

Meagan Smith  
Model Lesson Plan  
Time: 90 minutes

Supplies needed for each small group making collage: poster board, scissors, glue, newspapers and magazines, large colored pens.

- I. Goals: Studying human rights helps students:
  - A. Understand that laws are designed to protect human dignity
  - B. Understand that international human right laws touch every aspect of life
  
- II. Objectives:
  - A. Knowledge Objectives:
    1. Explain the meaning of human rights
    2. Become familiar with the UDHR and the existence of treaties
    3. Become familiar with recognized international human rights standards
  - B. Skills Objectives:

After this class, students will be better able to:

    1. Identify some of the rights included in the UDHR
    2. Distinguish between a human right and a legal right
    3. Identify UDHR rights being violated/protected in the news
  - C. Attitude Objectives—Students will be better able to feel that
    1. human right laws protects everyone’s dignity
    2. international human rights laws are relevant to their every day life
  
- III. Classroom Methods
  - A. **Poem and discussion of what are human rights?** (5-10 mins)
    1. Pass out poem “Like You”
    2. Ask someone from class to read (or identify someone before class).
    3. Explain that Roque Dalton was from San Salvador, El Salvador, and he was born in 1935. He was a journalist, poet and writer. Because of his political beliefs, he was imprisoned in El Salvador and then lived in exile in many different countries. He was assassinated in 1975.
    3. Ask students to explain what they understand by the concept “human rights”.
    4. (Work towards this definition: HUMAN RIGHTS ARE THOSE BASIC STANDARDS WITHOUT WHICH PEOPLE CAN NOT LIVE IN DIGNITY AS HUMAN BEINGS)
    3. Encourage brainstorming and have partner write responses on board.
    4. Ask them to think about the poem and the author as well, and see if that gives them any other ideas about what are human rights.
    5. Explain that human rights are rights that all people have just because they are human; basic rights that every individual on this

planet has. A violation of a human right is a violation of a person's dignity. Again, "HUMAN RIGHTS ARE THOSE BASIC STANDARDS WITHOUT WHICH PEOPLE CAN NOT LIVE IN DIGNITY AS HUMAN BEINGS."

6. Both **government and private** actors can violate someone's human rights. Human rights violations occur in our home, our schools, our workplaces, and in interactions between the government and citizens—whenever a person's dignity has been violated.

**B. Group Activity: Human Rights in Space** (30 mins)  
(problem 1. 4, p. 8 of Street Law book (2000 edition))

1. Pass out handout of problem (or have them open their books)
2. Ask student to read problem out loud.
3. Explain that each student should individually create a list of the three most important human rights they think should be respected in our space colony. When you're done please look up and we'll move on as a group to the next part.
4. Count off 1-5 and break into small groups to compare lists and create a master list of 10 most important human rights. Have the group elect a spokesperson to present to class.
5. Call students back together and ask spokesperson from each group to identify their first right. Partner write on board rights for this new colony. Go around class until no new rights appear.
6. As we go around and check in with the groups, ask class to think about why some rights are more important than other rights, and if any of the rights listed conflict with each other, and why. Also ask students WHY? that particular right is important
7. Ask class to turn to Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Appendix B, p. 564.
8. Ask students if they've ever heard of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?
9. Ask students what they think this declaration means, just given the title.
10. Explain that the UDHR is a statement of basic human rights which has been agreed to by almost every country. Every country that belongs to the United Nations agrees to promote, recognize and observe these rights. However, the UDHR is not the official law of any country. There are other international documents though that include many of the rights included in the UDHR, and countries have the option of making those documents laws in their country as well.
11. Divide up Articles according to group:

Group 1: Articles 1-7

Group 2: Articles 7-13

Group 3: Articles 14-19

Group 4: Articles 20-25

### Group 5: Articles 25-30

Ask each group to take “their articles” and see if our space colony includes the rights granted in those articles of the UDHR. (Keep board or overhead of the space colony’s rights visible, so that students can compare).

- 12 Ask students: Compare our space colony to UDHR in terms of respect for human rights. How does our space colony measure up to the UDHR?
- 13 **Report back** to class findings as groups. Teacher make a mark on space colony list to show that it is also found in the UDHR (For example, underline those rights that are also in UDHR). On board or overhead, make a separate list of rights that are in UDHR but that we didn’t include in our space colony.
- 14 **Discussion:**
  - a. Why do you think some rights are in the UDHR but not in our space colony?
  - b. Which rights are legal rights in the US? Which rights are not legal rights? What does a “legal right” mean? How is that different from a human right?
  - c. Did your ideas about which rights were most important change during this activity?
  - d. How would life be if we excluded some of these rights from our colony?
  - e. Are there any rights that you now want to add to the final list (of our space colony)?
  - f. Did anyone list a right themselves which was not included in any of the lists?
  - g. Why is it useful for us to make such a list?

### C. HUMAN RIGHTS IN DAILY LIFE COLLAGE ACTIVITY (45 min.)

1. Using same groups, explain to students that they will now make a collage of UDHR rights. They will receive newspapers and should cut and paste articles into four sections on their board: (write these on board or overhead)
  - a. Human rights practiced/protected
  - b. Human rights denied or violated
  - c. Human rights in conflict
2. Look for stories as well as small features, announcements, advertisements. (Give students 15-20 minutes to make collage)
3. Identify the UDHR articles related to each category and write next to the clippings. (Give students about 15 minutes)
4. **DEBRIEF ABOUT COLLAGE:** (about 30 minutes or less)
  - a. Ask a different person to explain each section (this way three or four people will be able to be share about the collage).
  - b. Also ask spokespersons to comment on: Which categories were easiest to find? Hardest? Why? Which articles came up the most often? Did some not come up at all?

- c. As a group, ask class: Based on these news stories, what seems to be the state of human rights in the world today? In the US? In Washington State? In Seattle?
- d. What are some positive initiatives and actions for the protection and fulfillment of human rights indicated by the stories? Who is taking these actions?
- e. Note that during this discussion it should become clear that the US is not necessarily a leader in human rights; however, many people in the US (in the government, in non-governmental organizations, in the legal profession, etc.) are concerned about human rights and working towards creating a nation with more respect for human dignity.
- f. Ask teacher to post collage for a week or two.

**C. TREATY EXERCISE/International Human Rights Law in the US (10 minutes--optional/additional)**

(This exercise is best done following the introduction of the UDHR/space colony exercise, although mention of the UDHR could be taken out and it could be done at any time. Most likely there will not be time for this in 90 minutes, although this could be done prior to the human rights class, as an introduction and to get students thinking about what is international human rights law. I would also recommend this for a slightly more mature classroom, such as seniors, honors, etc.)

1. Explain that international human rights law become legal rights when the government signs and ratifies an international treaty guaranteeing such rights, a state becomes “party” to a treaty. Other ways human rights become legal rights is when they are written into the Constitution or the legislature passes a law protecting these rights. A treaty imposes legal obligations on the country. The UDHR in itself is not a binding or enforceable treaty, but the United Nations has established a system of treaties where individuals countries must choose to “ratify” in order for it to be enforceable or “binding” in their country.
2. Activity to look at treaties
  - a. Pass out list of treaties and ask them to mark whether they think the US has “ratified” this treaty for the US. Do this independently.
  - b. Come back and go through list on overhead, polling students on what they thought, and identifying if US has ratified.
  - c. Ask them if they can guess as to what that treaty is about, given the name.
  - d. This could be a good time to explain that international human rights law has traditionally distinguished between “civil and political” rights and “economic and social” rights, and has given greater importance to the civil and political rights, although that is slowly changing. Given what the US has chosen to ratify and not

- ratify, how do you think the US feels about “civil and political rights” and “economic and social rights”?
- e. Attached you will find teacher’s key.

#### **IV. Evaluation**

1. Brainstorming definition of human rights
2. Class participation in Problem 1.4—space colony
3. Production of collage in groups
4. Debriefing discussion about human rights around us

#### **V. Homework**

My partner and I decided to assign a 5 minute “reflective writing” after every class, (like a 5 minute free write). Our class teacher gave them time to complete in a following class. This could also be done during the last five minutes of every class. We found this to be very helpful way to get a sense of what the students were learning and allow everyone to express their opinion. This week’s reflective write brings in an element of human rights and Washington State, and also allows them to think about one of the most relevant human rights issues in the US. We usually type question up and hand out to each person at end of class.

#### **Reflective Writing:**

The death penalty is legal in Washington State.

Right now, 17 men are on death row in Walla Walla.<sup>1</sup>

International human rights law bans the use of the death penalty. Human rights advocates argue that it is a violation of human rights because it is “cruel and unusual punishment” and violates the “right to life”.

Please comment. (i.e. which position do you agree with, and why?)

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<sup>1</sup> As of May 2000. Update this statistic before assigning to class. Check out the web site for “Washington State Coalition Against the Death Penatly”.

International treaties form the foundation of international human rights law. Countries must sign and “ratify” treaties in order for them to be applicable in that country. Once a country ratifies a treaty, they must make every effort possible to enforce the rules of the treaty within their country.

Please identify which treaties you think the United States has ratified:

### **Convention to End All Forms of Racial Discrimination**

Yes, the US has ratified (ie. the US has agreed to abide by the laws in this Convention)

No, the US has not ratified

### **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women**

Yes, the US has ratified

No, the US has not ratified

### **Convention on the Rights of the Child**

Yes, the US has ratified

No, the US has not ratified

### **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights**

Yes, the US has ratified

No, the US has not ratified

### **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**

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Human Rights  
Problem 1.4, page 8.

You have been selected to join a group of space pioneers who will establish a colony on a distant planet. In order to create the best possible society, you and your group decide to make a list of human rights that all space colonists should have.

- a. List the three most important rights that you believe should be guaranteed.
- b. Compare your list with your groups. Explain your reasons for your selections.
- c. Why do you think some rights listed are more important than other rights?
- d. Do any of the rights conflict with one another? If so, which ones? Why?
- e. Compare your list with the rights listed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Appendix B. Which ones did you include? Which ones did you not include?