

Handout 1.1: Highlights from the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Fundamental Freedoms	Fundamental rights include: the freedom of conscience and religion*; freedom of thought, belief, opinion, and expression, including freedom of the press and other media**; freedom of peaceful assembly***; and freedom of association.****
Democratic Rights	Democratic rights include: the right for every Canadian citizen, 18 years of age or older, to vote in an election, to be a candidate; the requirement that no government will continue for longer than five years without holding an election; and that these governments meet at least once every year.
Mobility Rights	Mobility rights include: the right of every Canadian to choose to work and live in any province or territory in Canada; and the right of every Canadian to live in, leave, and re-enter Canada whenever he or she chooses.
Legal Rights	Legal rights include the guarantee that Canadians, when arrested, must: be told of their right to see a lawyer; be tried within a reasonable amount of time; and be presumed innocent until proven guilty.
Equality Rights	Equality rights include the right for any Canadian not to be discriminated against on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical ability.
Official Languages of Canada	This includes the right for all Canadians to use either English or French in communications with Canada's federal government and some of Canada's provincial governments.
Minority Language Education Rights	This includes the right for French or English minorities in every province to be educated in their own language.

* This means that Canadians are free to worship the religion of their choice or to not worship at all.

** This means that unless the media report something that is untrue, the media cannot be prevented from reporting anything that happens inside Canada.

*** This means that Canadians can meet as a group in private or public provided that it is done so in a non-violent and peaceful way.

**** This means that Canadians have the right to associate or befriend anyone they choose and the government does not have the right to limit these associations.

For more information please visit: <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/charter/>

Reflection Question: *What are some of the responsibilities that are associated with these rights and freedoms?*