Human Rights Day

Listening and reading comprehensions

,

What are human rights?

Human rights are rights that everyone has in their life no matter where they live and who they are. It is based on justice, peace, freedom, and humanity.

South Africa has included indivisible human rights in our own Bill of Rights, Chapter 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. The articles of our Constitution can only be changed by a two-thirds majority in Parliament, which means it is difficult for anyone, including the government, to take away the basic rights of a citizen.

The Bill of Rights preserved in our Constitution is the cornerstone of our people in our country in an enduring affirmation of the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom

Human Rights Day, 21 March

Human Rights Day in South Africa is linked to two days the 21st March and the 16th June. 21st March 1960. 69 people died and 180 were wounded when they were fired upon while a peaceful group of people who had gathered in protest against the Pass laws. South African had a law that no non-white was allowed to move from the to seek work and the pass was only valid for 72 hours, then they had to return should they have not found work. If found without a without a Pass they. were arrested

Once employed the pass they applied for had to have all their details where they worked, their details and a photo to be able to move in and out the urban area.If anyone found in the area after dark they were arrested. Besides that all non-whites

LIVEWORKSHEETS

had to be at all times have their Pass to say they were allowed to be in a white area to carry out duties they were assigned to do.

Sharpeville uprising was the protest of students who were against being taught in Afrikaans. Many were arrested and killed of the youth on the bloody day.

The holiday commemorates the establishment of the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC). This commission was launched on 21st March 1996, exactly 35 years after the events of 21st March 1960 when anti-apartheid demonstrators in Sharpeville were gunned down by police.

When South Africa held its first democratic election, with Nelson Mandela elected as its first democratic President, 21 March, Human Rights Day was officially proclaimed a public holiday.

On Human Rights Day, South Africans are asked to reflect on their rights, to protect their rights and the rights of all people from violation, irrespective of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, whether they are foreign national or not – human rights apply to everyone, equally.

We must remain vigilant and report abuse and cruelty, such as human trafficking, child labour, forced labour and violence against women, children, and the aged and other vulnerable groupings of people.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

e

1. Why is Human Rights Day such an important date in the history of South Africa?

2. What happened in the dark days of arptheid with all non-whites? Give details

3. How many people either died or were injured in the march against the Pass law?

4. What does SAHRC stand for and when did it commence?

LIVEWORKSHEETS