RIGHTS AND THE INTERNET
Child-led learning resource
This activity helps you to think about whether the internet should be a human right.

You will be able to explore interesting questions like:

• What are human rights?
• How do different people use the internet?
• Do we need internet access in the same way that we need human rights?

You can give this a go on your own, but if there’s someone at home who can join you, why not work together? You could also connect with someone by telephone or video.

We’ll practise some critical-thinking skills which are important for understanding and discussing the news.

Ready? Let’s go!
WARM UP

How do you use the internet?
What kinds of things do you do online?

Look at these examples of what we use the internet for. What’s the difference between doing these things online or offline? For example, are they harder / easier for certain people?

How would this change if...
• You lived in a remote area without many amenities?
• You could not leave the house more than once a week?

What if someone does not have access to the internet? How would life be different? What things would be more difficult?

Decide which should be the most and least important use.
INTERNET USERS

How often do you use the internet?

In 2019 a UK survey said that:

- 99% of people aged 16 to 44 had recently used the internet compared with only...
- ...47% of adults aged 75 and over
- 78% of disabled adults had recently used the internet
- 7.5% of adults had never used the internet

• Why do you think people aged over 75 use the internet less?
• Why does internet access benefit disabled people?
• Why might some people have never used the internet?

How does internet access level the playing field for people who find it hard to go out?

Should everyone be entitled to internet access? Should certain groups get more help to access the internet?
HUMAN RIGHTS

Human rights are legal promises that protect everyone’s freedom and dignity.

There are 30 human rights which aim to meet every person's basic needs, according the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Look at the following examples of human rights. For each one, answer the questions:

• Why do people need this?
• What would life be like without this?

THE RIGHT TO think or believe in whatever you want
THE RIGHT TO education
THE RIGHT TO be involved with your community’s arts, literature, music and sciences
THE RIGHT TO employment
THE RIGHT TO share opinions freely in whatever way you choose
HUMAN RIGHTS

Are these rights important? Place them on this scale

- The Right to think or believe in whatever you want
- The Right to education
- The Right to be involved with your community's arts, literature, music and sciences
- The Right to employment
- The Right to share opinions freely in whatever way you choose

• Which one is the most important? Why?
• What about internet access? Where would this go on the scale? Why?
• Is internet access a “need” in the same way that the other rights are?
AN ENABLER OF RIGHTS?

**Technology is an enabler of rights, not a right itself.**

- Vincent Cerf, one of the pioneers of the internet

An enabler is something that helps another thing to happen.

Do you think internet access is an enabler of rights or a right itself?

Look back at the examples of human rights.

- Which one do you think the internet would be most helpful for? Why?
- Which one do you think the internet would be least helpful for? Why?
THE INTERNET IN THE NEWS

Look at these three news stories involving the internet.

**How does the internet help people to learn?**
Does this news story suggest that internet access should be a human right?
China has been limiting what people can see online about how the country handled the coronavirus outbreak. Is this good or bad? How would limiting internet access affect someone’s human rights? As a help, look back at the examples from the human-rights activity.
Why might some people not have internet access?

Does this news story suggest that internet access should be a human right?

Try thinking about how it could support either side of the argument.
REFLECTION

• What would someone’s life be like without the internet?
• Do we need internet access in the same way that we need human rights?
• What might someone who has never used the internet think?
SUPER-REFLECTION

• How might your experience of the news be different without the internet?
• What positives are there to living without the internet?
• Would stopping internet access take away any human rights? Why?

NOW...

Do some research
Find out more about human rights around the world
amnesty.org.uk/universal-declaration-human-rights-UDHR

Have a discussion
Talk to someone else about the issues covered in these activities

Become the teacher!
See if you can go through these activities again, as the teacher, with somebody else in your household