



What is a right?

In Canada and other democracies, citizens have certain **rights**.

A right is a **privilege or freedom** that is protected by law.



Rights are not usually provided automatically; they are usually **fought** for and claimed.

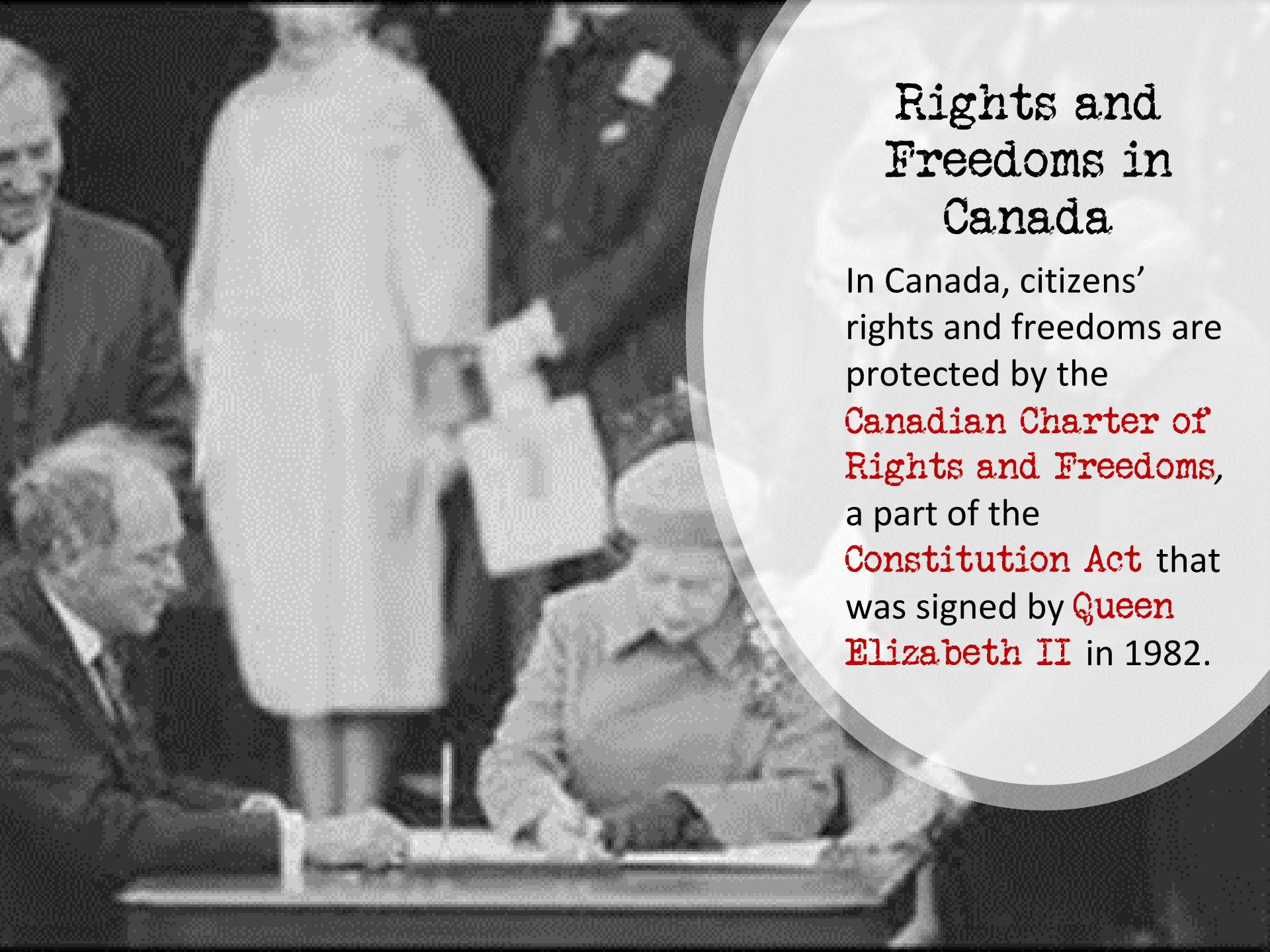
Example: Every child has the right to learn (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child).



Discussion Points

Can you think of any rights you have at home or at school?

Have you ever had to fight for any rights or argue for any privileges?

A black and white photograph showing Queen Elizabeth II and other officials seated at a long table, signing documents. The Queen is in the center, wearing a light-colored coat. To her left, a man in a dark suit is also signing. To her right, another man in a patterned jacket is signing. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people and what appears to be a formal setting.

Rights and Freedoms in Canada

In Canada, citizens' rights and freedoms are protected by the **Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms**, a part of the **Constitution Act** that was signed by **Queen Elizabeth II** in 1982.

CANADIAN CHARTER OF RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS



Seven
Sections of
the Charter
define our
rights as
Canadians

- Fundamental (or basic) freedoms
- Democratic rights
- Mobility rights
- Legal rights
- Equality rights
- Official languages of Canada
- Minority language education rights

Fundamental Freedoms (Basic Rights)



- The right to worship your god or no god (**freedom of religion**)
- The right to form your own opinion (**freedom of thought**)
- The right to share your opinions (**freedom of expression**)
- The **freedom of the media** to report on all matters and events
- The right to join or leave groups (**freedom of association**)
- The right to gather and protest (**freedom of peaceful assembly**)





— Our Democratic Process

There are too many people in Canada for everyone to have a say in every political decision, so we vote for representatives to make decisions and pass laws on our behalf. This is called a **representative democracy**.

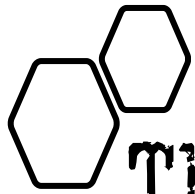
We select those representatives through an **election**.



Our Democratic Rights

Every Canadian citizen, 18 years and older, has the **right to vote** in a Canadian election and **to be a candidate** in a Canadian election.

Our democratic rights also requires that the federal government must hold an **election** at least **every five years**.



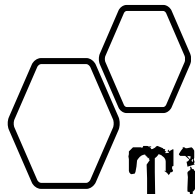
The Right to Vote

Various groups needed to fight for their right to vote in Canada.

Initially, only white men who owned land or a house could vote.

After much protest by men and women who thought this was unfair, **women** received the right to vote federally in 1918.



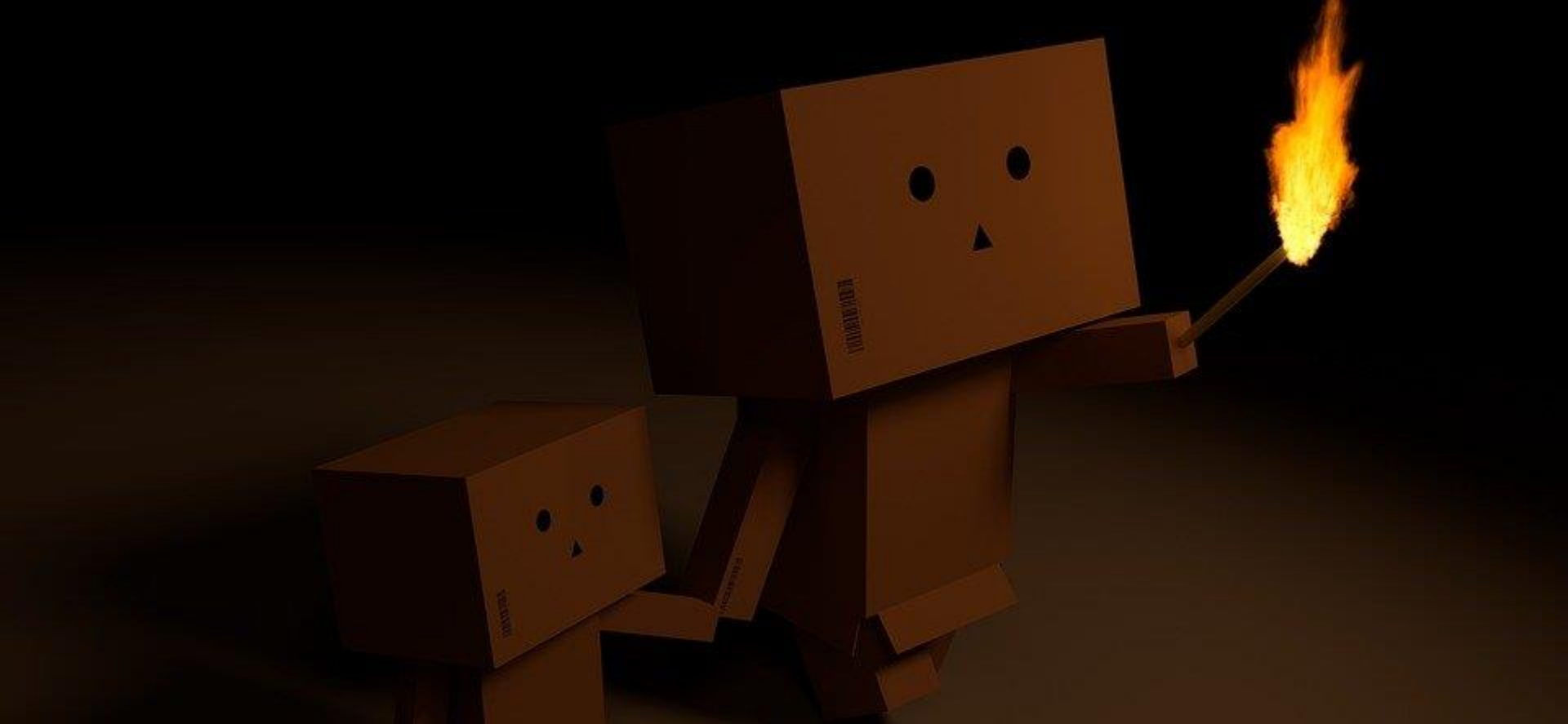


The Right to Vote

The last limitations for various **ethnic groups** and **religious groups** were not removed until 1960.

Universal suffrage is the expansion of the right to vote to all adult citizens.



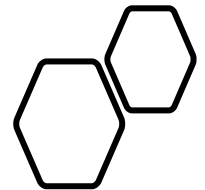


What is a responsibility?

A responsibility is a **duty** or obligation.

For every right, there is a responsibility.

Your right to an education comes with the responsibility to show up to school prepared and on time.



Responsibilities in a Democracy

It is the **responsibility** of all Canadians to respect and follow the rules set out in the Constitution.

The **right to vote** comes with the **responsibility to vote** and to make an informed decision.



Final Thoughts

How important is it that individuals behave as responsible members of society? Why?

Will you vote when you turn 18?

Should voters lose the right to vote if they choose to ignore their duty to vote in an election?

