

Declaration of the rights of man and citizen

[History](#)



Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, which was adopted on the 26th of August 1789, is one of the basic documents drafted during the French Revolution and was the preamble to the 1791 constitution of France. Apart from its role in the French Revolution, the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen plays a distinctive role in the course of human rights through history. This document was vital in identifying that everyone in the society belonging to any group has equal rights, individually as well as collectively. The Rights of Man are applicable to every person equally no matter who he is or what state he is in. The articles of the declaration embodied the absolute rights of an individual. Initially there was also a list of duties which every individual had to perform but after a while the people who framed the Declaration removed them from the list. The articles promise the individuals of freedom, their own piece of private property, social security and immunity from cruelty. The Declaration also promised freedom of speech and freedom of the media and press. The emphasis of the Declaration was on the equal treatment of all individuals and their independence. It stated that the law should be based on the citizens of the country and the officials should be answerable to them as well. The finances of the country should also be in the hand of the citizens. A number of articles of the Declaration were directed at the unfairness of the ancient regime and how it abused the rights and interests of the individuals. Liberalism in the 19th century was deeply affected by the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen. However the Declaration did not seem to have any provisions regarding women or slaves. During this time, France had an absolute monarchy which means it had one ruler who dictated everything.

Q1. What changes does this document make to this system?

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The Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen helped in changing the government of France from monarchy- where only the queen and the king had all the power and the power passed down the generations and new leaders were not elected- to republic where all the citizens had basic rights and also the right to vote and elect their own leaders. The Declaration gave rights to citizens which were never granted anywhere in France before like equality, liberty and property. It also led to the constitution of the Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen.

Q2. Do you see any similarities to the type of government founded in the United States with the Declaration of Independence in 1776?

The United States Declaration of Independence of 1776 had Thomas Jefferson as one of its main writers and at the time the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen was being drafted, he was present in France and was in contact with the authors of the Declaration which suggest that it was influenced to some extent by the U. S. Declaration of Independence. Both of the declarations are similar and that is the reason the governments founded on their basis also resemble as both the declarations are based on the rights of liberty, equality and property of the citizens.