

“Rights Around Minnesota, the U.S. and the World”

Lesson plan and activity

Overview:

This activity teaches children to recognize that human rights violations exist within their own communities as well as in other countries. Participants also learn about current events. Students consider a list of various hypothetical situations, involving both affirmations and abuses of human rights. They correlate the situation descriptions to specific articles in the UDHR.

Time: 60-90 minutes

Materials: “Rights Around MN, US and the World” handout, writing tools, copies of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Setting: Middle school-adult

Procedure:

1. Divide participants into small groups and assign each group an equal portion of the given list. Make sure to cover every example.
2. Allow groups time to go through the given situations and fill in the chart:
 - Match the situation descriptions to corresponding articles in the UDHR. For every statement, find two articles that apply. These situations could represent both an affirmation of one article and an abuse of another, though this is not necessarily always the case. A guided example, such as the following, may be helpful to start the process: “Parents in the area of Chernobyl, whose children have birth defects resulting from a nuclear accident, demand information from the Russian government.” While this demonstrates a violation of the right to Life, Liberty and Personal Security (Article 3), it also affirms the right to Opinion and Information (Article 19).
 - Indicate whether each situation affects people in Minnesota, the U.S., or the world, or in some cases, more than one of those three categories.
3. Return the class to a large group format, and ask one or two students from each small group to share some of their situation descriptions. Discuss selected statements that they find particularly important or interesting.
4. Ask students to brainstorm more examples of human rights situations, either in groups or individually. Post the descriptions in the classroom or have the class choose the human rights situations of particular concern to them. As an alternate activity, create situation cards for the activity, rather than using the worksheets.

RIGHTS AROUND MINNESOTA, THE U.S., AND THE WORLD

#	Situation	UDHR article that applies to situation	Relevance (MN, US and/or the world)
1.	A government offers food to starving people if they convert to a different religion.		
2.	Because of budget cuts, St. Paul's museums, concert halls, and public parks have eliminated all free events and scholarships for low-income members.		
3.	Immigration service officials decide to contact and question a woman at her home at 4:00 a.m. because they believe she is lying about living with her husband and children.		
4.	A dean of a private school prohibits student participation in any off-campus social or political groups that do not reflect the positions of the school.		
5.	A supervisor in a Minnesota factory tells her workers that they cannot have a lunch break because they have not produced enough beefsteaks, despite the fact that two machines were broken down.		
6.	A child of migrant workers has difficulty keeping up with schoolwork because her family moves several times each year. She also misses class at peak harvest times while she works along side her parents in the fields.		
7.	According to Human Rights Watch, Palestinians living in the Occupied Territories are prevented from meeting their basic needs due to the curfews, restrictions on travel, and the more than 120 permanent Israeli checkpoints that further restrict movement.		
8.	A man appearing to be of Middle Eastern descent is detained for questioning by police after he is seen speaking on a payphone nearby a water treatment plant.		
9.	A factory worker loses her job when her employer discovers that she is undocumented and is residing in the U.S. illegally.		

Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights

650 Third Ave S, #550 • Minneapolis, MN 55402 U.S.A. • Phone: (612) 341-3302 • Fax: (612) 341-2971
 E-mail: hrights@mnadvocates.org • Website: <http://www.mnadvocates.org>

#	Situation	UDHR Article	Relevance
10.	A soldier is detained and tortured after he refuses an order to kill a political opposition leader.		
11.	After university students refuse to take their exams in protest of their government's actions, the government forces them at gunpoint to take the exams.		
12.	A group of Minnesota volunteers raise money to start a school for Nepali children at risk for child labor.		
13.	A child is conscripted to fight in a civil war in exchange for food and shelter.		
14.	Three indigenous Guatemalans, whose houses have been burned and families have been killed during a police raid, are turned back at the Honduran border.		
15.	An Indonesian textile worker, working 6 twelve-hour days per week, receives wages that provide only enough to rent a room with no plumbing for herself and her children.		
16.	Three months after the September 11 terrorist attacks, more than 1,100 people (mostly Middle Eastern men) had been arrested and detained -- in the name of national security -- without being charged with any crime.		
17.	Workers at a grocery store in Fridley, MN demand the right to form a union.		
18.	The police arrest a man for failure to obtain prior government authorization to publish his first novel.		
19.	After being elected, a woman is refused a position in MN state government because she does not have a degree in political science or economics.		
20.	A Minnesota realtor denies Spanish-speaking applicants because he doesn't trust Spanish interpreters.		
21.	A child born with AIDS is asked to use separate sleeping, eating, and washing areas from other children at a youth camp.		
22.	A Moldovan woman promised a job as a waitress in Yugoslavia is sold into prostitution upon arrival.		

Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights

#	Situation	UDHR Article	Relevance
23.	A Sri Lankan Tamil woman, escaping persecution in her home country, arrives at the Minneapolis airport and requests asylum. An asylum officer questions her and decides that she does not reach the "credible fear" threshold. She is sent back to her home country.		
24.	A family in Mali wants to perform the traditional female circumcision procedure on their young daughter. Unlike in many African countries, the government of Mali has failed to take steps to criminalize FGM.		
25.	An employee of the Mall of America refuses service to a Somali woman in a store because she is wearing a veil.		
26.	A Native American tribe protests the state's plans to build a highway through land that they claim as burial grounds.		
27.	A woman has been beaten by her husband. She attempts to find a different place to stay. When she goes to the local battered women's shelter, she is told they are full.		
28.	A worker is afraid of filing a grievance with his employer because he is in the U.S. illegally. He fears that his employer will report him to the government immigration authorities.		
29.	An Albanian family is required to make a formal request to the government in order to relocate in another town.		
30.	A Tunisian judge threatens a defense lawyer with contempt of court for overstepping "the limits of his obligation" in defending his client.		
31.	A group of Mexican workers fleeing extreme poverty are denied admission to the U.S.		
32.	A pool of jurors have all seen pictures of a crime and heard media analysis of a murder suspect's motive before the trial is set to begin.		
33.	A young woman is required to marry a community leader to pay off her parents' debt.		

Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights