

## Lesson 1: Human Rights

### OVERVIEW

This lesson reviews students' knowledge of basic human rights and the rights of Americans through a study of important primary source documents. This lesson is designed for one 90-minute or two 45-minute class periods.

### OBJECTIVES

- Students will be able to list basic rights guaranteed to all individuals.
- Students will be able to locate the derivation of these rights in the Declaration of Independence, Constitution, and Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- Students will compare rights guaranteed to citizens, legal aliens, illegal aliens, and students in the United States.

### GUIDING QUESTION

What rights are we guaranteed?

### CURRICULUM FRAMEWORKS

TCC 1.3,2.1,2.3,2.4

PPE 1.2, 2.1, 1.3

PAG 1.4, 1.5.

### MATERIALS

Textbooks with Declaration of Independence and Constitution

Copies of excerpts from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (full text available at <http://www.hrweb.org/legal/udhr.html> and on CD-ROM)

Copy of school handbook with student rules

Copies of student activity sheet

Chart paper or butcher paper

### BACKGROUND

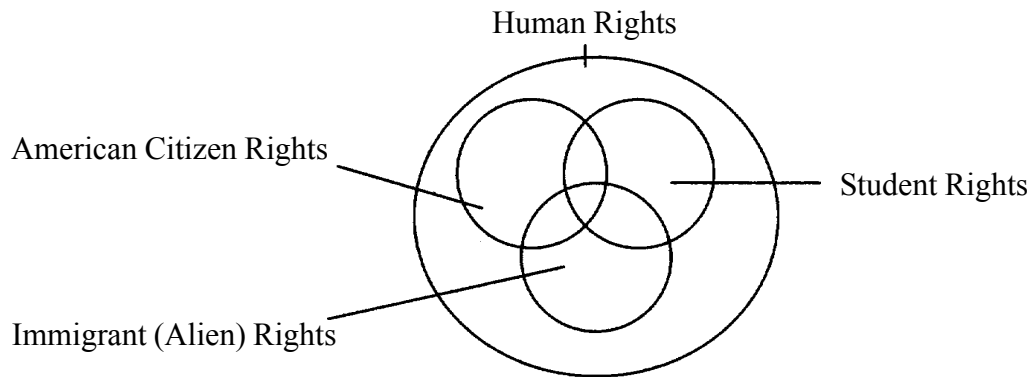
Many documents have shaped our ideas about basic political and human rights. The Magna Carta and English Bill of Rights, the Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution its amendments provide a framework within which our rights as American citizens can be found. Rights have been redefined over time and our founding documents have been interpreted differently over time by the court system. Rights vary – citizens, legal aliens, illegal aliens, and minors all have different rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1948, outlines rights that all humans should be guaranteed, regardless of the country in which they live.

### OPENING

Pose the following question to students: “What are our rights?” Have the class brainstorm a list of rights that humans are guaranteed and write these on the board or overhead projector. Then, ask students to brainstorm the sources of these rights.

Explain that the unit will be centered around the essential question, “What responsibilities do individuals have to uphold human rights?” To effectively answer this question, we will begin by reviewing the rights that all humans are guaranteed. Then we will look at how rights have been denied to individuals and groups throughout U.S. history and how individuals have responded to these rights violations. Finally, at the end of the unit we will determine what responsibilities we have in maintaining rights for all humans.

Draw the following Venn diagram on the board or overhead projector:



Have students place the rights they listed at the start of class into the Venn diagram, discussing whether the rights are those of humans, American citizens, immigrants (which may need to be divided into legal and illegal aliens), or students at your school, or a combination of these categories, and why.

## ACTIVITIES

(Day 1 for 45-minute class periods)

1. Have students choose one of the documents listed on the student activity sheet. After reading over the document, they should answer the questions either individually or in pairs.
2. After reading the documents and completing the activity sheet, discuss each document as a class, asking for student responses to the rights listed in each document. Add to the list that students brainstormed at the beginning of class.

(Day 2 for 45-minute class periods)

3. Ask students what they would include in a Bill of Rights if they were the author(s). Put students in small groups of two to four each. Ask them to write a 'TEENAGE BILL OF RIGHTS'. (Possible issues to consider might be work age - 14 instead of 16, curfew laws, choice in selection of which parent to live with in divorce or separation cases, etc.)
4. Bring the groups back together and have students vote on which rights would be included, keeping the number to ten or less. Require a 2/3 majority for approval. Have students compare their "bill of rights" to the original document.

## CLOSING

Read the following definition (from the *American Heritage Dictionary*) aloud to the class: “Human rights are basic rights and freedoms to which all humans are entitled, often held to include the right to **life and liberty, freedom of thought and expression, and equality among the law.**” Explain that the documents students have examined and created during this lesson have all been attempts to define these rights for either all humans, or a more specific group such as citizens of the United States or citizens of your school.

Ask students to define the three phrases mentioned in the definition on their own paper. Then, discuss with the class and agree upon a class definition of the three phrases. Write each of the phrases on a separate piece of butcher or chart paper, or on the chalkboard along with the student definitions. Tell students that they will be coming back to these definitions throughout the unit.

## EXTENSIONS

For homework, students could create a jingle (to the melody of a familiar tune), a drawing, or a poem to represent each of the three phrases (life and liberty, freedom of thought and expression, and equality among the law) discussed in the closing of lesson

Students could participate in a takeoff on the TV game show, “Whose Line Is It Anyway?” Give famous quotes from documents such as the Declaration of Independence, Constitution, Bill of Rights, Magna Carta, Mayflower Compact, Arkansas state constitution, school handbook, and Universal Declaration of Human Rights. See if students can identify the document from which the quotation was taken. The teacher can either assemble quotations, or have students come up with their own quizzes in groups and trade with each other.

Invite a local lawyer or law enforcement agent to come discuss current issues related to rights violations and/or student rights with your class.

## REFERENCES

<http://www.un.org/overview/rights.html> (overview of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights)

<http://www.hrusa.org> (Human Rights Resource Center)

<http://www.crf.org> (Constitutional Rights Foundation)

The following documents about the Japanese American experience in WWII Arkansas (found on the CD-ROM) contain discussion about rights:

Excerpts from Diary of an Evacuee

Helen Johnson Interview (Regenerations Oral History Project)

LESSON 1: HUMAN RIGHTS  
STUDENT ACTIVITY SHEET

1. Which document are you reading? (Check one)

Declaration of Independence       Bill of Rights       Constitution

Declaration of Human Rights       Other (i.e. student handbook)

2. In what year was this document written?

3. Who wrote this document? What information do you know about the author(s)?

4. Why was this document written?

5. List at least five rights that are mentioned or implied in this document.

6. Who holds these rights? (Think in terms of citizens, legal aliens, illegal aliens, minors, all people, etc.) Would the answer to this question have been different in different periods throughout history?

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS (SUMMARY VERSION)  
ADOPTED 10 DECEMBER 1948

In 1948 the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed this Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard for all people and all nations, to the end that every organ of society, keeping this declaration in mind, shall strive to promote respect for all these rights and freedoms:

- 1) Right to equality
- 2) Freedom from discrimination
- 3) Right to life, liberty, personal security
- 4) Freedom from slavery
- 5) Freedom from torture and degrading treatment
- 6) Right to recognition as a person before the law
- 7) Right to equality before the law
- 8) Right to remedy by competent tribunal
- 9) Freedom from arbitrary arrest, exile
- 10) Right to a fair public hearing
- 11) Right to be considered innocent until proven guilty
- 12) Freedom from interference with privacy, family, home, and correspondence
- 13) Right to free movement in and out of any country
- 14) Right to asylum in other countries from persecution
- 15) Right to a nationality and freedom to change it
- 16) Right to marriage and family
- 17) Right to own property
- 18) Freedom of belief and religion
- 19) Freedom of opinion and information
- 20) Right of peaceful assembly and association
- 21) Right to participate in government and free elections
- 22) Right to social security
- 23) Right to desirable work and to join trade unions
- 24) Right to rest and leisure
- 25) Right to adequate living standards
- 26) Right to education
- 27) Right to participate in cultural life and community
- 28) Right to social order assuring human rights
- 29) Community duties essential to free and full development
- 30) Freedom from state and personal interference in the above rights