

# Summary: Rights and Responsibilities

## Knowing About Rights

United States citizens have many rights. Some rights are stated in the Bill of Rights, which is part of the Constitution of the United States. It is the government's job to protect the rights of its citizens.

One right U.S. citizens have is freedom of religion. Citizens can practice any religion they like, or they can practice no religion at all. Another right is freedom of assembly. This means that citizens can get together wherever and whenever they like. The right to free speech means citizens can say what they think. They also have the right to own property. Citizens are free to do these and many other things. However, they must obey the law.

## Knowing Our Responsibilities

Citizens have many rights, but rights have limits. For example, you are free to speak your opinion. But it is against the law to shout "Fire!" in a public place if there is no fire.

Rights come with responsibilities. Every person has responsibilities. Laws explain our civic responsibilities. Obeying laws is an important responsibility. A person who breaks a law may go to jail. However, if a law is unfair, citizens can change it.

Adult citizens have many responsibilities. They may serve in the military or on a jury. They also have the responsibility to vote. Citizens vote to choose leaders. Sometimes they vote about changing laws. Citizens need to learn about the issues before they vote. Their opinions will not count if they do not vote.



### Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

**right** *noun*, a freedom  
**constitution** *noun*, the basic laws and ideas that a government and its people follow  
**responsibility** *noun*, something you should do  
**vote** *verb*, make an official choice



### After You Read

**REVIEW** What are some rights that citizens have? Find four rights that citizens have. Circle them.

**REVIEW** What civic responsibilities do citizens have? Highlight the three sentences that tell the answer.