freedom of assembly allows groups of people to peacefully express their views. They may want to discuss a problem, exchange ideas, encourage public support for a cause, or gather support for a candidate or party in an election. This promotes participation in a democracy.

Freedom of assembly allows groups of citizens to show their support or disagreement much more powerfully than when they act alone. Large gatherings are often reported by the media. This increases the chance that the government will listen to their needs and concerns.

However, there are rules about freedom of assembly. These include rules about the intention, time, manner and place of an event.

1. **INTENTION:** They should not lead to public disorder or disturb the peace in society.
2. **TIME:** They should not be held during important holidays, or other sensitive dates (e.g. religious celebrations) or times (e.g. in the middle of the night).
3. **MANNER:** it should be non-violent (e.g. protesters should not carry weapons with them).
4. **PLACE:** it should not take place in areas that will cause offense to the people living there.

These rules make sure that protests and demonstrations do not violate the rights of other citizens. This means that any gatherings that could lead to human rights abuses (e.g. by encouraging violence through hate speech) can be prevented to protect other citizens. However, as long as the assembly is peaceful and does not violate the rights of others, there is no reason why it should be banned.





Focus on Myanmar

Paung Ku

Background:

Paung Ku aims to strengthen and empower smaller civil society organisations throughout Myanmar. It was established in 2007 by a group of international and local organisations. In 2013, Paung Ku became an independent local NGO.

Paung Ku wants a diverse society in Myanmar that values all ethnicities, cultures and beliefs. It aims for a society based on equality and respect for the rights of all (particularly those who are marginalised). It supports development that empowers poorer people and is environmentally **sustainable**.

Paung Ku wants Myanmar to have a strong civil society. It supports organisations that work for freedom, justice and rights in Myanmar. It provides resources and opportunities to local organisations who are trying to achieve positive change and create peace in their communities.

Main Activities:

Small loans: Providing small amounts of money that allow local organisations to carry out projects and activities. This helps them address needs in their communities and/or express their communities' concerns to the government.

Meetings and trainings: Organising meetings and trainings on important topics such as on **land rights** laws, or on organisational development issues such as financial management. This helps them to be stronger, more professional organisations that can participate more effectively.

Building networks: connecting civil society partners to other civil society organisations within Myanmar. This includes linking groups based in rural areas with urban groups, and linking CSOs to the government. This helps civil society groups to work together to express their needs and concerns to the government.

Adapted from: International Institute of Social Studies in The Hague (no date), "Paung Ku", http://www.iss.nl/research/research_programmes/political_economy_of_resources_environment_and_population_per/networks/mosaic/partners_profiles/paung_ku/



1. How did Paung Ku start?
2. What are Paung Ku's goals?
3. What kind of activities do they do to achieve those goals?
4. In what way does Paung Ku support freedom of assembly and freedom of association?

Exercise

Activity

Know Your Rights 1

1. Examine these cases and decide if they are violations of freedom of assembly or not. Give reasons for your answer.
 - a. An anti-war group peacefully protests at soldiers' funerals.
Example answer: *Violation, because it is disrespectful to the soldiers and their families (place).*
or
No violation, because they are protesting peacefully in a public place.
 - b. A racist group wants to hold public marches through an ethnic minority neighbourhood.
 - c. A religious group organises a demonstration against gender equality.
 - d. The government stops an ethnic group from celebrating their national day because they say it weakens national unity.
 - e. A group of women chain themselves to a school gate to protest against gender discrimination in the education system.
 - f. A nationalist group holds a demonstration where they burn images of other ethnic groups' leaders and symbols.
2. Examine these cases and decide if they are violations of freedom of association or not. Give reasons for your answer.
 - a. An international religious organisation wants to open an office that will only provide services to people of their religion.
 - b. The government makes an organisation illegal because it is against democracy.
 - c. A women's empowerment group does not allow men to join. They say that including men will reduce the effectiveness of their trainings.
 - d. A township action committee is formed that does not accept women. They claim that including women will reduce the effectiveness of their decision-making.
 - e. An ethnic group wants to open their own schools that do not teach the government curriculum, in order to protect their language and culture.
 - f. A trade union in a factory made an agreement with the owners that all workers must be members of the union. The workers do not have a choice to join the union or not.

Discussion

1. How is freedom of assembly and association important in your community?
2. What kinds of organisations are working in your community?
3. Are any of their activities irresponsible?
4. In what ways do people make use of freedom of assembly in your community?
5. Are any of these irresponsible? Why?

Reflection

1. How does freedom of assembly (or violations of it) affect you personally? How does this make you feel?
2. How does freedom of association (or violations of it) affect you personally? How does this make you feel?

4.2.3 THE RIGHT TO EQUALITY

PREVIEW
What is the right to equality?

The right to equality protects citizens from discrimination.

What is discrimination?

Discrimination is when government, businesses or other powerful groups treat people unfairly because of their ethnicity, religion, gender or sexuality. It is important that all citizens in a democracy are treated equally.

Yes, I remember that. But if citizens have the same rights to vote and to stand in elections, isn't that equality?

No, even if citizens have those rights, other kinds of discrimination can prevent them from fully participating in democracy. The right to equality aims to reduce or prevent all kinds of discrimination.

How does it do that?

In a democracy, equality (or freedom from discrimination) usually refers to people having the same rights or freedoms.

The right to equality makes sure that individuals and minority groups are not discriminated against. It also protects their rights to freely express their lifestyle, language and culture. The right to equality supports democracy because it builds respect and tolerance in diverse communities.

Marginalised groups are often the victim of rights abuses or discrimination. As a result, there are international treaties to protect the rights of these groups. These include:

- **WOMEN:** Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women;
- **INDIGENOUS PEOPLE:** Declaration on the Rights of **Indigenous** People;
- **REFUGEES:** the 1951 Refugee Convention;
- **MIGRANT WORKERS:** International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families;
- **DISABLED PEOPLE:** Declaration on the Rights of People with Disabilities;
- **RACIAL GROUPS:** Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination;
- **LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER GROUPS:** A **treaty** on the rights of LGBT groups is currently being discussed at the United Nations.

Poverty (financial inequality) can also be a great danger for democracy. Poverty can stop people from taking part in democracy. When this happens, decisions do not reflect the interests of poor people. This can lead to social problems that weaken the stability of a democracy.

Exercise

Are the statements true or false? If false, explain why.

- a. The right to equality protects minorities' rights to practice their culture.
- b. The right to equality is not important in diverse communities.
- c. Poverty can stop people from participating in democracy.





Focus on Myanmar

Equality Myanmar

Background:

Established in 2000, Equality Myanmar has offices in Myanmar and Thailand, and human rights education training centres in Yangon and Mandalay.

Equality Myanmar's mission is to empower the people of Myanmar through human rights education to engage in social change and promote a culture of human rights for all.

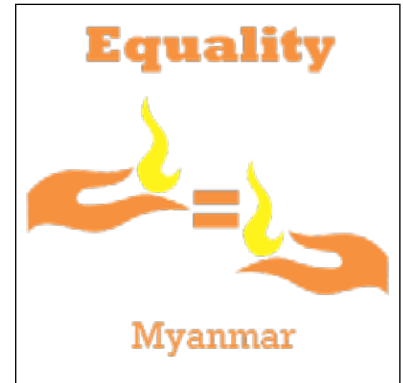
Main Activities:

Human rights education, advocacy programs, and research projects which target civil society organisations and **grassroots** communities.

Additionally, the organisation produces human rights educational materials, audio/visual tools, and other multimedia resources. These resources provide an opportunity to learn about human rights issues for people who cannot attend trainings. They include TV episodes, booklets, posters, animations, and magazines.

Since 2000, EQMM has trained over 1,000 women, students, activists, teachers, and religious and community leaders. It is building a network of human rights trainers and advocates across the country and along Myanmar's border regions.

Equality Myanmar (no date), <http://equalitymyanmar.org/>



Answer the questions.

1. What is the goal of Equality Myanmar?
2. What kind of activities does Equality Myanmar do?
3. Which groups does Equality Myanmar work with?

Exercise

Activity

Know Your Rights 2

Examine these cases and decide whether the right to equality was violated. If so, should the violation be allowed?

- a. A faith-based school only allows children from its religious group to attend.

Example answer: Violation. Schools should allow all students, otherwise some children might not be able to attend school.

or

No violation. If they are teaching about their religion, they have the right to only accept students who believe in that religion.

- b. The local government only employs people who speak the majority language.
- c. A private employer from an ethnic minority group only employs people from that minority.
- d. A man does not allow his sister's husband (who belongs to a different religion) to come to their home.
- e. Ma Kay Thi was seriously ill but when she went to the hospital the doctors didn't treat her because she was in the country illegally.
- f. Ma Nyo Wai and Ko Kyaw Htet are both employed to do the same job. They both have the same qualifications and experience but Ma Nyo Wai gets a lower salary than Ko Kyaw Htet.
- g. U Kyaw Win cannot get a job as a doctor in the local hospital because of his religion.

Discussion

1. Why is the right to equality important in a democracy?
2. Does everyone have the right to express their lifestyle, language and culture in your community? Why or why not?
3. Does poverty stop people from participating in democracy in your community? What effect does this have?
4. What kinds of discrimination can you see in your community?
5. What could be done to reduce discrimination in your community?

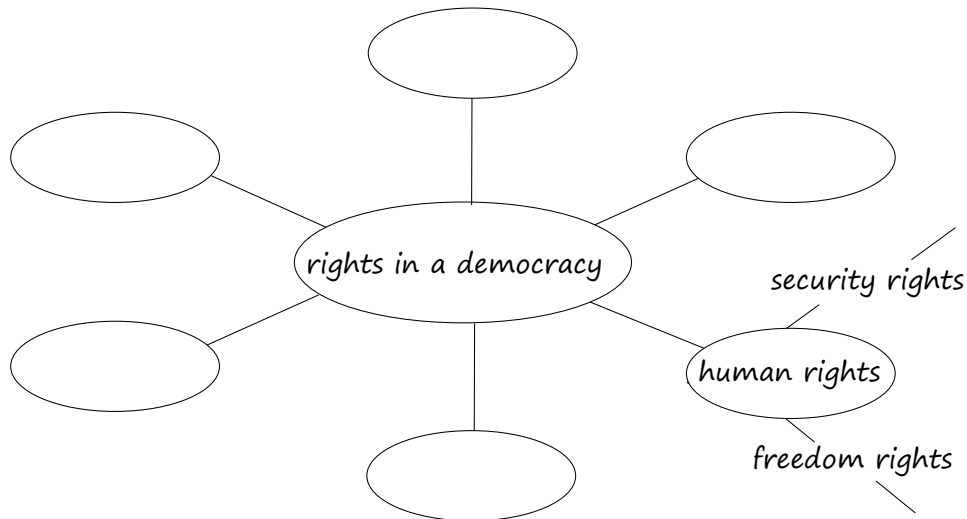
Reflection

1. Have you ever felt that you were discriminated against? Why were you discriminated against? How does this make you feel?
2. Have you ever discriminated against someone? Why did you discriminate against them? How did that make you feel? How do you think it made them feel?

Unit 2 Review

Unit 2 Mind Map

Complete the mind map with important ideas you have learned in Unit 2.



Comprehension

1. What are rights and responsibilities?
2. What is a constitution?
3. Why are constitutions important in a democracy?
4. What is majority rule?
5. What are minority rights?
6. What is the relationship between rights and responsibilities in a democracy?
7. Why are responsibilities important in a democracy?
8. What is an active citizen?
9. What are some characteristics of an active citizen?
10. What is a civil society organisation?
11. What are some of the things that CSOs do?
12. What are human rights?
13. Why is it important that citizens are aware of their human rights?
14. What are some of the human rights treaties that Myanmar has signed?
15. Why are freedom rights important in a democracy?
16. Why are security rights important in a democracy?
17. Why is freedom of speech important in a democracy?
18. Are there any limits on freedom of speech in a democracy?
19. Why is freedom of association and assembly important in a democracy?
20. Are there any limits on freedom of association and assembly in a democracy?
21. Why is the right to equality important in a democracy?
22. How does poverty affect democracy?

Unit 2 Glossary

- activist (n) – တက်ကြွလှုပ်ရှားသူများ။
- advocate (v) – ရပ်တည်ပေးသည်။ အကြံပေးလှုံ့ဆော်သည်။
- affirmative action (n) – အနိမ့်ခံဘဝလွတ်မြောက်ရေး ပံ့ပိုးမှု။
- arbitrary (adj) – ထင်ရာစိုင်းသော၊ အာဏာရှင်ဆန်သော။
- assembly (n) – လူထုစည်းဝေးပွဲ။ တွေ့ဆုံပွဲ။
- association (n) – အဖွဲ့အစည်း။ အစုအဖွဲ့။
- asylum (n) – နိုင်ငံရေးအရ ခိုလှုံခွင့်ပြုခြင်း။
- autonomy (n) – ကိုယ်ပိုင်အုပ်ချုပ်ခွင့်။
- ban (v) – တားမြစ်သည်။
- bill of rights (n) – နိုင်ငံသားများ၏ မူလအခြေခံအခွင့်အရေးများ။
- blog (n, v) – အင်တာနက်ဘလော့စာမျက်နှာ။
- brainwash (v) – အယူအဆ တစ်စုံတစ်ရာ ရိုက်သွင်းသည်။
- campaign (n, v) – စည်းရုံးခြင်း။ စည်းရုံးသည်။
- civil service (n) – ပြည်သူ့ဝန်ဆောင်မှုများ၊ ပြည်သူ့ဝန်ထမ်းကဏ္ဍ။
- civil society organisation (CSO) (n) – အရပ်ဘက်အဖွဲ့အစည်း။
- compulsory (adj) – မဖြစ်မနေဆောင်ရွက်ရသော။
- constitution (n) – ဖွဲ့စည်းပုံအခြေခံ ဥပဒေ။
- court (n) – တရားရုံး။
- custody (n) – ဓလေ့ထုံးတမ်းအစဉ်အလာ။
- declaration (n) – ကြေညာစာတမ်း။
- detain (v) – ဖမ်းဆီး ထိန်းသိမ်းသည်။
- dictator (n) – အာဏာရှင်။
- discriminate (v) – ခွဲခြားဆက်ဆံသည်။
- empower (v) – စွမ်းရည်မြှင့်တင်ပေးသည်။
- entitlement (n) – အခွင့်အာဏာပိုင်မှု။
- equal opportunities (n) – တန်းတူညီမျှသော၊ အခွင့်အလမ်းများ။
- expression (n) – ဖော်ပြချက်။
- faith-based (adj) – ကိုးကွယ်ယုံကြည်မှု အခြေပြုသော။
- grassroots (n, adj) – အခြေခံလူထု၊ အခြေခံလူတန်းစား။
- hate speech (n) – အမုန်းပွားစေသော စကားများ။
- indigenous (adj) – ဌာနေ လူမျိုးစုဖြစ်သော။
- insurrection (n) – ပုန်ကန်၊ အာဏာသိမ်းမှု။
- just (adj) – မျှတသော။
- labour (n) – အလုပ်သမား။
- land rights (n) – လယ်ယာမြေ အခွင့်အရေး။
- legislative (adj) – ဥပဒေပြုသည်။
- microfinance (n) – အသေးစားငွေကြေးရင်းနှီးမြှုပ်နှံမှု။
- municipal (adj) – မြို့တော်/ မြို့နယ် စည်ပင်သာယာအစိုးရနှင့် ပတ်သက်သော။
- network (n, v) – ကွန်ရက်။ ကွန်ရက်ချိတ်ဆက်သည်။
- patent (n) – မူပိုင်ခွင့်။
- precautionary (adj) ကြိုတင်သတိပေးကာကွယ်သော။
- province (n) – တိုင်း၊ ခရိုင်။
- raise awareness (v) – အသိပညာ တိုးမြှင့်ပေးသည်။
- riot (v, n) – အဓိကရုဏ်း။
- stability (n) – တည်ငြိမ်မှု။
- standard of living (n) – လူနေမှုအဆင့်အတန်း။
- sustainable (adj) – ရေရှည်တည်မြဲစေသော။
- torture (n) – ညှင်းပန်းနှိပ်စက်မှု။
- treaty (n) – သဘောတူစာချုပ်။
- trial (n) – တရားခွင်။
- welfare (n) – လူမှုဖူလုံရေး။