

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights: An Overview

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INTRODUCTION

In this unit, I would like to introduce sixth grade students to an important document, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). This document was drafted within the framework of the United Nations (UN) and is designed to ensure all people equal opportunity, justice and dignity. In 1998 the United Nations celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This document is perhaps one of the most important achievements of the United Nations. It is a reminder of the important role the United Nations has undertaken in seeking to promote international human rights.

At the beginning of the unit, students will be asked questions to begin their thinking about the idea of human rights. What are human rights? Are they available to everyone? What do they do for me? Why should it be important for students to learn about this most controversial of subjects? In sixth grade, students are studying world history. Since this unit will be interspersed with a social studies curriculum, it will be about three to four weeks in length, depending on the allowable time. A study of the United Nations and its stand on an important issue such as human rights will be an element of enrichment for students. It is hoped that students will gain an understanding of what is meant by the term “human rights” and why there is significance in learning about this subject.

We might bring this idea a little closer to home. Students in my school have left the comparatively protective environment of elementary school and have entered the more diverse and challenging atmosphere of middle school. They will meet students from a wider spectrum of society. They will be exposed to a more sophisticated view of opinions and values. There will be rules and regulations in place for their protection and safety. Perhaps they will want to take a look at them and ask some questions about the necessity of the rules. Will they allow me to pursue my education and protect me from discrimination? Will I have the same opportunities as every one else? Are they fair? Will they support my ability to speak freely? Will I be able to express my personal convictions? Are they put in place for my protection and well being as well as for others? These are questions that may be asked as students go on to high school, to college, to the work force and so on into the world. At a higher level, this is the premise that the UDHR seeks to undertake in protecting the rights and dignity of people around the world. Eleanor Roosevelt, wife of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, was the chairperson of the Human Rights Commission. Her work on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was, without a doubt, her greatest legacy. She was undeniably the most influential member of the UN’s Commission on Human Rights. This quotation expresses the passion she felt toward the issue of human rights,

and speaks to her involvement and influence in drafting the declaration.

Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home - so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person; the neighborhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm, or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, and equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.

These ideas of human rights as put forth in the UDNR were drafted to ensure the dignity of the human person. Dignity gives a person a sense of worth and value. It is a part of our common humanity. When a person's dignity and freedoms are taken away it creates a climate of distrust and social and political unrest. This is true whether we are thinking about our own little corner of the world or on a more global view. The words of Eleanor Roosevelt become even more meaningful when we think of human rights in this way.

BACKGROUND NARRATIVE

On October 24, 1945, fifty-one nations gathered in San Francisco, and formed the United Nations. This date has become known as United Nations Day. In the UN charter preamble, it states in the second clause that the principal purpose of the United Nations will be "to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small." In Article 3, the charter declares that one of the purposes of the organization will be "to achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion." The UN has been making rules on internationally recognized human rights since December 10, 1948, when the General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was conceived at the end of World War II and before the beginning of the Cold War. During this time several rather prophetic events took place. The Berlin Blockade by Soviet troops, and eventually the Berlin Wall, isolated half of the city of Berlin. Israel became a state, and war broke out in the Middle East. Mao's Communist uprising overtook China's government, and India gained her independence. Some of these headlines are still making news today in issues of human rights.

Human rights are the fundamental rights of a people. The principles set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognize “the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family as the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.” It goes on to say this:

Disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people.

All people are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect. These rights have been agreed to by individual member states that have pledged themselves to achieve, in cooperation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and the observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms. When the UDHR was being drafted, some warned that the document should not be a statement of rights conceived only in terms of values prevailing in Western Europe and America. The challenge was to create a statement of human rights that would do more than just express respect for a person as an individual. It must also take into account the individual as a member of the social group of which he or she is a part. It was decided that a core of fundamental principles existed that was widely shared among people who were culturally divided, that basic human rights rest on common convictions, even though the convictions are stated in terms of different philosophic principles and on the background of divergent political and economic systems (Glendon, 56). As a result, there exists a common understanding from one state and/or nation to the next. People of all walks of life, with dissimilar beliefs and convictions, live together in all parts of the world. For most of history it has been a challenge for people to either blend their nations and live in harmony, or resort to conflicts and wars of suppression, resulting ultimately in violations of human rights, as we know them. Again, the words of Eleanor Roosevelt helped to form the Declaration toward that end:

We wanted as many nations as possible to accept the fact that men, for one reason or another, were born free and equal in dignity and rights, that they were endowed with reason and conscience, and should act toward one another in a spirit of brotherhood. The way to do that was to find words that everyone would accept.

In an effort to appeal to as many nations as possible, the UDHR was worded in such a way that it should not be offensive to any one nation and should make it possible for any nation to apply the ideals and principles to their circumstances. It is important to remember that the Universal Declaration is not a law or even a legally binding document. These rights may be interpreted and followed according to the desires of individual states and according to how they fit or agree with the ideals of a particular state or nation.

To explain the rationale of this idea, students might find it helpful to know a little about what makes up a group of people and a country and how that relates to a state or

nation. The basic political and legal unit of world affairs is the state. A *state* is a governing system within a specific geographical area, with a stable population and a functioning, and presumably independent government. This is accompanied by the notion that the state is sovereign. Political and legal theorists argue that power and control reside with the states' rulers. They have the authority to make policies or rules within a state's borders. A *nation* is a people (a group of persons professing unity on the basis of language, religion, history, culture or some other bonding element) and connected to a state. By definition, where there is a state, there is a nation, but in actuality there may be several nations (people) within a state.

For a clear example of this, we look at the state of Switzerland (officially the Helvetic Confederation). By definition, Switzerland is a state. It is a self-governing country. However, within her boundaries are at least four different nations (people) living within its borders: the Swiss-French, the Swiss-Germans, the Swiss-Italians, and the Swiss-Romanisch. The rationale of this is, simply, within a state (country) there may be, in all probability, the existence of two or more groups of people (nations) who may not think alike, be of different races, observe diverse customs, and different religious beliefs. In spite of these differences, they most often are able to live in harmony with one another.

What happens when they do not co-exist peacefully, they have a serious disagreement, the governments change, or one nation becomes intolerant of the other? The resulting conflicts have become some of the most contentious disagreements in the past and in our modern day history. Many of these conflicts have had the effect of crushing the basic human rights of people and causing enormous pain and suffering.

To cite some examples, we can look at the atrocities in Kosovo, the seemingly unending political and human conflicts in the Middle East, the complicated issues of human rights abuse in China, and the religious disagreements in Ireland. These are only a few of the issues that are apparent in the news we read about in our morning paper. In the 1930s and 1940s, Hitler, the head of the Nazi regime in Germany, decided the fate of over 6 million people, most of whom were Jews. This resulted in one of the most horrendous atrocities dealt against a group of people (nation) in modern history. More recently, the conflict in Kosovo, involving the Serbs and the Albanians, has been prominent in our news. This is a smoldering conflict that dates back hundreds of years. The so-called "ethnic cleansing" has caused the country enormous grief and destruction. It has drawn the attention of the United Nations and resulted in peacekeeping missions designated to police the country of Yugoslavia. A few of these areas have been in the news ever since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was drafted back in 1948. We will look closer at some of these matters later in the unit.

As we learn more about issues of human rights, we discover that some sovereign states consider it their basic right as a sovereign state to determine how rights are determined, allowed or administrated in their own state. This makes for a rather unequal,

unfair, enactment of human rights around the world. However, for all states to agree to or to even value certain human rights is a naive assumption. We assume all the members of the UN are committed to the principles of the UDHR, but we cannot assume that they are compelled to adhere to them. Human rights cannot be mandated. For example, according to the UDHR, “it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law.” The “rule of law” means that “a law should not grant privilege to a person or group nor should a law discriminate against a person or group.” Must member states follow these mandates? Can states be forced to abide by the ideals set forth in the UDHR? The answer is no, if they choose not to abide by them. The United Nations is made up of many different people who belong to different ethnic groups, cultures, races, religious groups and governments. The expectations of many states include mandating their own interpretation of what is the acceptable governing or rights allowed the people within their state. It is important to remember that not all states are a democracy, a government of the people, with free elections and free press. Some states have an authoritarian style of government. This means the government is some form of a dictatorship, administered by one person or by military rule. Some states are run by a communist government in which there is very little personal freedom. As a result, there will be different perceptions and attitudes from one state to the next.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

When students have had an opportunity to study the preamble and articles that make up the UDHR, they will become aware of rights which, for the first time in history, have become a universal code of human rights that are available to all nations and all people. Getting into the business of monitoring someone else’s human rights is a little like sticking your nose in to someone else’s business. Unless there is an international way to monitor and administer justice, it is pretty much up to individual states as to how they conduct themselves and/or the people of their state.

In studying about issues of human rights, students will have the opportunity to look at some examples of how human rights are looked at around the world. To say that human rights violations do not exist in the United States or Western Europe would be a mistaken assumption, but some of the most publicized issues seem to occur in China, parts of Africa, and the middle East. Women and children are seen to be most vulnerable in many parts of the world. In South Asia, India, and parts of the Middle East, this seems to be particularly true. They are trapped in jobs that are little more than slave labor situations. When television star Kathie Lee Gifford was advised that her line of children’s clothing sold in the US was in fact being manufactured in third world countries by “slave labor,” it raised such an outrage of public opinion that it forced her to change her manufacturing methods.

Violence against women and girls is the most pervasive violation of human rights in the world today.

**The Progress of Nations (1997), UNICEF*

Discrimination against women and girls is an important cause of malnutrition. The very high rates of child malnutrition and low birth weight through out much of South Asia are linked to such factors as women's poor access to education and their low levels of participation in paid employment, compared with other regions.

**The State of the World's Children (1998), UNICEF*

More than 1 million children, mostly girls, are forced into prostitution every year.

**The Progress of Nations (1997), UNICEF*

Seventy-nine percent of the indigenous people in Peru are poor, and more than half live in extreme poverty.

**Indigenous People: Challenges Facing the International Community*

Most of these examples show women and girls as victims of human rights violations. In some cultures women are normally treated as second class citizens and dependent upon the men of the family for support and protection, which is sometimes not such very good protection. Young girls are sold into early "marriages" by families wanting the money in exchange for another mouth to feed. This a violation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, specifically rights of children to special protection, and the right to liberty and security of person. These are rights that lawfully belong to them. It is a practice that is widespread in some Asian and Middle Eastern countries. In Article 16, it states that marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.

As we look at articles in the news about nation-states around the world, we see member states of the United Nations who have approved the UDHR and signed treaties that legally call for enforcement and respect for human rights, but some of whose actual records of human rights violations are some of the worst in the world.

China has drawn much criticism in regard to their position on human rights. China is a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, supported the UDHR, and signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Even so, there have been many instances of flagrant violations. Free speech and free press are all but non-existent in China as a communist run country. Even now, as China has gained the Olympics for 2008, we see an ambiguity of actions. While they are showing to the world their apparent willingness to abide by the rules, two Chinese-American citizens have been jailed, put on trial, and convicted, all without public knowledge. (Amnesty International). Article 9 in the UDHR states that "No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile." In the ICCPR, which is a legally binding agreement, it says,

“that no one can be tortured, arbitrarily imprisoned, or be restricted from such basic freedoms as movement, expression and association.” Ultimately they were deported, but the fact that the event even happened is a violation of the ICCPR. While the UDHR is not legally binding, but an ideal of moral action, the ICCPR is a legally binding treaty, signed by China.

June 4, 2000, marks the eleventh anniversary of the massacre of hundreds of unarmed civilians in Tiananman Square. The subsequent injuries and arrest of tens of thousands of demonstrators throughout China was another example of illegal action in view of the ICCPR. They were imprisoned and sent to labor camps for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression. China signed the ICCPR in 1998, but has continued to violate numerous provisions in the covenants and has continued to incarcerate the students involved in the protest.

While there have been no official actions taken against China by the United Nations for their violations of basic human rights, they have been forced to take a closer look at their position. In a Chinese celebration during the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Beijing organized its own international human rights conference with participants from twenty-seven countries. It used the event to make the old argument that interpretation and implementation of international human rights standards vary with cultural and historical factors and the level of economic development, as well as to reject so-called “Western” definitions of civil and political rights. (Human Rights in China, www.hrw.org/campaigns/china-99/testim-hcir.htm). This makes reference to one of the central themes that went into the drafting of the UDHR. The wording and ideals of this declaration should make it possible for any nation to apply the ideals and principles to their own individual circumstances.

Since 1983, the Sudan Peoples Liberation Army and the Sudanese Government have been at war in the Southern Sudan. Among the casualties in this war were 20,000 children, mostly boys of age 7 to 17, who were separated from their families. Many of the fathers have been murdered, and mothers and sisters have been sold into slavery. This group of “lost boys” traveled more than 600 miles under unbelievable hardship from the Sudan to Ethiopia and back. The survivors are now in camps in Kenya, the Sudan and Uganda. Organizations, such as the Red Cross, have assisted in trying to unite the boys with their families or relatives, but many of the boys have found themselves on their own with out the support of a any family.

They have been given refugee status because of the persecution they have faced because of their religion and race. This is a violation of the ICCPR, part III, the rights of children to special protection, and special rights of members of ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities. About 300 of the “lost boys” are still under the age of 18. In a first-ever recommendation, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has agreed to resettle some of the boys to a third country. No longer able to herd cattle for a living, the boys have placed a major emphasis on education, studying hard and preparing themselves

for a vocation during their stay in the refugee camps. Using a lottery system, some of the boys have been assigned to locations in the United States under the sponsorship of churches and civic groups.

The conflict in the Middle East between Israel and Palestine is a very complicated issue. In 1948, Israel was proclaimed as a Jewish state. But it infringed on the state of Palestine. It is further complicated by the geographical makeup of the states. The city of Jerusalem is a historically religious center for Islam, Judaism and for Christianity. Palestinians are angry at being uprooted from their homes and jobs to make room for the Jewish settlers. In Article 17 of the UDHR it says, “no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.” The Jewish settlers come back with what Article 15 states, “Every one has the right to a nationality.” It is a conflict that has caused many acts of violence on both sides and is not likely to be settled soon. The United States, along with other countries through the United Nations have worked to bring some kind of settlement between the two nations. Several of these hopeful attempts have been made in the United States with no lasting affect. There has been some talk of Sweden bringing industry to the Middle East to provide jobs for the Palestinians in the hope that a better economy would be a solution to the conflicts. At times when it would seem peace may be forthcoming, someone detonates a bomb and it starts all over again. There has not been any lasting agreement of peace to this time. This conflict is discussed by a high school student, Emma Palmgren, in her article “What is being done to solve the conflict between Israel and Palestine?” Students are encouraged to look at this web site and read her appraisal of the situation at www.angelfire.com/emmapalgram/Israel.html

In the United Nations, issues of human rights are handled through the Commission on Human Rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was given further exactness in two covenants or treaties that were drafted in 1966. These can be viewed in their entirety at the web site noted at the bottom of each definition below. It should be remembered that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is not a law that is to be adhered to legally. No state is legally bound to abide by it. It is a document that presents a moral value in respect to the way people are treated. But in 1966, two covenants (or treaties) were drawn up by the United Nations that sought to legally protect the rights of people. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights are the broadest legally binding human rights agreements negotiated under the sponsorship of the UN. These covenants put in place a legal means to monitor how countries would maintain these rights and a way to effect accountability for doing or not doing so. The covenants are described in the following excerpts.

The International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights: the aim of this covenant is to guarantee people their rights as whole people. These rights are founded on a belief that we can enjoy our rights, our freedoms and economic justice all at the same time. The emphasis the UN places on these rights is easy to understand when you consider the following:

- A fifth of the developing world's population goes hungry every night
- A quarter of the world lacks access to basic necessities like safe drinking water.
- A third of the world lives in a state of abject poverty at such a margin of human existence that words simply fail to describe it.
- More than 500 million adults cannot read or write.

These are just a few of the reasons the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights seeks to protect as the most basic of human rights. (Human Rights, www0.un.org/cyberschoolbus/treaties/human.asp)

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights: The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights defends the fundamental right to life, and says that no one can be tortured, enslaved, arbitrarily imprisoned, made to do forced labor, or be restricted from such basic freedoms as movement, expression and association. The Covenant is divided into six parts. Among the six provisions is Number III, which spells out the classical civil and political rights, including in part:

- the right to a fair hearing,
- the right to freedom of religion, expression, and peaceful assembly,
- the rights of children to special protection, and
- special rights of members of ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities.

(Human Rights, www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/treaties/human.asp)

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights coordinates the UN human rights program and promotes world wide respect for human rights. There has been some question of how to reinforce the treaties that have been put in place for the protection of human rights. The International War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda have been the scenes of high profile prosecutions of high profile War Criminals, Slobodan Milosevic of Yugoslavia and Jean de Dieu Kamuhanda of Rwanda for crimes against humanity.

The conflict in Kosovo, between the Serbs and the Albanians is a conflict between two nations in the province of Serbia. Their disagreements are rooted in conflicts that began hundreds of years ago. Despite many years of living under one government, the Albanians decided that they needed self government. This led to ethnic cleansing that caused untold damage. There was a strike for international justice this summer when Slobodan Milosevic of Yugoslavia, was arrested and transferred to The Hague. This sends a strong message that no leader accused of human rights violations is immune to the reach of international justice.

In a surprising blow for issues of human rights and for the first time since its founding in 1947, the United States has been voted off the United Nations Human Rights Panel. In the spring of 2001, the US lost the vote to France, Austria, and Sweden. This is particularly upsetting in light of the fact that nations who have previously been allies of the US supported Austria, France, and Sweden in the election. This surprise move reflects a rising dissatisfaction among western European states with the United States' unpopular record of voting on key issues of certain human rights concerns. The 53-member panel is divided among member states into geographical areas. The vote is a secret one, but it is thought that countries whose human rights records are in opposition to US policies worked to affect the expulsion of the US. What is even more disturbing is the election of Pakistan, Sudan, Togo, Sierra Leone, and Uganda to the Panel. The African countries ran unopposed to represent Africa. All of these countries have deplorable human rights records and are glad to be in a situation of more control for themselves.

UN Human Rights Commissioner Mary Robinson expressed hope that the United States "will return speedily as a member of the commission. The United States of America has made a historic contribution to the commission on Human Rights." She also noted that the first US representative on the panel Eleanor Roosevelt, "helped shape the commission and its vision of an International Bill of Human Rights."

Over the years, the United Nations, through such ideals as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, has made concerted effort to help to relieve some of the assaults on human dignity and to help all countries try to restore respect for all people.

OBJECTIVES

This unit on Human Rights is designed for a sixth grade level social studies classes. It will be an addition or enrichment, so to speak, to the regular social study's curriculum. The subject of world politics might be demanding of young students. It would be safe to say that most students do not think too much beyond the area of their own community. For some students, their view of human rights abuse is manifested in having to abide by their school dress code, doing homework assignments or making their grades in order to participate in special events at school. I believe it is important that they at least be exposed to the complexity of world order and its effect on how and why people are treated and respected in different parts of the world.

In sixth grade, students are studying world history. They are going beyond the boundaries of their own country and learning about what has happened in history to shape the world around them. Since this unit will be interspersed with a social studies/world history curriculum, it will be about three to four weeks in length. A study of the United Nations and its stand on important issues such as human rights will be an element of enrichment for students. It is hoped that students will gain an understanding of what is meant by the term "human rights" and why there is significance to learning about this

important subject that affects them, as well as people around them and from all parts of the world. “Adhering to the ideals of human rights enables us to respect one another and to live together in harmony. The denial of human rights and fundamental freedoms is not only a tragedy, but creates conditions of social and political unrest, resulting in violence and conflict within and between societies and nations.”

(Human Rights, www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/humanrights/understanding.asp)

There will be opportunity for students to explore the rights we are trying to protect. A portion of this study will be to examine the preamble and the articles of the Declaration. Students will learn that some states are more conscientious in their responsibility to respect the ideals set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. They will also have the opportunity to learn that some nations find it easier to ignore the principles of respecting human rights.

Since this unit was conceived in the World Politics and Current Events seminar, part of the unit will involve reading the international news section of a major newspaper such as the *New York Times*. In this section of the paper, news is reported from states all over the world, including the United States. It is a global look at what is going on everywhere in the world. In lieu of the *Times*, in Houston, the *Houston Chronicle* is a good choice. Students may opt to use the *New York Times* online (Internet) to access articles of international interest. Students will use their reading skills to look for information that will demonstrate issues of human rights issues and what safeguards there are for protecting human rights. Along with the study of the Universal Document of Human Rights, students will also connect issues of Human rights to current events. From there, students will also apply their knowledge of geography, history, and presentation skills to extend their experience in the lesson phase of the unit.

The United Nations CyberSchoolBus web site, which can be found at <http://www.un.org/Pubs/CyberSchoolBus>, offers a copy of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the preamble and all 30 articles, which students can download and/or copy for study. It also has extensions concerning the subject of human rights that expands the scope of the unit in a more interactive way if there is a desire or the time to do so. I would encourage teachers to do this. The web site is full of attractive and instructive information. The interactive lessons can be used in conjunction with the unit activities, such as learning about human rights issues a little closer to home or to just expand the unit either as a class or individually. There are some suggestions as to how students might extend the ideals of human rights into their own communities and what active part they may become involved in themselves.

LESSON PLANS

The lessons in this unit will include a good look at the document in question and a list of vocabulary words. Students should understand the significance of the context of words used in defining the meaning of world politics. Some of the vocabulary will be very

recognizable, but a few words will have a different connotation beyond their knowledge. In other words, some words used in relationship to the United Nations and world politics are familiar words used in an unfamiliar context. Students will compare and contrast words and/or terms, looking at the old and new implication of the words and the nuance of meanings.

Lesson #1

Students will demonstrate an understanding of past, present, and future. Among the key concepts in history are time and chronology whether it is the study of events or individuals, or both. It is important to know the specific time period and the sequence of events that occurred.

Discussion of human rights - students will identify what rights we have and the reasons for safeguarding them.

The first lesson concerning the United Nations and human rights will begin with a brief historical look at the founding of the United Nations and a look at the Preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. To look at a copy of the Declaration students will access the Internet at:

www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/humanrights/resources/universal.asp

Students will read and discuss the Preamble and the articles. They can choose several of the articles and become acquainted with the purpose and meaning of the document. Below are a few suggestions of words to include on a vocabulary list. More can be added.

Nation - a group of people bound together on the basis of language, religion, history, or some other bonding element and is a part of a state.

State - a governing system within a specific geographical area, with a stable population and a functioning, and presumably independent government.

Territorial State - a governing system for a specific state with a stable population and a functioning government.

State Sovereignty - a state has the right to control policy within their jurisdictions even if they did not have power of enforcement.

Current Events - news that is happening currently (now).

National Politics - occurrences among the people within a state or country.

International Politics - occurrences between different states or countries.

Human Rights - the fundamental entitlements of people.

The Rule of Law - a law should not grant privilege to a person or group nor should a law discriminate against a person or group.

Lesson #2

For this lesson divide students into groups or teams of 4 to 5. Students should have access to a daily newspaper, an international journal, a television, or the Internet. It would be a good idea to have a copy of these resources available in the classroom, as well as a copy of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and copies of two important covenants, the ICCPR and the ICESCR. The *New York Times* is a good source of international news. In lieu of the *Times*, the *Houston Chronicle* is also a good source locally, or the *Times* can be accessed on the Internet.

Each small group will choose a current event article concerning human rights currently in the news. Groups may use the newspaper, national television news, news magazines or the Internet to look for an article that they believe tells about situations in which people are being denied their rights. After studying the articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, students should be able to describe the rights they perceive to be violated. These are the articles of fundamental rights as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Students should also have access to a copy of the two covenants, the ICCPR and the ICESCR. These are the rulings that are legally binding in enforcing rulings on violations of human rights.

1. In one sentence, state the subject of the current event you have chosen.

2. Summarize in three sentences what you perceive to be a violation of human rights in the article.

3. State three facts that lead you to determine the cause of the violation.

- a.

- b.

c. _____

4. Write a short paragraph that will summarize your opinion about the issue or event and include the UDHR rights that are in question.

5. Based on what you have read, what do you think will be the outcome of the situation?

Lesson #3

In this lesson, student teams will make a presentation of their reports using oral discussion skills and geographical skills. Try to relate the subject of human rights in the news article to a corresponding article in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. More than one student should be able to locate the countries that are involved in the article on which they made their report. Students should be able to locate the countries on a map. Determine the proximity of the nation/state of all sides involved, in which the people live and/or have lived. In some cases, students should be able to draw some conclusions as to why there is a conflict concerning location. Determine other facts about the people involved who live in the areas, including a focus on language, religion, race, education, and customs. Use of the Internet is encouraged.

Lesson #4

The culminating activity is a combination of art and information put together for display. Students may use free standing folding display boards or poster board. Make use of information from the articles being studied, pictures, maps, and national emblems. These will be done by the individual groups working together. Have a displayed copy of the UDHR and perhaps copies of the two international treaties mentioned in the narrative. Show some examples of similarities and differences in language, religion, and customs. These can all be displayed in the classroom or in a more public area to highlight the culmination of the unit.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Annan, Nane. *The United Nations: Come Along With Me!*

The wife of the United Nations Secretary, General Kofi Anna, wrote this book. This is a chronicle of her discoveries of the goals and work of the United Nations, written for elementary students. In the book, she describes her travels to troubled spots around the world and speaks for the need of a world where children can feel safe. This is excellent “extra reading” for students involved in a study about the UN and Human Rights.

Glendon, Mary Ann. *A World Made New*. New York, NY: Random House, 2001.

Goodby, James. “Collective Security in Europe After the Cold War,” Vol. 46, no. 2 of *Journal of International Affairs*, 299-321.

Human Rights Treaties

www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/treaties/human.asp

Milosevich

<http://www.hrw.org/press/2001/06/hague0628.htm>

United Nations

<http://www.un.org/Pubs/CyberSchoolBus/>

This site offers an elementary view of some of the workings of the United Nations. It has some interactive features that students will find fun and educational. Some of them are question-and-answer activities, others are group projects that follow a professor traveling around the world, all the while communicating with the students. The students must figure out where he is visiting using the descriptions of his travels. Along with some historical and current information about the UN, I found this to be an interesting place to be.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

<http://www3.itu.int/udhr/lang/eng.html>

This site is a view of the United Nations’ document, the “Universal Declaration of Human Rights.” This is a means of utilizing technology in the classroom to research a part of the unit. It is a picture of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in its entirety

Weiss, T.G., D.P. Forsythe, and R.A. Coate. *The United Nations and Changing World Politics, Third Edition*. Westview Press, 2001

This is a thorough study of the United Nations. It contains a comprehensive view of the makeup of the United Nations and detailed analysis of the separate parts of the organization as well as the duties of the separate parts of the organization.

“What is being done to solve the conflict between Israel and Palestine?”

www.angelfire.com/ok/emmapalmgren/Israel.html

This is a paper on the Internet written by a young high school girl. For a student or an adult who would like to read a child’s eye view of the Israel-Palestine Conflict. The article was simply stated, analyzed and documented well. Some of the grammar was a little off-beat, but the article might appeal to students.

Roosevelt, Eleanor. Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) United Nations.
Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute. Revised on August 5, 1998.

<http://www.udhr.org/history/Biographies/bioer.htm>

This is a short article about Eleanor Roosevelt’s part and involvement with the UDHR.