

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 meet whenever they like. The right to free speech means citizens can say what they think. They also have the right to own property and the right to privacy. Citizens are free to do these and many other things, as long as they 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 citizen has responsibilities. Laws explain our 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 and then vote. Their opinions will not count if they do not vote.



Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

right *noun*, a freedom
responsibility *noun*, something you should do for the common good
vote *verb*, to make an official choice



After You Read

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

REVIEW What responsibilities do citizens have? Underline the words that tell you the answer.