

ARGUMENTATIONSÖVNING PÅ ENGELSKA

Many key issues in U.S. politics are related to human rights. These rights are often interpreted differently resulting in difference of opinion. This is an opportunity to explore and understand how the idea of rights can be used to argue completely different viewpoints on various issues that divide the U.S. population.

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The United States of America is a society based on individual rights. The founding fathers built the new nation on the ideas of “life, freedom and the pursuit of happiness” - three unalienable rights, which have been given to humans by their creator, and that governments need to protect.

The constitution states that the U.S. is a democracy and that people’s rights are to be guaranteed by the state. The Bill of Rights contains amendments to the constitution, for example freedom of speech, the right for citizens to bear arms, the right to one’s property, and a fair justice system based on the rule of law.

The United States was the driving force behind the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, which they have signed and committed to uphold.

INSTRUCTIONS

Work in groups of four.

1. Read through the list topics you have been provided. Make sure to look up and explain difficult words and help each other understand.
2. Pick one of the topics together.
3. Divide into pairs and pick a side. One pair is “for” and the other “against”.
4. Your task is to find arguments for your viewpoint by applying and interpreting human rights. Use the list of different rights you have been given. Which rights could be used to support your viewpoint? Make arguments and write them down.
5. Present your arguments to each other. Try to convince the other group that your viewpoint is the right one.
6. When both pairs have presented their viewpoint, discuss:
 - Did you use the same rights in different ways?
 - Can you find any conflicts where different rights contradict each other?
 - Who gets to decide which viewpoint is right?
 - Which one do you as a group agree with?

amendment - tillägg

constitution - grundlag

contribute - bidra

deprive - ta ifrån

enforce - upprätthålla

interpret - tolka

property - egendom

unalienable - omöjlig att ta ifrån eller skilja på

universal - gäller alla, alltid, överallt.

violate - kränka

TOPICS



GUN LAWS

Gun laws help to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and those who are mentally ill. They also help to keep track of guns and determine what type of weapons people are allowed to own. There are some weapons, such as a nuclear bomb, that the public should not own. The tough question is deciding where to draw the line.

Should citizens be allowed to own and carry firearms freely? Or should firearms be more regulated or illegalized completely?



HEALTHCARE

Universal healthcare guarantees that you get taken care of when you are sick, even if you can't pay for it. It will however be more expensive for the government and could mean increased taxes. Others might pay for your healthcare, or you for others. This is not an issue with private healthcare.

Should healthcare be free for all and paid for by the government? Or should healthcare be paid individually or with insurance?



THE DEATH PENALTY

The death penalty is used in several states. It is not really central to this year's election but opinions on it divide the population. Some see it as a way of scaring people from committing horrendous crimes and punishing murderers by taking their life. Others think it is illegal and immoral and has no place in a modern society.

Should the death penalty be allowed or should we abolish it completely?



COLLEGE AND STUDENT DEBT

Many students need to take very expensive loans in order to afford higher education. Some say you should pay for it yourself because you are the one who benefits from education. On the other hand education is important to stay competitive as a nation, and educated people will contribute to society as a whole.

Should higher education be available to all students and paid for by the government? Or should it be up to each individual to pay for it themselves, with their own money or through loans?



IMMIGRATION

The United States is a country built on immigration. Without immigration it would not be the great power it is today. However, according to some there are risks with immigration, for example terrorism, or changes in American culture and way of life.

Should it be easy to seek refuge in the U.S. and become a resident or citizen? Or should we make it more difficult?

RIGHTS

THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS (1948) - SIMPLIFIED

1. We are all born free. We all have our own thoughts and ideas. We should all be treated in the same way.
2. These rights belong to everybody; whether we are rich or poor, whatever country we live in, whatever sex or whatever colour we are, whatever language we speak, whatever we think or whatever we believe.
3. We all have the right to life, and to live in freedom and safety.
5. Nobody has any right to hurt us or to torture us.
- 7-8. The law is the same for everyone. It must treat us all fairly. We can all ask for the law to help us when we are not treated fairly.
15. We all have the right to belong to a country.
17. Everyone has the right to own things or share them. Nobody should take our things from us without a good reason.
19. We all have the right to make up our own minds, to think what we like, to say what we think, and to share our ideas [...]
21. We all have the right to take part in the government of our country.
22. We all have the right to a home, to have enough money to live on and medical help if we are ill.[...]
25. We all have the right to a good life, with enough food, clothing, housing, and healthcare. Mothers and children, people who are unemployed, old and disabled people all have the right to help.
26. We all have the right to an education, and to finish primary school, which should be free.
28. We have a right to peace and order so we can all enjoy rights and freedoms in our own country and all over the world.
29. We have a duty to other people, and we should protect their rights and freedoms.
30. Nobody can take away these rights and freedoms from us

Full version [here](#).

THE BILL OF RIGHTS

2nd amendment

A well regulated militia is necessary to the security of a free State. The right of the People to keep and carry firearms shall not be violated.

5th amendment

[...]No one shall be forced in any criminal case to be a witness against oneself, or have one's life, liberty, or property taken without due process of law. Private property shall not be taken for public use, without just compensation.

8th amendment

[...]No cruel or unusual punishments shall be used.

14th amendment

[...]No state shall make or enforce any law which violates the rights of citizens. A person's life, liberty, or property, cannot be taken illegally. Every person should enjoy equal protection from the law.