

Rights in Action

Read how Texans use rights and how law protects them.

7.15.A “explain rights of Texas citizens; and”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline any three sentences that name a Texas right or a legal requirement for voting, then write **R** or **V** beside each one to show how Texans participate in or are protected by government.

Rights of Texas Citizens

- ① Texas citizens have rights protected by the United States Constitution and the Texas Constitution. These rights let people take part in public life and express ideas. At a city council meeting, Maya may peacefully speak about a proposed bus route. She may join a peaceful group, publish an opinion, practice her religion, or sign a petition asking government officials to act. Officials may set reasonable meeting rules, such as time limits, but they cannot punish Maya simply because they disagree with her lawful opinion.
- ② Voting gives eligible Texans a way to choose public officials and decide certain public questions. To vote in Texas, a person generally must be a United States citizen, a Texas resident, at least 18 years old on Election Day, and registered by the deadline. A person with a final felony conviction must have completed the sentence, including parole or probation, or been pardoned or otherwise legally released from the voting restriction. Also, a court must not have found the person totally or partially mentally incapacitated for voting. These rules help elections follow the law.
- ③ Rights also protect Texans when government uses its power. Due process means government must use fair procedures before taking away a person's life, liberty, or property. For example, a person accused of a crime has the right to know the charge, to have a lawyer, and to receive a fair trial. Texas law also protects equal rights. Government may not deny a person equal legal rights because of race, color, disability, religion, sex, national origin, or other protected status.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

- 1** Name two actions Maya may take at the city council meeting or in response to the bus route. What right do these actions show?

- 2** What four general requirements must a person meet to vote in Texas? What two additional limits does the passage describe?

- 3** What does due process require government to do? Name two rights of a person accused of a crime.

- 4** What may officials do at a city council meeting, and what may they not do because of Maya's lawful opinion?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Imagine that a city council stops residents from giving peaceful public comments about a park plan. Write a three-sentence request to the council. Name the right involved, explain why the rule is unfair, and ask for a specific change.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline any three sentences that name a Texas right or a legal requirement for voting, then write **R** or **V** beside each one to show how Texans participate in or are protected by government. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Name two actions Maya may take at the city council meeting or in response to the bus route. What right do these actions show?	She may peacefully speak, join a peaceful group, publish an opinion, practice religion, or sign a petition. These actions show rights to express ideas and participate in public life.
2	What four general requirements must a person meet to vote in Texas? What two additional limits does the passage describe?	A voter generally must be a U.S. citizen, a Texas resident, at least 18 on Election Day, and registered by the deadline. A person with a final felony conviction must have completed the sentence or been pardoned or otherwise legally released from the voting restriction, and a court must not have found the person mentally incapacitated for voting.
3	What does due process require government to do? Name two rights of a person accused of a crime.	Due process requires fair procedures before government takes away life, liberty, or property. An accused person has the right to know the charge, have a lawyer, and receive a fair trial.
4	What may officials do at a city council meeting, and what may they not do because of Maya's lawful opinion?	Officials may set reasonable rules, such as time limits. They may not punish Maya simply because they disagree with her lawful opinion.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our city council should allow residents to speak peacefully about the park plan. The right to free speech protects lawful opinions, even when officials disagree. I ask the council to restore a fair public-comment time.

Accept equivalent examples of the rights and voting requirements stated in the passage. For the open response, accept any accurate three-sentence request that identifies peaceful expression or petition, explains the concern, and requests a specific lawful change.