

МИНИСТЕРСТВО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ И НАУКИ РФ
ФЕДЕРАЛЬНОЕ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННОЕ БЮДЖЕТНОЕ
ОБРАЗОВАТЕЛЬНОЕ УЧРЕЖДЕНИЕ
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BASIC LEGAL CONCEPTS

Учебно-методическое пособие

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street. If people were allowed to choose at random which side of the street to drive on, driving would be dangerous and chaotic. Laws regulating our business affairs help to ensure that people keep their promises. Laws against criminal conduct help to safeguard our personal property and our lives.

Even in a well-ordered society, people have disagreements and conflicts arise. The law must provide a way to resolve these disputes peacefully. If two people claim to own the same piece of property, we do not want the matter settled by a duel: we turn to the law and to institutions like the courts to decide who the real owner is and to make sure that the real owner's rights are respected.

We need law, then, to ensure a safe and peaceful society in which individuals' rights are respected. But we expect even more from our law. Some totalitarian governments have cruel and arbitrary laws, enforced by police forces free to arrest and punish people without trial. Strong-arm tactics may provide a great deal of order, but we reject this form of control. The legal system should respect individual rights while, at the same time, ensuring that society operates in an orderly manner. And society should believe in the Rule of Law, which means that the law applies to every person, including members of the police and other public officials, who must carry out their public duties in accordance with the law.

In our society laws are not only designed to govern our conduct: they are also intended to give effect to social policies. For example, some laws provide for benefits when workers are injured on the job, for health care, as well as for loans to students who otherwise might not be able to go to university.

Another goal of the law is fairness. This means that the law should recognize and protect certain basic individual rights and freedoms, such as liberty and equality. The law also serves to ensure that strong groups and individuals do not use their powerful positions in society to take unfair advantage of weaker individuals.

However, despite the best intentions, laws are sometimes created so that people later recognize as being unjust or unfair. In a democratic society, laws are not carved in stone, but must reflect the changing needs of society. In a democracy, anyone who feels that a particular law is flawed has the right to speak out publicly and to change the law by lawful means.

Task 2. Match the English word combinations to their Russian equivalents

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) the purpose of law, | a) уважать права отдельного человека |
| 2) to live in society | b) отражать изменяющиеся потребности общества |
| 3) to choose at random | c) иметь разногласия и конфликты |
| 4) to safeguard our personal property and our lives | d) верить в верховенство закона |
| 5) to have disagreements and conflicts | e) назначение(цель) права |

- | | |
|---|---|
| 6) to resolve disputes peacefully | f) защищать основные права и свободы |
| 7) to turn to the law | g) иметь право открыто высказать свое мнение |
| 8) to respect individual rights | h) жить в обществе |
| 9) to arrest and punish people without trial | i) выбирать что-либо наугад |
| 10) to believe in the Rule of Law | j) стремиться изменить закон законными средствами |
| 11) in accordance with the law | k) арестовывать и наказывать людей без суда и следствия |
| 12) to protect basic individual rights and freedoms | l) охранять нашу собственность и жизнь |
| 13) to reflect the changing needs of society | m) в соответствии с законом |

Task 3. Complete the following sentences according to the text.

1. Almost everything we do is governed by...
 - a) rules imposed by morality;
 - b) the courts;
 - c) some set of rules.
2. If we didn't live in a structured society with other people...
 - a) we would simply do as we please;
 - b) we would simply do with little regard for others;
 - c) laws would not be necessary.
3. Laws against criminal conduct help ...
 - a) to protect our property;
 - b) to take advantage of other individuals;
 - c) to safeguard our personal property and our lives.
4. We turn to the law...
 - a) to resolve disputes peacefully;
 - b) to decide who the real owner is;
 - c) to force people to keep their promises.
5. Another goal of the law is...
 - a) to protect certain basic individual rights and freedoms;
 - b) fairness;
 - c) to provide for benefits.

Task 4. Complete the following text by translating the words and expressions in brackets:

The aim of (права) is to regulate the conduct of human beings in society. The aim of (правовой) theory is (рассмотреть) the nature, origin and classification of law. The theory of natural law is based on the belief that there is a set of perfect

(юридических норм) for human conduct and (законы) devised by men must be induced by these rules. (Закон) is a term which is used in many different senses. To (юриста) law has a far narrower meaning – the principle recognized and applied by the state in (суде). The English (правовая система) has still been copied by many nations. (Судебный процесс) becomes the center of a contest between both parties in which one emerges as the winner. By the time of (судебного разбирательства) each (сторона дела) should gain as much information as possible.

Task 5. Answer the following questions.

1. What kind of society do we live in?
2. What is the society governed by?
3. What is the difference between laws and rules of morality?
4. Why do rules of morality and custom play an important role in our life?
5. Why are laws designed to control our behavior?
6. What are the goals of law?
7. When do people turn to the law?
8. Why do we need law?

Task 6. Make the summary of the text using the following scheme.

1. The author believes ...
2. Firstly the author points at ...
3. Secondly the author supposes...
4. Thirdly the author thinks...
5. Finally the author concludes...

Task 7. Discuss the following:

1. It is the duty and responsibility of every citizen to uphold and obey the laws.
2. Laws reflect the traditions of the people as to what is right, proper and just.
3. Compare the system of laws of the United States of America with some other countries.
4. Constitution – the basic system of laws – should never be changed.
5. It is not laws, but politics, that determine citizens' rights.
6. However hard people try, laws are always insufficient.

The following expressions can help you:

I quite agree here.

Naturally. Certainly. Sure. Exactly. Definitely. Quite.

Most likely. Absolutely.

I couldn't agree more.

Beyond all doubt.

I'm afraid I don't agree.

I'm not so sure.