



‘Citizen of Humanity’: Teaching about Human Rights

A unit of work to support Stage 3 HSIE

- Resources include the *Discovering Democracy Primary Kit*, class sets available in all Primary School Libraries in Australia.
- In New South Wales, lessons written in accordance with the HSIE Stage 3.

(Courtesy of the New South Wales Human Rights Education Committee (NSWHREC) in collaboration with the NSW Department of Education and Training (DET) ; and with support from the Franciscan Friars Justice and Peace Office; the Conflict Resolution Network; the National Committee on Human Rights Education Inc. Australia (NCHRE), UCA in Victoria; and the Australian Baha’i’ Community.

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Outcome: SSS3.7 Describes how Australian people, systems and communities are globally interconnected and recognises global responsibilities

Syllabus subject matter:

- Global interconnections and interdependence, eg trade, human rights agreements and organisations
- Rights and responsibilities of Australian citizenship and global citizenship
- Rights and responsibilities of users and producers of goods and services globally
- Contributions of groups, movements, policies and laws to the development of fairness and social justice in Australia

Teaching/learning strategies	Outcomes and ways students demonstrate achievement
<p>Read children's stories at http://www.hrw.org/reports2003/india/india103.htm .</p> <p>Additional stories are available on the following links. Some of the testimonies on these sites are very graphic. Teachers are advised to review the testimonies and select a range that are suitable for their classrooms.</p> <p>http://www.hrw.org/press/2003/01/india-testimonies.htm “Children’s Testimonies – Small Change: Bonded Child Labor in India’s Silk Industry”</p> <p>http://www.hrw.org/campaigns/crp/voices.htm “The Voices of Child Soldiers” [various countries]</p> <p>http://www.hrw.org/press/2003/04/togo040103-test.htm “Children’s testimony from Borderline Slavery: <i>Child Trafficking in Togo</i>”</p> <p>http://www.hrw.org/campaigns/crp/farmchild/testimonies.htm “Failure to protect child farm workers” United States</p> <p>http://www.hrw.org/press/2002/04/ecuador0425.htm#testimonies “Testimonies taken from <i>Tainted Harvest: Child Labor and Obstacles to Organizing on Ecuador’s Banana Plantations</i>”</p> <p>http://hrw.org/english/docs/2004/01/15/elsalv6931.htm</p>	<p>SSS3.7 Describes how Australian people, systems and communities are globally interconnected and recognises global responsibilities <i>Reads and discusses information about the lives of children in other parts of the world.</i></p> <p><i>Makes comparisons between their lives and the lives of children in other parts of the world.</i></p>

“Voices of El Salvador Girl Domestic Workers – Testimonies from *No Rest: Abuses Against Child Domestic Workers in El Salvador*”

<http://www.hrw.org/press/2002/10/burma-testimonies.htm>

“Testimonies from *My Gun Was As Tall as Me: Child Soldiers in Burma*

Discuss:

1. What is the reality of life for some children?
2. Define *bonded child labour*
3. How is life for many children different to your life? What sorts of things can you do/have/enjoy that these children cannot?
4. How do you feel about the lives of these children and why?

Defining Human Rights

Human rights are customs, practices and laws that have developed over centuries to protect people, races, groups and minorities from oppressive rules and/or governments. They are based on the principle that all humans are equal. They have developed and become established through a variety of events and processes, including wars and rebellions. However, at historically significant moments, human rights have been written down in documents that now form the basis of modern rights. (p50DDLS).

Commonly, human rights can be defined as being of 3 types:

Civil rights

The rights to liberty and equal treatment before the law, including provisions to safeguard the liberty of the person; freedom of speech, thought and faith; and the right to justice and freedom from unfair restrictions by the state

Political rights

Freedom to vote, organise, participate in social movements, associations and parties and seek political office.

Social rights

Access to education and health care, security of employment, adequate housing and income maintenance, rights to a basic level of material well-being by virtue of one’s citizenship rather than an individual’s market capacity.

- As a class read the *plain English* version of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

Discusses and defines human rights.

Discusses and categorises human rights into civil, political and social rights.

Reflects on the UDHR in relation to own life and the lives of other children they have read about.

on

<http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/humanrights/resources/plain.asp>.

- Identify and discuss some of the events and abuses that lead to the development of the UDHR in 1948.
- What were some of the *civil, political and social rights* abuses that were occurring in the factories in India in the previous task?
- Are you aware of any human rights abuses occurring in Australia or the world at present? Students should reflect on current news items and news stories from Australia and around the world.

Declaration of Human Rights

Many of the countries of the world agreed in 1948 on a document that said the world would be more peaceful if everyone respected the dignity of every human being. This document is the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

Every right implies a responsibility not to use that right in a way which interferes with another person's rights. The United Nations declared that all people had certain rights that must never be violated. It listed these in its *1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Countries, such as Australia, that have *ratified* or accepted this Declaration have pledged that they will make sure these rights are built into its own laws.

- Using websites such as www.abc.net.au/civics/rights read and discuss what human rights are.
- Create a concept map for HUMAN RIGHTS that summarises the particular rights in the declaration. Using a second colour marker place words near the rights that further explain the rights listed, eg justice, responsibilities, treaties etc.
- Categorise the list of human rights under the headings of civil, social and political rights. Explain why you put them under the chosen heading.

The following activities use recent newspapers, news media and websites to develop an awareness of human rights issues in everyday life and to show human rights violation/ rights being denied or threatened.

Identifies human rights, when these are respected, and situations in which they are not respected, in Australia and the world.

Gives examples that explain what human rights are.

Categorises and gives reasons for identifying different types of human rights.

- Using the concept map of abbreviated rights from the *Universal Declaration* (UDHR):
- In groups of four, each group receives some newspapers or magazines – from mainstream media to local or community papers /magazines. Ensure that you have a variety of newspapers and magazines available. Groups will also need scissors, tape or glue and coloured cardboard sheets. Each group will construct a poster using items from the print media to demonstrate/illustrate human rights issues.
- Look not only for news stories but also for small features such as cartoons, letters and advertisements (i.e. how the language of the paper itself illustrates an awareness of rights in practice.
- Once students have found articles:
 1. What specific rights were involved in the story? List them;
 2. Find the reference to the right/s, mentioned in the news articles above, in the UDHR. Which human right from the UDHR does each right mentioned in the news articles refer to?
 3. Identify and discuss the problem/s or reasons that led to the human rights issue.
- Ask a spokesperson from each group to summarise the group’s selection and explain the group poster.
- Display group presentations around the room.

Children and work

- Using the website <http://www.curriculumsupport.nsw.edu.au/hsie/cr/oc/education.htm> for Iqbal’s story and <http://www.curriculumsupport.nsw.edu.au/hsie/cr/oc/work.htm> for Radha’s story compare students’ experiences of work with those in other places.
- Identify the problems that are being faced by the children, their families or the communities. What are the human rights being denied in the story?
- Is it only an issue with some of the population or are the problems widespread?
- What can/is being done about the problems?
- Who is/should be fixing the problems?

Select some of the case studies from the following website, eg Mikiesse (a story about access to fresh water)

Participates in group work identifying human rights in the media.

Prepares and presents group work on human rights.

Compares own life with that of children in other parts of the world.

Determines the particular human rights issue(s) and suggests some strategies to address these problems.

www.globaleducation.edna.edu/globaled/go/pid/61 or <http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/humanrights/stories.asp>

- Discuss the story portrayed and students' reaction to the lives they are reading about.
- What are the differences between students' lives and the lives of the children portrayed in the stories?
- What human rights issues are affecting the lives of the children in these stories?
- What are the issues that cause and allow this denial of human rights to exist? Does this situation occur in Australia? Why/Why not? What can be done in Australia to counteract these problems, should they occur?

Responsibilities

What can the government do to protect children's basic rights? What can you do?

Convention on the rights of the child

Conventions or covenants are *hard laws*, which means that countries that have *ratified* a convention must comply with the standards set down in the convention. By 1991, 191 of the world's nations had ratified the Convention. The Convention was signed by Australia.

Using the website

<http://www.curriculumsupport.nsw.edu.au/hsie/croc/introduction.htm> for an introduction to the

Convention on the rights of the child explain:

- the need for the Convention
- what it means when a country *ratifies* a Convention?

Read the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

<http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/humanrights/resources/plain.asp> work in small groups to look at a right from the Convention. Following discussion with your group:

- In your own words, explain the meaning of the human right. Give examples from Australia of this human right and how you as a citizen might enforce or support it.
- How might you educate people or promote that right?
- Design an advertisement to promote the human right to your school/class/stage.

Explores different case studies on a range of human rights issues.

Suggests ways governments can protect the basic rights of children.

Learns about the 'Convention on the rights of the child.'

Explains, in more detail, the meaning of human rights.

Promotes human rights within the school.

Learn more about the history of the Convention on the rights of the child and child rights at the UNICEF internet website <http://www.unicef.org/crc/>

Australia's global responsibilities

Australia is involved in providing support in the global community. This includes providing aid to other countries through aid organisations such as AusAID. Read the general information on Australian Aid programs from AusAID:

<http://www.globaleducation.edna.edu.au/globaled/goto/24>

Read and discuss:

1. What types of aid does Australia provide to other countries? Which countries receive this aid?
2. On a map of the world, label the countries that Australia provides aid to and label the type of aid.

Use the following web resource to assist with this activity.

<http://www.ausaid.gov.au/makediff/map/index.html>

3. How does Australia's aid contribute to the development of some countries and lessen human rights abuses?
4. How might the distribution of aid, eg through AusAid, not be the most effective way of providing aid?
5. What alternatives to AusAid are there to provide aid? Eg organisations, treaties, trade, human rights groups etc. Conduct research, list and describe some of these alternatives.

What can we do to help?

Select an aid or human rights organisation that you would consider supporting, eg

- Amnesty International
- WHO
- Care Australia
- UNICEF
- OxFam
- Red Cross
- World Vision
- International Campaign to Ban Landmines
- Greenpeace
- Doctors Without Borders
- Caritas
- Others

Describes some examples of Australia's obligations under international treaties.

Describes how, and gives reasons why, Australia is interdependent with other nations eg international treaties and organisations.

Identifies some global responsibilities between nations and individuals.

Researches some AusAID programs.

Locates and categorises countries receiving aid.

Explains how global interactions need to be assessed for their global implications, eg aid distribution.

Explains how international aid can reduce human rights problems.

Researches a range of aid organisations.

Describes the efforts of organisations in meeting universal human needs and rights, eg Red Cross

Investigate the aid organisation and provide the following information:

1. what the aid organisation does, eg disaster relief, etc
2. background of the organisation, eg who set it up and why
3. how can you support this aid/human rights organisation, eg time, money, personal commitment?
4. reasons for choosing to support this aid/human rights organisation over other aid organisations

Counting the cost

Becoming involved in human rights activities can become difficult and problematic. It can also become very frustrating as change can be slow and suffer many setbacks.

Using the DET resource *Belief in Action*, read the following case study:

No 23 “I have a dream...” Martin Luther King

1. What was the situation that Martin Luther King spoke out about and tried to change?
2. What were some of the challenges he faced in his fight?
3. How did he react to these challenges?
4. How successful was he in achieving his goal?

Using the *Discovering Democracy* Primary video and the *Stories of Democracy* CD ROM see the segment *People Power*.

1. Outline the issue that Charles Perkins and his supporters were trying to highlight.
2. What were the challenges they faced?
3. How successful were they in achieving their goal?

Teachers: See additional activities in *Discovering Democracy Upper Primary units of work*

Treaties

Have a look at the key human rights treaties on <http://www.dfat.gov.au/hr/index.html> . Discuss the variety of treaties that are listed. How are these treaties enforced (direct action from the people of a country, political coercion, exclusion from the Commonwealth, sanctions etc)?

Evaluates and makes decisions about an aid agency students could support

Describes the contributions of some individuals and groups to the development of fairness and social justice in Australia and the world.

Investigates an Australian social justice issue with human rights implications.

Identifies how Australia fulfils its international responsibilities.

How You Can Contribute.

1995-2004 has been designated by the United Nations General Assembly as the UN Decade for Human Rights Education. The aim of the Decade is to promote human rights around the world by improvement of education about human rights. As part of the Decade the United Nations has adopted a "Plan of Action" which can be implemented at international, regional, national and local level.

For students to become involved in human rights activities they need to consider the following:

- Personal commitment
- Working with a group or other committed people
- The need to be informed
- How to advocate human rights to others
- Taking direct action if needed
- Supporting the political processes

Choose a human rights issue in which you have a particular interest and develop your own plan of actions based on the list above.

In conclusion

Would the students like to pledge their interest and intent to preserve human rights in all countries? Human rights pledges in the form of a certificate can be made available to students at their request.

Develops a personal action plan to address a human rights issue that concerns them.

Undertakes the Human Rights pledge.

References:

Discovering Democracy Primary Kit (1998) Curriculum Corporation, Melbourne.
Belief in Action NSW Department of Education and Training, Sydney.