

**What are Human Rights?** Conveys the universality of human rights, the concept of rights and illustrates the role of human rights in various contexts. (Grade 3)

**Lesson Title:** Human Beings/Human Rights

**Reference:** *Human Rights Resource Centre*, University of Minnesota. ([www1.umn.edu](http://www1.umn.edu))

**Overview:** Through brainstorming and discussion, this activity leads participants to define what it means to be human and to relate human rights to human needs.

**Materials:** Whiteboard or chart paper, chalk or markers

**Suggested Activities:**

### **PART A: What Does It Mean to Be Human?**

1. Write the words "HUMAN" and "RIGHTS" at the top of chart paper or a blackboard. Below the word "human" draw a circle or the outline of a human being.

Ask students to brainstorm what qualities define a human being and write the words or symbols inside the outline. For example, "intelligence," "sympathy."

2. Next ask students what they think is needed in order to protect, enhance, and fully develop these qualities of a human being. List their answers outside the circle, and ask students to explain them. For example, "education," "friendship," "loving family." (Note: Save this list for use in Part B)

3. Discuss:

- What does it mean to be fully human? How is that different from just "being alive" or "surviving"?
- Based on this list, what do people need to live in dignity?
- Are all human beings essentially equal? What is the value of human differences?
- Can any of our "essential" human qualities be taken from us? For example, only human beings can communicate with complex language; are you human if you lose the power of speech?
- What happens when a person or government attempts to deprive someone of something that is necessary to human dignity?
- What would happen if you had to give up one of these human necessities?

4. Explain that everything inside the circle relates to human dignity, the wholeness of being human. Everything written around the outline represents what is necessary to human dignity. Human rights are based on these necessities.

**For younger children –**

1. Ask children sitting in a circle to think of a quality about themselves that they consider a good quality. Using a talking stick or simply speaking in turns, ask each to describe that quality briefly.

- Note that everyone has good qualities.
- If children have difficulty generating qualities about themselves, ask "What are some qualities we admire in people?" and write a list of responses on the board. Have each child pick one that is true for her or him.

2. Ask some of these questions:

- Do you respect in others the quality you like about yourself?
- Do you respect good qualities in others that you do not have?
- Do all human beings deserve respect? Why?
- How do you show respect for others?

3. Ask children if they can remember a time when they felt hurt because someone did not respect them.

- Did someone say something insulting or hurtful to you?
- Why do people sometimes say bad things to each other?
- What is dignity? Is your dignity hurt when others do not respect you? How does it feel to you?

4. Ask the group how human beings differ from other living creatures. Emphasize that human beings communicate with words, not just sounds, and that they decide many things about their lives.

- Use the outline in Part A.

5. Ask, "What does it mean if we say that all human beings deserve respect because they all have human dignity?"

6. Explain that after a terrible war, World War II, all 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. These words are contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

7. Ask children to think of one example of how life in their community could be more peaceful if people showed greater respect for each other.

8. Have children work in pairs or alone to illustrate one way they could show respect to someone. Share these ideas with the rest of the class.

**Lesson Title:** Needs and wants

**Reference:** *Thinking Global: Global Perspectives in the lower primary classroom*  
Rebecca Reid-Nguyen

**Overview:** This activity helps students come to an understanding about the things all people must have in order to be healthy and safe, and the non-essential things or wants.

**Material:** Large pieces of paper and pens

**Suggested activities:**

- Brainstorm the things people needs in order to grow up healthy and safe. List them on the board or large piece of paper
- Discuss the difference between needs and wants. Needs are the things that we have to have and not having them will affect how we grow and live. Wants are the things that are nice to have but we can still be healthy and safe without them.
- Decide which items on the list are needs and which are wants.
- Try ranking the needs and wants from the most important to the least important
- Make a display of needs using the heading “ All people need....” Illustrate with pictures or a collage.
- Look at the united nation list of the Rights of the child and compare how the class list to these. The UNICEF’s site is a good one with pictorial explanation of the Rights <http://www.unicef.org/voy/meeting/rig/righome.html>

Further lesson ideas can be found in *Thinking Global: Global Perspectives in the lower primary classroom* pp. 124-28

**One Human Family promotes appreciation of the common citizenship of humanity** (Grade 4)

**Lesson Title:** A Human Rights Tree

**Reference:** *Human Rights Resource Centre*, University of Minnesota. ([www1.umn.edu](http://www1.umn.edu))

**Overview:** Students work cooperatively to create an image that helps to define human rights and human needs.

**Materials:** Art supplies, chart paper

**Suggested Activities:**

1. Ask students, working in small groups, to draw a tree on large chart paper.
  - Write on the tree (in the form of leaves, fruits, flowers, or branches) those human rights that they think all people need to live in dignity and justice.
  - A human rights tree needs roots to grow and flourish. Give the tree roots and label them with the things that make human rights flourish. For example, a healthy economy, the rule of law, or universal education.
2. When drawings are complete, ask each group to present its tree and explain its reasons for the items they have included.

**Going Further:**

1. Match the fruits, leaves, and branches with articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and write the number of the article next to each item.
2. Display these trees in the classroom or in public places.
3. Identify rights concerns that are of particular concern to you and your community.

Source: Amnesty International-Austria

**Lesson Title:** I am, you are, we are

**Reference:** Racism, No way! Interactive website  
<http://www.racismnoway.com.au/index.html>

**Overview:** Students recognise that individuals and groups have both common and different attributes and that each individual may be a member of many different groups.

**Material:** Any inanimate objects. The only restriction is that it belongs to a recognisable group and has its own distinct physical characteristics. eg leaves, rocks, shells. In this lesson, we use potatoes, use several varieties if possible. One for each student.

**Suggested activities:**

- Students select one potato each
- Students examine their potato and have one minute of silence to name and get "acquainted" with their new friend.
- Teacher initiates the activity by showing his/her potato to the class and introducing it by means of a narrative. The story should focus on certain physical characteristics, eg, it has a certain bump because it was dropped on the way to market.
- Students then introduce their potatoes in pairs, groups or to the whole class.
- Students put their "friend" back into the bags. (Is there any difference between the way the students handle their "friend" and how they handled it earlier?)
- Discuss: "All potatoes are the same!"
- Ask the students if they could find their friend again. Invite them to try.
- Students explain a unique feature of their potato, which helped them identify it.
- Teacher draws the analogy between potatoes and people and reiterates that a statement such as "they're all the same" probably means that the person saying it, has not taken the time to get to know his/her friend.

For additional ideas and activities for this lesson see:

[http://www.racismnoway.com.au/classroom/lesson\\_ideas/20001010\\_20.html](http://www.racismnoway.com.au/classroom/lesson_ideas/20001010_20.html)

## Celebrating diversity promotes an appreciation for the diversity of the human family (Grade 5)

**Lesson Title:** Considering a Picture

**Reference:** Human Rights Resource Centre, University of Minnesota. ([www1.umn.edu](http://www1.umn.edu))

**Overview:** Using photographs of people from a variety of cultures, this activity raises questions about universality, diversity, and human dignity.

**Materials:** Copies of simplified version of UDHR, a collection of pictures showing people of many different cultures, ages, and backgrounds. Especially recommended are Amnesty International calendars and UDHR 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary poster set.

### Suggested Activities:

1. Individually, in pairs or small groups, choose a picture from the selection.

Study the picture and discuss some of the following questions.

2. Questions about Universality:

- Why did you choose this picture? Why do you think the photographer chose this subject?
- What do you find in the picture that serves as a **mirror** of your own life, reflecting something familiar that you can easily recognize?
- What do you find in the picture that serves as a **window** onto another culture or way of living, something that is strange and unfamiliar to you?
- What do you think is going on here (e.g., is it a working environment? a religious setting?).
- How is the person(s) feeling?
- In what ways do you think the person(s) in the picture lives a very different life from you? Has different values? needs? hopes? expectations of life?
- In what ways do you think the person(s) in the picture is like you? Shares similar values? hopes? needs? expectations?
- Is this a complete picture of the way the person lives? What might be missing?
- Is there any evidence of victimisation in this picture? Of privilege? Of discrimination or privilege based on class? gender? ethnicity?
- What human rights do you think are most important to the person(s) in the picture? Do you think different rights are most important to you?

- Are human rights really universal? Do you think the person(s) in the picture wants the same human rights as you do? Do you think the person(s) enjoys the same human rights as you? Why or why not?

## **Adaptation**

### 1. For Young Children –

- Why did you choose this picture?
- What do you see that is like your own life, something familiar that you can easily recognize?
- What do you see that is unfamiliar and different from your own life? Is there anything in the picture that you don't recognize or understand?
- In what part of the world do you think this picture was taken?
- How do you think this person is like you? In what ways is the person not like you?
- What do you think the person(s) in this picture is doing?
- Make up a story about the person(s) in this picture.
- How do you think the person(s) in this picture feels?
- What will the person in this picture do tonight? Tomorrow morning? What will he or she do that you do also? What do you think he or she will do differently or not at all?
- What do you think this person enjoys doing?
- What do you think this person will be like in a few years?
- What do you think this person would like to tell you? To ask you? What would you like to tell or ask this person?
- Draw a picture that illustrates one of the questions above.
- Try to copy the picture, matching colours and shapes as closely as possible.

Source: Human Rights Educators' Network, Amnesty International USA; adapted in part from Emily Style, National Seed Project 1.

**A Dialogue** -- Write a dialogue between the persons in the picture or between a person in the picture and you.

1. **A Cartoon** – Draw a cartoon depicting a story about the people in this picture.
2. **Research** – If possible, find out where the picture was taken. Find out about that country or its culture, including its human rights situation.
3. **Create** – Write a poem or story or create an artistic expression that captures an idea or feeling raised by this photograph.

**Lesson Title:** Let's look at groups

**Reference:** Racism, No way! Interactive website  
<http://www.racismnoway.com.au/index.html>

**Overview:** Students will identify the many groups to which they belong and consider how groups are formed, group dynamics and how group rules influence individual choice. Students will develop strategies that might influence their groups.

**Introduction:** We are all members of many groups and subgroups. Some groups we choose to belong to and some are chosen for us. Understanding group affiliations and influence helps us understand our individual, community and national identities.

**Material:** Post- it notes

### **Suggested activities:**

#### **Groups**

- Brainstorm 'groups' that students might belong to. (gender, age, language spoken, ethnic background, community, place of birth, sports, hobbies, clubs, schools, classes, only children, favourite food, star sign etc)
- Distribute post-it notes.
- Students write their name and the name of each group they belong to on a separate post-it note.
- One student names one group he/she belongs to and puts the label on the board.
- Other students with the same or similar groups add their post-its to the one on the board.
- Continue until all post-its have been grouped.
- Highlight that students may have some groups in common but may also belong to other very diverse groups.

#### **Choice**

- What are the different things that members of a group may have in common?
- Could any student join any of these groups? Why/ why not?
- Some groups are groups of choice and some are not. Sort the post-its into two categories 'groups I choose to belong to' and 'groups I belong to without choice'.
- Distribute Handout 1.
- Students list their individual groups into the two categories on the handout.

For further ideas and strategies regarding how group dynamics and group rules influence individual choice and how students may develop strategies that might influence their groups see:

[http://www.racismnoway.com.au/classroom/lesson\\_ideas/20020621\\_47.html](http://www.racismnoway.com.au/classroom/lesson_ideas/20020621_47.html)

**Justice: A fair go for all draws the subject of human rights to the child's daily life and calls the students to explore ways in which they can show their respect for human rights. (including civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights) (Grade 6)**

**Title:** Human Rights in the News

**Reference:** <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/edumat/hreduseries/hereandnow/Default.htm>

**Overview:** This activity uses recent newspapers and news media to develop an awareness of rights issues in everyday life and to show human rights not only as they are violated but also as they are protected and enjoyed.

**Materials:** Newspapers, chart paper, sticky tape or glue, scissors, Copies of the UDHR – [simplified version](http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/edumat/hreduseries/hereandnow/Part-5/8_udhr-abbr.htm) ([http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/edumat/hreduseries/hereandnow/Part-5/8\\_udhr-abbr.htm](http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/edumat/hreduseries/hereandnow/Part-5/8_udhr-abbr.htm))

**Procedure:**

1. Divide students into small groups. Each group receives a newspaper or pages from a newspaper, scissors, tape or glue, and a sheet of chart paper.
2. Each group will construct a poster using items from the newspaper grouped under these categories:
  - a. rights being practiced or enjoyed
  - b. rights being denied
  - c. rights being protected
  - d. rights in conflict

Encourage students to look not only for news stories but also for small features such as announcements and advertisements (e.g., the language of the paper itself illustrates the right to language and culture, advertisements can illustrate the right to private property, reports of social events may illustrate cultural rights, and personal columns can reflect many rights in practice).

3. Once students have found stories for each category, they should select one story from each category to analyse:
  - a. What specific rights were involved in the story? List them beside the article.
  - b. Find the article(s) of the UDHR that cover each right and write the article number(s) on the list.

**Alternative:** All groups contribute to four separate posters, combining the articles they have found to make class posters.

4. Ask a spokesperson from each group to summarise the group's selections.
5. Choose one or two stories from each group's poster and ask the group to explain their analysis of the story in terms of the UDHR:
  - What specific rights were involved in several stories?

- What articles of the UDHR were involved?
- Were more stories concerned with political and civil rights or social, economic, and cultural rights? Why do you think one kind of right appeared more often?

6. Discuss:

- What categories of rights stories were easiest to find? Hardest? Why?
- Did some articles of the UDHR come up more often than others? Did others not come up at all? How can you explain this?
- How many articles explicitly mentioned human rights? How many concerned human rights issues but did not use those words? Why do you think human rights were not mentioned?
- Based on these news stories, what seems to be the state of human rights in the world today? In Australia? In your community?
- What are some positive initiatives and actions for the protection and fulfillment of human rights indicated by the stories? Who is taking these actions?

**Going Further**

1. **Keep Searching** – Leave the posters hanging for an extended time, during which students continue to add clippings. Reassess the posters and the concluding discussion.
2. **Compare Media Coverage** – Ask students to compare coverage of the same human rights stories in different newspapers and/or different media (e.g., radio, magazines, TV). What differences can they observe in importance given the story? In emphasis of features of the story? Are there different versions of a single event? Did any version of the story explicitly mention human rights?
3. **Survey Television Coverage** – Ask students to watch a news program on TV and write down the topics covered and the amount of time given to each human rights topic.

**Lesson Title:** Fair Dinkum

**Reference:** Racism, No way! Interactive website  
<http://www.racismnoway.com.au/index.html>

**Overview:** Students understand that there are different interpretations of fairness, justice and equity.

**Introduction:** The questions raised in these activities are not uncommon in most classrooms. Through discussion of scenarios, the students should understand the complexities of the terms fairness, justice and equity. In particular students should understand that, depending on the circumstances, fairness and justice do not always result when everyone is treated the same, and unfairness and injustice do not always result when individuals are not treated the same. Teachers may adapt the scenarios, or use their own.

**Materials needed:**

Worksheets to download

[Explore](http://www.racismnoway.com.au/upload/explore.rtf) (<http://www.racismnoway.com.au/upload/explore.rtf>) (rtf File)

Get a player/reader for this file [here](http://www.racismnoway.com.au/help/reader.html) (<http://www.racismnoway.com.au/help/reader.html>)

[Teacher's notes](http://www.racismnoway.com.au/upload/Teacher's%20notes.rtf) (<http://www.racismnoway.com.au/upload/Teacher's notes.rtf>) (rtf File)

Get a player/reader for this file [here](http://www.racismnoway.com.au/help/reader.html) (<http://www.racismnoway.com.au/help/reader.html>)

**Suggested Activities:**

- **Explore**

- Download *Explore* scenarios and distribute to groups for discussion exploring the questions:  
Do you think that this is fair?  
Can you think of any circumstances under which this would be fair?  
Do certain circumstances merit special treatment?
- Each group comments on one scenario.

- **Discuss**

- Ask students to share experiences they have had when they did not feel they were treated with fairness, justice and equity.
- Discuss their experiences in terms of:  
Is treating everyone the same always fair?  
Is it sometimes fairer to treat people differently?  
Do certain circumstances merit special treatment

**Define** (see teacher's notes)

Discuss the following terms and construct group definitions

equality                      equity

fairness                      justice

social justice

For additional strategies in regards to the issues of fairness in a school context see:

[http://www.racismnoway.com.au/classroom/lesson\\_ideas/20020828\\_49.html](http://www.racismnoway.com.au/classroom/lesson_ideas/20020828_49.html)