

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

G102 Theme 3 - Rights, responsibilities and justice in democratic societies

DEMOCRACY

A political term literally meaning the rule of the people. It refers to any system where the ultimate authority lies with the people rather than a particular group or individual. This power may be expressed directly or through representatives.

DIRECT DEMOCRACY

A system of democracy whereby the people directly participate in all decision making. Such a system was in operation at times in Ancient Greece but is largely impractical on a large scale.

EUROPEAN CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

An international treaty drafted in 1950 to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms in Europe.

HUMAN RIGHTS ACT 1998

An act that enshrines in British Law the key principles of European human rights legislation.

JURY SERVICE

The civic duty to sit on a jury, usually of 12 citizens, and decide in criminal cases whether a defendant is guilty or not.

JUSTICE

A disputed term but generally taken to denote fair and impartial treatment, meaning that doing good is rewarded and doing wrong is subject to some form of sanction.

LEGAL MORALISM

The view that the main aim in law is to reflect the moral standards or rules of society.

LEGAL POSITIVISM

The view that the main aim of law is to create rules that enable society to achieve the greater good.

LIBERTARIAN

A political philosophy that upholds individual freedom of expression and action.

NEO-LIBERAL

Term referring to economic and social policies based on private enterprise and free markets.

NON-HARM PRINCIPLE

The principle associated with John Stuart Mill that the government's only reason to intervene in the lives of its citizens is to prevent them from harming each other.

PUBLIC SPENDING

The money that is spent by the government to fund its activities and provide public services eg schools, police, hospitals.

REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY

A system of democracy whereby the people elect representatives at regular intervals who are then empowered to make decisions on their behalf.

GCE HUMANITIES GLOSSARY OF TERMS G102 THEME 3 - RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES AND JUSTICE IN DEMOCRATIC SOCIETIES

RIGHTS

Denotes a person's entitlement to something that it would be legally and / or morally wrong to deny them or withdraw from them.

SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

A centre left political ideology that is broadly socialist in that it believes in redistribution of goods and opposes some aspects of free market economics.

TAXATION

The means by which governments finance their expenditure by imposing charges on both citizens and corporations.

UN DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

A resolution adopted by the United Nations in 1948 partly as a response to the horrors of World War II. Certain rights (life, liberty, security) were viewed as self evident.