

# Human Rights Essay

Alyssa Nauska  
[8th grade Winner]

Human Rights plays a role in everyone's life, but not everyone realizes it. It's involved in every comment you make that includes someone different. Every near discriminatory "joke" you say. It affects people, even if it doesn't affect you.

Human rights means being able to hold hands with the person you love, work where you're qualified to work without your skin color or sexual orientation being the reason you can't; it means having the right to be human, making choices and mistakes.

Everyday I hear comments being made about this being "gay" and other comments about that being "retarded." There are an estimated 1,019,729 words in the English language. What I don't understand is why these words are chosen to describe something meager or something that lacks quality.

Society has gotten to the point where people think it doesn't matter what they say, that they think their comments and hate don't affect other people. Humans are often hurtful towards each other, but I believe we all were born with the innate of compassion and love.

These days, I see parents showing their kids *what* to think instead of *how* to think. I see people not being able to marry someone they love because they are the same gender, even though it is acceptable to marry someone then divorce the next day. People say gays aren't socially acceptable, but the thing is, slavery was once the norm. So what does that say about our community in Juneau?

I hear and see this type of thing everyday; people being ignorant and neglecting the notion that all humans are equal. I wish I didn't see bias and prejudice, but I do. I often witness people in Juneau, young and old, ignoring the fact that we're the same.

Humans aren't born racist, homophobic or sexist. We were born equal. So why is it everyone is bent on believing that one *life* is less important than another? Why is it a person high up in society can get away with something other people can't? How is that equal? Why is one religion "correct" while a different one is frowned upon? What gives other people the right to decide who *I* wanna be and what *I* want to do with my life?

I don't believe in God, and I'm constantly being told that I'm locked out of Heaven for it. But who knows what happens after we're done here? That's right, no one. So I'm basically being held back by people who honestly don't know any more than I do about it.

The right to be who we're destined to be belongs to everyone, not just people who are favored or socially acceptable. I can look around and see a flawed humanity. My one hope is to see that change. Because we may be different on the outside, but we are *all* human. Nothing else should define us. not race, sex, or sexual orientation.

# I'm a Human Being, I Own a Right.

Charity Lumba  
[7<sup>th</sup> Grade Winner]

How has human rights, changed *your* life? Think about our rights from today and from 50 years ago. Compare and think of how it changed our nation. Human Rights plays an important role in my life because it allows me to live free, and unworried. Having the right itself just makes me feel special. It's like owning something that's never going to be broken, be stolen, and lost. It's with you anywhere and anytime.

Education is most definitely a right. Anyone that would want to go to school should be allowed not having to think about any barriers. There shouldn't be a barrier in the first place anyways, school should always be affordable for anyone. I think education is a privilege, and its sad to think about that a lot of the students including me, don't even value school at all. But there are probably thousands of other kids right now that's *human*, and is living in this world that is wanting to be in school. But where is their right to be educated? Nowhere.

We shouldn't be hearing and seeing torture at anytime. *No one* has the right to torture any other human beings! Back where I was from I was told a story that one time a dad who came home really drunk and was really upset about something. Of course he was probably not thinking right cause he hit his son with a tube, not a plastic tube, but a heavy-metal tube. This kid was left with bruises all around his body. I felt terrible and heartbroken almost cause it was sad enough to hear the story but knowing that, that dad is still living his life to the fullest is ridiculous! He should be in jail right now, feeling guilty of what he has done to his own son.

So overall what I'm trying to say is any human beings should always be treated with respect, whether you like the person or not. Respect their own rights, and hopefully they'll respect yours. Just like the saying, "treat others how you want to be treated".

# Human Rights

By: Hannah Harvey  
[6<sup>th</sup> Grade Winner]

All of us have heard of human rights; the rights all humans are entitled to, but we don't really grasp the whole concept. For most of us Human rights are just something our parents have to worry about that don't have much to do with us. But to me human rights are the knowledge that we all are human and no race, gender, origin, religion or place of residence is better than any other race, gender, origin etc.

For me in Juneau, I think about human rights a lot. I think about if there were no human rights I wouldn't have half as many opportunities as a woman as I do today. Even though this is the 21<sup>st</sup> century, boys still think they are better than us, at least in my experience. It would be much worse with no human rights.

In Alaska we have lots of different races, Native Alaskan, African-American, Asian-American. Without human rights only the rich and powerful would have any rights at all. Also the minorities would be crushed by the majorities. Considering the number of racist jokes at school, I think if we didn't have human rights the minorities would either be bullied at school or not allowed to go to school at all.

The reason we moved to Juneau in the first place was because my mom is a pastor. When we first arrived we went to a lot of different churches, but without human rights there would only be one religion that everybody had to follow or we would be told what to believe by the government. If you had different ideas about religion you would be labeled as a traitor and executed or imprisoned.

At my school we have a wide variation of students, rich, poor, and in the middle. Without Human rights only the rich would be able to have an education. The poor and middle class kids wouldn't be deemed worthy of that kind of knowledge. That's one of the reasons I am thankful for Human rights.

We had a Palestinian exchange student for six months. Just talking with her made me realize how lucky I am to live in a place where human rights are emphasized. She talked about needing a permit to go to the beach down the road. She also told us about how an Israeli soldier broke her dad's expensive journalism camera. Another thing that was frustrating for her in Palestine was that women were not allowed to play soccer, her favorite sport.

In Juneau human rights apply to many aspects of everyday life, school, church, diversity, and genders. I don't know where we would be without human rights, definitely not this advanced. That is what human rights mean to me.