Human rights are customs, practices and laws that have developed over centuries to protect people, races, groups and minorities from oppressive rules and/or governments. They are based on the principle that all members of the human race are equal. They have developed and become established through a variety of events and processes, including wars and rebellions. However, at historically significant moments, human rights have been written down in documents that now form the basis of modern rights.

The historian TH Marshall grouped human rights into three categories.

**Civil Rights**
The rights to liberty and equal treatment before the law, including provisions to safeguard the liberty of the person; freedom of speech, thought and faith; and the right to justice and freedom from unfair restrictions by the state.

**Political Rights**
Freedom to vote, organise, participate in social movements, associations and parties, and to seek political office.

**Social Rights**
Access to education and health care, security of employment, adequate housing and income maintenance, rights to a basic level of material wellbeing by virtue of one’s citizenship rather than an individual’s market capacity.