Your notes

GCSE Citizenship Studies: revision notes

Human rights and international law

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International human rights

- **Human rights** are basic rights that belong to everyone because they are human.
- The Universal Declaration of **Human Rights** (**UDHR**) was agreed by the UN in 1948, after the Second World War. It has 30 articles, including the right to life, freedom from torture and freedom of speech.
- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (**UNCRC**), agreed in 1989, sets out rights for everyone under 18, such as the right to education, play and to be heard.
- The Geneva Conventions set rules for the treatment of prisoners, the wounded and civilians in war.

The ECHR and the Human Rights Act

- The European Convention on **Human Rights** (**ECHR**) was drawn up by the Council of Europe in 1950. Cases can go to the European Court of **Human Rights** in Strasbourg.
- The **Human Rights Act 1998** brought the **ECHR** into UK law, so people can use it in UK courts. Examples: Article 2 (right to life), Article 3 (freedom from torture), Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life) and Article 10 (freedom of expression).
- Some rights are absolute (such as freedom from torture); others are qualified and can be limited to protect others (such as freedom of expression).

Debates

- Some people want to replace the **Human Rights** Act with a British Bill of Rights, arguing that UK courts should have the final say. Others argue the Act protects everyone, especially vulnerable people.
- International courts, such as the International Criminal Court, try people for genocide and war crimes.

Key terms

Human rights	Basic rights that belong to everyone.
UDHR	The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, agreed in 1948.
UNCRC	The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, agreed in 1989.
ECHR	The European Convention on Human Rights.
Human Rights Act 1998	The law that brought the ECHR into UK law.
Absolute right	A right that can never be limited.
Qualified right	A right that can be limited to protect others.

Quick questions

Cover the answers and test yourself: remembering is what makes it stick.

1. When was the Universal Declaration of Human Rights agreed?
2. What does the UNCRC protect?
3. What did the Human Rights Act 1998 do?
4. Where is the European Court of Human Rights?
5. Which is an absolute right?
6. What is a qualified right?
7. What do the Geneva Conventions cover?
8. Which article of the ECHR protects freedom of expression?

Answers

1. 1948
2. The rights of children under 18
3. Brought the ECHR into UK law
4. Strasbourg
5. Freedom from torture
6. A right that can be limited to protect others
7. The treatment of people in war
8. Article 10

What to do next

Practise 10 questions on this topic

Try 3 exam questions, with mark schemes

Read the lesson, one step at a time

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