

Human Rights Seminar

Rationale: This lesson is designed to introduce students to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by allowing them to make personal connections to the document. It also allows students the opportunity to discuss with peers how it relates to the world we live in and make connections to important global issues. Additionally, it serves to establish protocols for future text-based seminar discussions.

Objectives: Students will critically consider the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and examine its relationship to our world by participating in a seminar discussion.

Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.1

Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.2

Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.5

Analyze how a particular sentence, paragraph, chapter, or section fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.6

Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text.

Materials: Students will each need a copy of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (abridged for youth version courtesy of www.humanrights.com) and a blank sheet of paper to make a name tent for the seminar.

Time: One 45-minute class period. Optional extension: www.humanrights.com publishes 1-minute public service announcement video clips for each of the thirty articles of the UDHR. They also have an engaging 10-minute video titled "The Story of Human Rights" that explores the development of human rights throughout history.

Procedures:

Engage – Ask students to jot down a response to any of the following questions: Use the word 'universal' in a sentence. Describe one right or freedom you believe all people should have.

Explore – Distribute copies of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (abridged for youth). Explain that today we will read an important document written and adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948. The document is organized into 30 articles, each describing a right that all humans deserve to have protected whenever and wherever they are. Instruct students to put a star next two articles that they personally feel are most important and to put an X next to the one that presents the biggest challenge in the world today. If they have enough time, on the back students should explain why they choose the articles they did.

Explain – Explain to students that we will have a seminar discussion in order to share ideas about the role of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in the past, present, and future.

Explain that during the discussion students do not need to raise their hand to speak, but should try to focus on the main speaker and wait their turn to talk. We are going to practice building on what others say – agreeing and disagreeing in a courteous, respectful manner. As the facilitator, the teacher’s job is to ask challenging, open-ended questions and model how to listen to others.

At this time, instruct students to fold a sheet of paper in half to make a name tent. On the backside they should copy a selected class goal and a personal goal for the discussion. Some ideas can include:

- Use others’ names
- Make eye contact
- Refer to the text to cite evidence
- Build on others’ ideas
- Keep an open mind
- Ask an open-ended question

Elaborate – When ready, begin the discussion by asking students to go in a circle and share which article stood out or best connected with them. Once everybody has shared, open the discussion with one of the following guiding questions. The teacher should then actively listen and provide additional guiding questions to further the discussion:

- Many of you chose article #_____. Why do you think this is?
- Why do you believe this document was created? What need do you think was present in the world at the time?
- Who do you think is responsible for ensuring human rights for all? How do we make this happen?
- Do you believe any of these articles are controversial? Which ones might relate to a current world conflict?
- Do you believe this document will still be relevant in the next five years? Twenty years? One hundred years? If not, why? If so, how so?
- Notice human right # 30. What is the power of including this as the concluding article?

Evaluate – Towards the end of the discussion, thank students for being active participants in today's discussion. Ask students to conclude by using one of the following sentence starters to share a final thought:

- I used to think...now I think...
- Human rights are important because...but...so...
- I can be a peace builder by...

Assessment: At the end of the seminar, students should be asked to reflect on both the class goal and their personal goal. This can be done through a quick informal rating (e.g. fist-to-five) or a written response. Additionally, you can assign written reflection questions based on the discussion topics and ideas.

Another unique tool for assessment is a teacher discussion tracker. Draw a large circle on a sheet of paper (or chart paper) and write each student's name or initials around the outside of this circle in the order that they are seated. Begin with the student who initiates the conversation and then draw a line connecting his/her name to the name of the next student to speak. Continue drawing lines to connect the names of each student as they thoughtfully contribute to the discussion. You will end up with a web of intersecting lines visually representing how often each student participated. This is a good tool to show students in the middle of the discussion in order to help them regulate their participation or prompt others to join in. It can similarly be used as a reflection tool at the end of the seminar.

Lastly, the teacher can use symbols to record information about the quality of comments and participation. For example, a “?” can be put next to a student's name who asked a thought-provoking question or an “E” for a student who used evidence from a text in his/her comment. This is another good visual for students to monitor the quality of their participation and set goals to improve.



Universal Declaration of Human Rights Abridged for Youth

1. **We are all born free and equal.** We are all born free. We all have our own thoughts and ideas. We should all be treated in the same way.
2. **Don't discriminate.** These rights belong to everybody, whatever our differences.
3. **The right to life.** We all have the right to life, and to live in freedom and safety.
4. **No slavery.** Nobody has any right to make us a slave. We cannot make anyone our slave.
5. **No torture.** Nobody has any right to hurt us or to torture us.
6. **You have rights no matter where you go.** I am a person just like you!
7. **We're all equal before the law.** The law is the same for everyone. It must treat us all fairly.
8. **Your human rights are protected by law.** We can all ask for the law to help us when we are not treated fairly.
9. **No unfair detainment.** Nobody has the right to put us in prison without good reason and keep us there, or to send us away from our country.
10. **The right to trial.** If we are put on trial this should be in public. The people who try us should not let anyone tell them what to do.
11. **We're always innocent till proven guilty.** Nobody should be blamed for doing something until it is proven. When people say we did a bad thing we have the right to show it is not true.
12. **The right to privacy.** Nobody should try to harm our good name. Nobody has the right to come into our home, open our letters, or bother us or our family without a good reason.
13. **Freedom to move.** We all have the right to go where we want in our own country and to travel as we wish.
14. **The right to seek a safe place to live.** If we are frightened of being badly treated in our own country, we all have the right to run away to another country to be safe.
15. **Right to a nationality.** We all have the right to belong to a country.
16. **Marriage and family.** Every grown-up has the right to marry and have a family if they want to. Men and women have the same rights when they are married, and when they are separated.
17. **The right to your own things.** Everyone has the right to own things or share them. Nobody should take our things from us without a good reason.
18. **Freedom of thought.** We all have the right to believe in what we want to believe, to have a religion, or to change it if we want.
19. **Freedom of expression.** We all have the right to make up our own minds, to think what we like, to say what we think, and to share our ideas with other people.
20. **The right to public assembly.** We all have the right to meet our friends and to work together in peace to defend our rights. Nobody can make us join a group if we don't want to.
21. **The right to democracy.** We all have the right to take part in the government of our country. Every grown-up should be allowed to choose their own leaders.
22. **Social security.** We all have the right to affordable housing, medicine, education, and childcare, enough money to live on and medical help if we are ill or old.
23. **Workers' rights.** Every grown-up has the right to do a job, to a fair wage for their work, and to join a trade union.
24. **The right to play.** We all have the right to rest from work and to relax.
25. **Food and shelter for all.** We all have the right to a good life. Mothers and children, people who are old, unemployed or disabled, and all people have the right to be cared for.
26. **The right to education.** Education is a right. Primary school should be free. We should learn about the United Nations and how to get on with others. Our parents can choose what we learn.
27. **Copyright.** Copyright is a special law that protects one's own artistic creations and writings; others cannot make copies without permission. We all have the right to our own way of life and to enjoy the good things that art, science and learning bring.
28. **A fair and free world.** There must be proper order so we can all enjoy rights and freedoms in our own country and all over the world.
29. **Responsibility.** We have a duty to other people, and we should protect their rights and freedoms.
30. **No one can take away your human rights.**

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