

Human Rights Through Social Justice

Lesson 1:

The Promise of Human Rights

Lesson Description:

This lesson serves as a basic introduction to the idea of human rights, as well as key notions behind human rights. The lesson encourages students to begin reflecting on how they (and we as Canadians generally) think about human rights. Apart from being introduced to some basic human rights documents and their historical contexts, this lesson will introduce students to different ways of thinking about human rights: e.g. as aspirational and abstract standards of ethical behaviour, as legal norms that apply to citizens, as products of historical contests, as hard won (and often incomplete) political entitlements, and as both individual and relational in practice.

Core Question(s):

- What are human rights?
- What does it mean for human rights to be universal, inalienable and innate?
- What is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?

Learning Goals:

- Be familiar with different ways of thinking about Human Rights:
 - Aspirational/Practical
 - Universality, Inalienability and Innateness
 - Individual/Relational
- Be familiar with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and its political, legal and historical significance;
- Generate, classify and prioritize a list of questions about human rights that will serve as guide questions for their group research project and assignments under the module.

Competencies: Historical Thinking

Historical Significance	Cause & Consequence	Continuity & Change	Historical Perspective
Using primary and secondary sources	Through inquiry	Through inquiry	Through inquiry
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Determine & explain the importance of people, events/developments or ideas <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Assess the impact of the past and on the present <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluate how importance may shift for various people and over time	<input type="checkbox"/> Identify various causes using one or more accounts of the event or development <input type="checkbox"/> Explain both intended and unintended consequences <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Assess the relative influence of various causes <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluate the impact of various consequences	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Compare what has changed and what has stayed the same over a period of time (explain why) <input type="checkbox"/> Determine using sound inferences from multiple sources <input type="checkbox"/> Assess how an event may involve progress for some people or groups and decline for others	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Explain reasons for then and now ideas and beliefs <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Infer past viewpoints using varied sources <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Analyze how and why of ideas and beliefs in a particular time and why they may be different from today (context) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Analyze the tension that can exist between conflicting past and present-day viewpoints about history (presentism)

Materials

- Quote paraphrasing Hannah Arendt on the “Right to have Rights”
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights For Everyone, Everywhere: The Making of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,” Excerpt only (14:56) (UN Audiovisual library)
- QFT Activity Worksheet
- Assignment
- Worksheets
- Handouts
- PowerPoint Presentation

Materials Extension

- Fundamental Freedoms, Eleanor Roosevelt and the Declaration of Human Rights, The Making History Series, Facing History Facing Ourselves, (2010)
 - “Who was Peng-Chun Chang?”, p. 155,
 - “Who was Charles Malik?”, p. 176,
 - “The Politics of Words,” p. 168-174.
- Assignment
- Worksheets
- Handouts

(All videos in this lesson require access to wifi)

Activity	Grouping			Approach (Pedagogy)	Materials
	W	S	I		
<p>Activity 1: Thinking about Human Rights</p> <p>Question framing activity</p> <p>Depending on the size of the class, this activity can be done in one group and facilitated by the instructor or in small groups with an assigned note taker.</p> <p>Forming questions</p> <p>Categorizing the questions</p>	✓	✓	✓	<p>Students will be asked to write questions after reading the following prompt statement:</p> <p><i>“Merely being a human being is not enough for an individual to have rights. Individuals need to be a part of a political community to have and exercise those rights.”</i></p> <p>Within the next 5 minutes,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask as many questions as you can. • Do not stop to judge, discuss, edit, or answer any questions. • Write down every question exactly as it pops into your head (No need to polish or edit). • Change any ideas in statement form into questions. <p>After generating questions, give the students another 5 minutes to categorize or classify the questions according to their importance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will prioritize the questions they have generated choosing what they consider to be the three most important questions. • Students provide a rationale for their choices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projector or Whiteboard • Activity Worksheet • Activity Worksheet

(W) Whole group (S) Small group (I) Individual

Activity	Grouping			Approach (Pedagogy)	Materials
	W	S	I		
<p>Sharing and guided discussion</p> <p>The questions generated by the students can be addressed in the lesson summary and used as guide questions for further student inquiry.</p>	✓			<p>Small groups share their questions with the class</p> <p>Using the questions generated by the students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask students about the work they did. (Their impressions about the task, the questions they asked, any difficulties?) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whiteboard List of suggested prompts and follow up questions to guide the discussion
<p>Activity 2: Lesson summary</p>	✓			<p>Summary of the activity, a Mini Presentation on the Origins of Human Rights and an Introduction to Basic Human Rights Concepts</p> <p>(See suggested PPT Resource and Infographic for Lesson Overview)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PowerPoint Infographic (Projector and/or Print Out)
<p>Activity 3: Q & A and/or instruction on video assignment</p> <p>Continuation (After assignments are done)</p>	✓			<p>Students may have additional questions from the presentation. Some questions can be added or related to the questions generated by the students during the activity.</p> <p>Explain the assignment and give students instructions on how to use the worksheet.</p> <p>Sharing and discussion of the assignment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assignment 1 and Worksheet (Video) See additional guide questions for furthering student inquiry

(W) Whole group (S) Small group (I) Individual

Extension Learning Activity: Open-ended Inquiry Project

Confronting Cultural Assumptions about the Origins of Human Rights

During the Question Framing Activity, students may come up with questions that will require unpacking for underlying cultural and historical assumptions. The instructor can prompt students to think about ideas about human rights norms, especially human rights documents adopted over time, are rooted in particular historical contexts. One useful way of opening up the discussion about these cultural assumptions is to prompt students to ask questions about the people who played a role in the drafting and adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Assign the following reading from Fundamental Freedoms, Eleanor Roosevelt and the Declaration of Human Rights, The Making History Series, Facing History Facing Ourselves, (2010)

- “Who was Peng-Chun Chang?”, p. 155,
- “Who was Charles Malik ? ”, p. 176,
- “The Politics of Words,” p. 168-174.

See also: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Extension Learning Activity: Open-ended Inquiry Project

Guide Questions for further Student Inquiry:

1. Does information about the historical context/actors behind human rights documents/milestones affect our understanding of human rights norms?
2. What does it mean to say that the UDHR is a negotiated document?
3. How was the UDHR a product of its time? How was it also ahead of its time?
4. Explain what it means for the wording of the UDHR to be politically significant. Cite some examples when Eleanor Roosevelt found it important to insist on a particular terminology.

Bibliography

Arendt, Hannah. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. Schocken Books, 1951.

Benhabib, Seyla. "'The Right to Have Rights': Hannah Arendt on the Contradictions of the Nation-state." In *The Rights of Others: Aliens, Residents, and Citizens*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004. 49-70. Print. The Seeley Lectures.

DeGooyer, Stephanie et al. *The Right to Have Rights*. Verso, 2018.

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Krumbein, Frédérick. "P.C. Chang - The Chinese Father of Human Rights." *Journal of Human Rights*. vol. 14, no. 3, pp. 332-352, 2015.

Lesson Planning Workbook for Using the Question Formulation Technique, the Right Question Institute.