

“Building a Human Rights Document

Jason Ray and Noe Pizano

Western Oregon University
Preservice Teachers: Social Studies

TITLE: Building a Human Rights Document.

TIME 2-3 class periods.

OVERVIEW: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is the internationally recognized standard of human rights and social justice for every man, woman and child alive in the world today. In this lesson, students identify the issue of basic human rights, examine the importance of the UDHR, and compare it to United States Bill of Rights.

SUBJECT AREA / GRADE LEVEL: Civics/Government 8-12

STATE CONTENT STANDARDS / BENCHMARKS:

- Describe personal and political rights of citizens in U.S.
- Identify and analyze an issue.

OBJECTIVES: The students will demonstrate the ability to...

- define 'human rights'.
- create a human rights document.
- Compare their document with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and with the United States Bill of Rights.

MATERIALS:

- Big sheet of butcher paper.
- Magic Markers.
- Copy of the Universal Declaration of Human rights (simplified version) and the Bill of Rights.

PRESENTATION STEPS:

1. Ask the class what 'human rights' means to them and record their answers .
2. From these answers work as a class to create a definition of human rights.
Write it on the blackboard.
3. Divide the class into groups of four and have them list what they think are the fundamental and universal rights of humans.
4. Regroup as a class and share information as to what are inherent human rights. Record their ideas. Can the rights be grouped under specific headings? (e.g. rights to freedom of speech and movement, 'social rights', 'environmental rights') Create a class human rights document on a large sheet of butcher paper.
5. Give students copies of the Bill of Rights and the Universal Document of Human Rights (simplified version) to read.
6. Discuss the similarities and differences between these and their human rights document. Which rights mentioned in these two documents has the class identified? Are there any rights which the class included which the two documents overlooked/If so, what were they and why were they overlooked? (Environmental rights were completely overlooked.)

ASSESSMENT: Ask students to create a Venn diagram showing similarities and differences between the Bill of Rights and the Universal Document of Human Rights and to record an entry in their journal comparing the two documents and describing how they felt about the activity.

ADAPTATIONS: Use visual aids, such as an overhead or film clip of a human rights violation, to help students define human rights.

EXTENSIONS: Have students do a presentation about a country where the citizens do not have rights articulated in the UDHR.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Simplified Version)

All people everywhere have the same human rights, which no one can take away. This is the basis of freedom, justice and peace in the world.

This Declaration affirms the dignity and worth of all people, and the equal rights of women and men. The rights described here are the common standard for all people everywhere.

Every person and nation is asked to support the understanding and respect for these rights, and to take steps to make sure that they are recognized and observed everywhere, for all people.

Article 1: You have the same human rights as everyone else in the world, because you are a human being. These rights cannot be taken away from you. Everybody, no matter who they are or where they live, should be treated with dignity.

Article 2: You should not be treated differently, nor have your rights taken away, because of your race, color, sex, language, religion or political opinions. Your basic rights should be respected no matter what country you are born in or how rich or poor you are.

Article 3: Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 4: Human beings must not be owned, bought or sold. No one has the right to enslave anyone else. Slavery is a crime.

Article 5: Torture is forbidden at all times and in all circumstances. No one should suffer treatment or punishment that is cruel or makes him or her feel less than human.

Article 6: Everyone has the right to be treated as a person in the eyes of the law.

Article 7: You have the right to be treated by law in the same way as everyone else. You have the same right to be protected by the laws of your country as anyone else.

Article 8: If your rights under the law are violated by someone else, you have the right to see justice done.

Article 9: You may not be arrested or held in a police station without good reason. You may not be kept out of your own country. If you are detained, you have the right to challenge the detention in a court of law.

Article 10: You have the right to a fair and public hearing if you are ever accused of breaking the law, or if you have to go to court for some other reason. The courts must be independent from the government, qualified to understand the law, and free to make their own decisions.

Article 11: If you are accused of a crime, you have the right to be treated as innocent until you are proved guilty, according to the law. You have the right to a fair and public trial where you are allowed to defend yourself. You can not be tried for doing something, which was not a criminal

offence in law at the time it was done.

Article 12: No one has the right to intrude in your private life or to interfere with your home or family without good reason. No one has the right to attack your good name without reason. The law should protect you against such interference.

Article 13: You have the right to move about freely within your country. You also have the right to travel to and from your own country, and to leave any country.

Article 14: If you are forced to flee your home because of human rights abuses, you have the right to seek safety in another country. This right does not apply if you have committed a non-political crime or an act that is not in keeping with the UDHR.

Article 15: You have the right to be treated as a citizen of the country you come from. No one can take away your citizenship, or prevent you from changing your country, without good reason.

Article 16: All adults have the right to marry, regardless of their race, country or religion. Both partners have equal rights in the marriage, and their free and full agreement is needed for the marriage to take place. All families are entitled to protection by the state.

Article 17: You have the right to own goods, land and other property, alone or with other people. No one has the right to take your property away without any good reason.

Article 18: You have the right to hold views on any issue you like without fear of punishment or censure. You also have the right to believe in any religion - or none at all. You have the right to change your religion if you wish, and to practice and teach your religion and beliefs.

Article 19: You have the right to tell people your opinion. You should be able to express your views, however unpopular, without fear of punishment. You have the right to communicate your views within your country and to people in other countries.

Article 20: You have the right to peacefully gather together with other people, in public or private. No one should force you to join any group if you do not wish to.

Article 21: You have the right to take part in the government of your own country directly or by being represented. Everyone has the right to equal access to public service in his or her country. Governments represent the will of the people. Therefore free and fair elections should be held on a regular basis.

Article 22: You have the right to have your basic needs met. Everyone is entitled to live in economic, social and cultural conditions that allow them dignity and let them develop as individuals. All countries should do everything they can to make this happen.

Article 23: You have the right to work in fair and safe conditions and to choose your job. You have the right to be paid enough for a decent standard of living, or to receive supplementary benefits. You also have the right to form or join trade unions to protect your interests.

Article 24: You have the right to time off from work. No one may force you to work unreasonable hours, and you have the right to holidays with pay.

Article 25: Everyone has the right to a decent life, including enough food, clothing, housing, medical care and social services. Society should help those unable to work because they are unemployed, sick, disabled or too old to work. Mothers and children are entitled to special care and assistance.

Article 26: Everyone has the right to an education. In the early years of schooling, it should be

free of charge and compulsory. Education at a higher lever should be equally available to everyone on the basis of merit. Education should develop the full human being and increase respect for human rights.

Article 27: No one may stop you from participating in the cultural life of your community. You also have the right to share in the benefits scientific discovery may bring, and the right to have any interests from your scientific, literary or artistic work protected.

Article 28: Human beings have the right to live in the kind of world where their rights and freedoms are respected.

Article 29: We all have a responsibility to the people around us, and we can only develop fully as individuals by taking care of each other. All the rights in the UDHR can be limited only by law and then only if necessary to protect other people's rights, meet society's sense of right and wrong, maintain order, and look after the welfare of society as a whole.

Article 30: There is nothing in the UDHR that justifies any person or state doing anything that takes away from the rights to which we are all entitled.