

# declaration of the rights of man and citizen worksheet answers

## Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen Worksheet Answers

The Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen is a pivotal document in world history, particularly for its role in shaping modern concepts of democracy and human rights. Created during the French Revolution in 1789, this declaration established fundamental principles that inspired various human rights movements around the globe. In this article, we will explore the key components of the declaration, the historical context in which it was created, and provide comprehensive worksheet answers to help students understand its significance.

## Historical Context

The late 18th century was a period of immense social and political upheaval in France. Several factors contributed to the creation of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen:

### 1. Enlightenment Ideals

The Enlightenment was a philosophical movement that emphasized reason, individualism, and skepticism of authority. Thinkers like John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Voltaire advocated for:

- Natural Rights: The belief that individuals are born with rights that cannot be taken away, such as life, liberty, and property.
- Social Contract: The idea that government authority is derived from the consent of the governed.
- Equality: The notion that all individuals deserve equal treatment under the law.

These Enlightenment ideas profoundly influenced the French revolutionaries, who sought to create a society based on these principles.

### 2. Social Inequality

Before the revolution, French society was divided into three estates:

- First Estate: The clergy, who held significant power and privilege.
- Second Estate: The nobility, who enjoyed wealth and land.
- Third Estate: Commoners, including peasants and the bourgeoisie, who were burdened by heavy taxes and had little political power.

The Third Estate's discontent with their treatment and the privileges of the upper estates fueled demands for change.

### **3. The American Revolution**

The successful American Revolution (1775-1783) served as an inspiration for the French revolutionaries. The Declaration of Independence highlighted the importance of rights and freedoms, encouraging the French to pursue their own quest for liberty and equality.

## **Key Principles of the Declaration**

The Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen consists of 17 articles, each outlining specific rights and principles. Here are some of the key principles:

### **1. Equality Before the Law**

- Article 1 states that "men are born and remain free and equal in rights." This principle emphasizes that all individuals, regardless of their social status, are entitled to the same rights and legal protections.

### **2. Natural Rights**

- Articles 2 and 3 outline the natural rights of individuals, including liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression. These rights are inherent and cannot be surrendered.

### **3. Freedom of Speech and Religion**

- Article 11 guarantees freedom of speech and freedom of the press, while Article 10 protects the freedom of religion. These provisions underscore the importance of individual expression and belief systems.

### **4. Sovereignty of the People**

- Article 6 asserts that the law is the expression of the general will, emphasizing that the authority of government comes from the people. This principle laid the groundwork for democratic governance.

## **5. Right to Property**

- Article 17 states that "since property is an inviolable and sacred right," individuals have the right to own property without arbitrary interference. This principle is central to economic freedom.

## **Worksheet Answers: Analyzing the Declaration**

When studying the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, students may encounter various questions that require critical thinking and analysis. Here are some common worksheet questions along with detailed answers:

### **1. What was the significance of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen in the context of the French Revolution?**

The Declaration was significant because it:

- Established a set of universal principles that would guide the new French Republic.
- Served as a foundational document for future human rights legislation.
- Inspired revolutionary movements across Europe and the world, promoting the idea that individuals have inherent rights that must be protected by governments.

### **2. How did the Declaration reflect Enlightenment ideals?**

The Declaration embodies Enlightenment ideals through:

- Its emphasis on reason, equality, and individual rights.
- The belief in the social contract, where government derives its authority from the consent of the governed.
- The assertion that rights are natural and universal, applicable to all individuals regardless of status.

### **3. What were the limitations of the Declaration at the time of its creation?**

Despite its progressive nature, the Declaration had limitations, including:

- It primarily addressed the rights of men, largely excluding women and marginalized

groups.

- The implementation of these rights was inconsistent, as the revolutionary government sometimes violated the principles it espoused.
- The focus on individual rights often conflicted with the collective needs of society, leading to tensions during the revolution.

## **4. Discuss the impact of the Declaration on modern human rights movements.**

The Declaration has had a profound impact on modern human rights movements by:

- Serving as a model for other declarations and constitutions, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) adopted by the United Nations in 1948.
- Inspiring activists advocating for civil rights, women's rights, and social justice around the globe.
- Reinforcing the idea that human rights are universal and should be protected regardless of nationality, ethnicity, or gender.

## **5. How does the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen compare to the American Declaration of Independence?**

While both documents promote the idea of natural rights and the importance of government accountability, key differences include:

- The American Declaration focuses primarily on the rights of individuals in the context of governance, while the French Declaration explicitly emphasizes social equality and collective rights.
- The French Declaration emerged from a revolutionary context seeking to dismantle an existing social order, whereas the American Declaration sought independence from British rule.
- The French Declaration includes provisions for freedom of speech and religion in greater detail than the American Declaration.

## **Conclusion**

The Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen remains a cornerstone of democratic thought and human rights advocacy. Its principles not only shaped the course of the French Revolution but also laid the groundwork for future movements aimed at achieving equality and justice worldwide. Understanding this document is crucial for anyone studying history, politics, or human rights, as its legacy continues to influence societies around the globe. Through examining the worksheet answers and engaging with the material, students can gain a deeper appreciation for the rights and freedoms we often take for granted today.

# **Frequently Asked Questions**

## **What is the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen?**

The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen is a fundamental document of the French Revolution, adopted in 1789, that outlines the individual and collective rights of all citizens.

## **What are the key principles outlined in the Declaration?**

The key principles include liberty, equality, fraternity, the right to property, freedom of speech, and the right to resist oppression.

## **How does the Declaration influence modern human rights?**

The Declaration serves as a foundational text for modern human rights, influencing various international documents, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations in 1948.

## **What historical context led to the creation of the Declaration?**

The Declaration emerged from the social and political upheaval of the French Revolution, as the Third Estate sought to establish a new framework for governance and individual rights in response to the monarchy's abuses.

## **How does the Declaration address the role of law?**

The Declaration states that the law is the expression of the general will and that all citizens have the right to participate in its formation, highlighting the importance of legal equality and justice.

## **What was the impact of the Declaration on other countries?**

The Declaration inspired numerous movements for democracy and human rights across Europe and the world, encouraging revolutions and reforms aimed at establishing similar rights and freedoms.

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## **[Answers](#)**

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