

Rights and duties

Theme 3 of 5 · conforms to the official programme (arrêté du 10 October 2025)

Revision sheet — Rights and duties

A major topic: **11 of the 40 questions**. The official programme (the référentiel of the **decree of 10 October 2025**) splits it into three sub-topics: **fundamental rights** (2 questions), the **obligations and duties of people residing in France** (3 questions) and **situational questions** (6 questions). This sheet covers **the whole of the programme**.

The essentials in 30 seconds

- Fundamental rights rest on three texts: the **1958 Constitution**, the **Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1789)** and the **Environmental Charter (2004)**.
- The right to vote is acquired at **18**.
- Every right comes with **duties**: obeying the law and respecting others, paying your taxes.
- Freedoms are exercised **within the law**, respecting others' rights and **public order**.

1. Fundamental rights (2 questions)

They rest on the **1958 Constitution**, the **Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1789)** and the **Environmental Charter (2004)**.

- **Individual freedoms** — being master of one's movements and choices: freedom of **movement**, of **marriage** and of **divorce**.
- **Freedoms of opinion** — freedom of **opinion**, of **conscience**, of **expression** and of **belief** (free expression is bounded: no insult, defamation or incitement to hatred).
- **Social and economic rights** — guaranteeing dignified living conditions (health, social protection, education).
- **Guaranteeing principles** — human dignity, physical and moral integrity, equality before the law, presumption of innocence.

2. Obligations and duties of people residing in France (3 questions)

- **Obey the law** and court decisions; freedoms stop where those of others begin and where **public order** requires (security, tranquillity, public health, respect for dignity).
- **Pay your taxes** and social contributions.
- **Respect others**, their property and the **environment**, and contribute to collective life through work.
- **Take part in defence**: census registration at 16 and the Defence and Citizenship Day (JDC).
- **Ensure your children's schooling** (compulsory from 3 to 16).

- **Take part in democratic life:** vote and, where required, serve as a **juror** in a criminal court (cour d'assises).

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Asserting your rights: equality before justice applies to all; **discrimination** (in hiring, housing...) is prohibited and punished; you can refer a matter to the **Rights Defender**.

3. Situational questions (6 questions)

More than half of this topic's questions describe a practical case: an insult or discrimination, harassment, violence, neighbours, a right being denied. They are **never published in advance**: what can be learned is the **method**.

The method in 4 reflexes

1. **Look for the legal rule, not the opinion.** The right answer is the one that applies the law.
2. **Rely on the values of the Republic.** Non-discrimination, equality before the law, respect for the dignity and integrity of the person.
3. **Favour dialogue first, then legal recourse.** Talk about it, then turn to the competent body: employer, town hall, police or gendarmerie, **Défenseur des droits**, the courts.
4. **Eliminate extreme answers.** Taking justice into your own hands, seeking revenge, threatening — but also "do nothing" or "wait until you have proof" — are almost always wrong.

Emergency reflexes

- **15** medical · **17** police/gendarmerie · **18** fire · **112** European number · **114** (SMS, deaf and hard-of-hearing)
- **3919** violence against women · **119** child in danger
- Failing to assist a person in danger is an **offence**: the right reflex is to alert the emergency services.

Two markers that come up often

- **Public order:** freedoms may be limited for **security, tranquillity, public health** and respect for **dignity**. That is what lies behind night-time noise rules or the ban on fly-tipping.
- **Freedom of expression:** it stops at insult, defamation and incitement to hatred — including online.

Example: "Your neighbour makes loud noise every evening after 10pm." Apply the rule (public tranquillity is part of public order), follow dialogue → recourse (speak to them, then contact the town hall or police), and rule out the extremes ("make just as much noise back", "do nothing").

Common mistakes

- Thinking free expression is **unlimited**: it stops at insult, defamation and incitement to hatred.
- Thinking a right implies no duties.
- Forgetting the **Environmental Charter (2004)** among the fundamental texts.
- Confusing the **right to vote** (18) with the age of criminal responsibility.

Tip: read the situational questions carefully (spot "except", "not", "compulsory"), then practise with the timed mock exam.

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