

TITLE: Conceptually Understanding Human Rights

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SUMMARY: This lesson is designed in particular to fit within the theme of the United Nations with a focus on Human Rights. In this lesson students will have studied, debated, and understand what Human Rights are and how they are categorized and identifies, specifically through the lens of the United Nations. This will include understanding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The goal is for students to contextualize, analyze, and understand the human right situation in the Philippines by using examples of violations of human rights and the challenges that the nation faces.

LEVEL: The lesson is designed for a 9th Grade classroom

CONTENT AREA: The lesson is designed for a Global Studies or World History course

DURATION: One 50 minute class period

OBJECTIVES: Below are the learning objectives of the lesson. By the end of the lesson students will be able to understand the larger context of human rights as a concept and in application. The following objectives below will be addressed:

Essential Question: What are Human Rights according to the United Nations?

- Students will be able to explain human rights as a concept

PROCEDURE:

The lesson will be presented over the course of three class periods. Teachers should pass out **Worksheet #1: Understanding Human Rights** at the beginning of the first class period. At the end of the class period students will also be working in small groups; preferably in groups of 2-3. Make sure to group accordingly prior to the lesson.

Introduction (10 minutes):

Direct students to the top of **Worksheet #1** and give a brief context of what the lesson will be covering. The students will answer independently a ‘bell-ringer’ question. This is done to get students thinking about the subject at hand. In this case the question is as follows and they should be answered at the top of **Worksheet #1**:

- What rights here at school do you value the most?
- What rights do you feel are violated here as a student?

The introduction will then turn into a whole class discussion. Ask students to share their responses. Move the discussion from what rights they feel are violated within school to outside of the school walls and in a larger context the world. Some discussion questions that could be used by the teacher include but are not limited to:

- Is it a violation to someone’s right if they do not go to school? Why or why not?
- What are some similarities or examples of people feeling their rights are violated like you felt when talking about school?
- What about in other parts of the world? Do you know of examples where peoples have had their human rights violated?

Close Reading Activity (30 Minutes):

The classroom teacher should next pass out **Article #1: “What are human rights?”** from the United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner.

The students will be responsible for close reading this article. Instruct students to read and annotate the article first. It is designed to provide a background on what human rights are and how they are interpreted by the United Nations. As students annotate they should be doing the following with the document:

- Underline or circle any adjectives or descriptions of what human rights are
- Underline sentences that reference human rights and the government and or States responsibility
- Circle any actions that the article suggests either individuals or groups should take in regards to human rights

Included is vocabulary students may need for the reading. Teacher should also review these words prior to the students engaging in the close reading activity.

Vocab to know:

- **Inherent:** existing in something as a permanent, essential, or characteristic attribute.
- **Interrelated:** related or connected to one another.
- **Interdependent:** (of two or more people or things) dependent on each other.
- **Indivisible:** unable to be divided or separated.

Once students have completed reading the article, instruct students to answer the questions related to the reading on **Part 1 in Worksheet #1**. The questions are as follows:

1. After completing the annotations, which words were used the most to **describe** what human rights are? Why do you think these words were used? (answer)
2. In reference to your annotations, what is the responsibility of the government or state in regards to protecting human rights? Make sure to cite one specific piece of textual evidence in your answer. (answer)
3. In reference to your annotations, what is the responsibility of the individual in regards to protecting human rights? Make sure to cite one specific piece of textual evidence in your answer. (answer)
4. Referencing the article, choose one specific sentence that best sums up what human rights are in your opinion. Why did you choose the sentence above to best represent what human rights are? (answer)
5. In 2-3 sentences, give your best summary of what human rights are. Be sure to address both the inherent nature of human rights as well as the relationship between human rights, the individual, and the state. (answer)

Closure (15 minutes):

After each student has completed these answers hold a short discussion on the answers and what they have read. Make sure to address the questions of the article that may seem particularly troublesome for each class. Points to emphasize about the article:

- Human rights are inherent and therefore should not be taken away or denied. Individuals shall not be discriminated against based on categories such as sex, race, color, and so on.
- Human rights are dependent on one another. If one right is denied it takes away from the other rights of the human being.
- Human rights are universal
- Individuals and governments/states are responsible for protecting these rights and there have been some measures taken by all states to do so.

The final activity will require the teacher to group students. This will be done prior to the class. A suggestion is that students should be put into groups of two or three students. They will be required to create a 140 character tweet that best summarizes what human rights are.

They are to act as if the teacher is the PR team of the United Nations. The teacher must approve the tweet as their exit slip before they leave the classroom!

Teachers may also wish to have students tweet their answers to their own personal account if they feel it is appropriate or applicable. One easy way to do this is to create a unique hashtag for each class period. (ex: #HRMeanings1sthour)

MATERIALS/REFERENCES:

"What Are Human Rights." *What Are Human Rights?* United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, n.d. Web. <<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Pages/WhatareHumanRights.aspx>>.

APPENDICES:

Worksheet #1: Understanding Human Rights

Name: _____

Introduction: Answer the following questions in relation to your experience in school. Be ready to share your answers:

- What rights here at school do you value the most?
- What rights do you feel are violated here as a student?

Part 1: "What are Human Rights?"

Directions - As you read the article "What are Human Rights?" from the United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner annotate the article using the following guidelines:

- Underline or circle any adjectives or descriptions of what human rights are
- Underline sentences that reference human rights and the government and or states responsibility
- Circle any actions that the article suggests either individuals or groups should take in regards to human rights

Vocab to know:

- **Inherent:** existing in something as a permanent, essential, or characteristic attribute.
- **Interrelated:** related or connected to one another.
- **Interdependent:** (of two or more people or things) dependent on each other.
- **Indivisible:** unable to be divided or separated.

When you have completed the annotations of your article answer the following questions in relation to the article.

1. After completing the annotations, which words were used the most to **describe** what human rights are? Why do you think these words were used?
2. In reference to your annotations, what is the responsibility of the government or state in regards to protecting human rights? Make sure to cite one specific piece of textual evidence in your answer.
3. In reference to your annotations, what is the responsibility of the individual in regards to protecting human rights? Make sure to cite one specific piece of textual evidence in your answer.
4. Referencing the article, choose one specific sentence that best sums up what human rights are in your opinion.

Sentence: _____

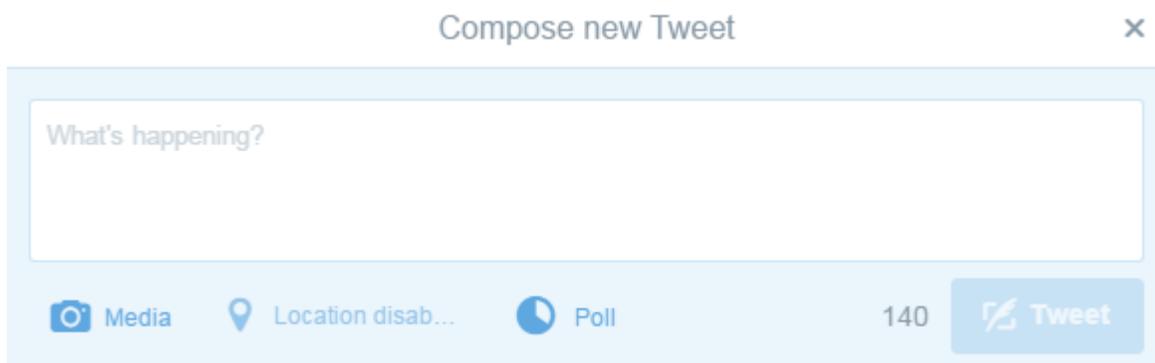
Why did you choose the sentence above to best represent what human rights are?

5. In 2-3 sentences, give your best summary of what human rights are. Be sure to address both the inherent nature of human rights as well as the relationship between human rights, the individual, and the state.

Part 2: Closure

Directions - Within your group you are now responsible for creating a tweet that will be posted to the United Nations official twitter account. You only have **140 characters** to describe what human rights are! The United Nations PR team is counting on you to deliver the message for the entire world to read!

As a group, write your response below. You teacher is the PR leader so you must check it in with them before it can go on the web!



Article 1: “What are human rights?” – United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner

- <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Pages/WhatareHumanRights.aspx>

What are human rights?

Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, whatever our nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, or any other status. We are all equally entitled to our human rights without discrimination. These rights are all interrelated, interdependent and indivisible.

Universal human rights are often expressed and guaranteed by law, in the forms of treaties, customary international law, general principles and other sources of international law. International human rights law lays down obligations of Governments to act in certain ways or to refrain from certain acts, in order to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms of individuals or groups.

Universal and inalienable

The principle of universality of human rights is the cornerstone of international human rights law. This principle, as first emphasized in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights in 1948, has been reiterated in numerous international human rights conventions, declarations, and resolutions. The 1993 Vienna World Conference on Human Rights, for example, noted that it is the duty of States to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms, regardless of their political, economic and cultural systems.



All States have ratified at least one, and 80% of States have ratified four or more, of the core human rights treaties, reflecting consent of States which creates legal obligations for them and giving concrete expression to universality. Some fundamental human rights norms enjoy universal protection by customary international law across all boundaries and civilizations.

Human rights are inalienable. They should not be taken away, except in specific situations and according to due process. For example, the right to liberty may be restricted if a person is found guilty of a crime by a court of law.

Interdependent and indivisible

All human rights are indivisible, whether they are civil and political rights, such as the right to life, equality before the law and freedom of expression; economic, social and cultural rights, such as the rights to work, social security and education , or collective rights, such as the rights to development and self-determination, are indivisible, interrelated and interdependent. The improvement of one right facilitates advancement of the others. Likewise, the deprivation of one right adversely affects the others.

Equal and non-discriminatory



Non-discrimination is a cross-cutting principle in international human rights law. The principle is present in all the major human rights treaties and provides the central theme of some of international human rights conventions such as the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

The principle applies to everyone in relation to all human rights and freedoms and it prohibits discrimination on the basis of a list of non-exhaustive categories such as sex, race, colour and so on. The principle of non-discrimination is complemented by the principle of equality, as stated in Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights."

Both Rights and Obligations

Human rights entail both rights and obligations. States assume obligations and duties under international law to respect, to protect and to fulfil human rights. The obligation to respect means that States must refrain from interfering with or curtailing the enjoyment of human rights. The obligation to protect requires States to protect individuals and groups against human rights abuses. The obligation to fulfil means that States must take positive action to facilitate the enjoyment of basic human rights. At the individual level, while we are entitled our human rights, we should also respect the human rights of others.