



United Nations Association in Canada
Association canadienne pour les Nations Unies

UN Human Rights' Day 2007

Introduction

WHY DECEMBER 10th?

It is the day back in 1948 when the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). It was formally established in 1950. John Peters Humphrey, a Canadian from New Brunswick, wrote the first draft of the Declaration, so Canada has been involved from the very start of this important document.

WHAT IS THE DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS?

It is a list of the rights every person around the world is entitled to according to the United Nations. The document consists of 30 articles that cover fundamental rights and freedoms. It prohibits all forms of discrimination based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, national or social origin, property, birth, opinion or other status.

UDHR is not law, instead it is a statement of the rights the UN believes countries should provide to each of their citizens. The Declaration represents an ideal to be attained by all peoples and nations. Many countries, such as Canada, have made the UDHR part of their own laws. You can find these rights in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (1982) and also in the *Canadian Human Rights Act* (1977).

There are different categories but all are equally important:

- Political Rights (example: right to vote)
- Civil Rights (example: right to freedom of opinion)
- Equality Rights (example: right to be free from racism)
- Economic Rights (example: right to be paid fairly for work)
- Social Rights (example: right to an education)
- Cultural Rights (example: right to speak one's own language)

*Complete Universal Declaration of Human Rights is attached
It is also available online at: www.un.org/Overview/rights.html*

There are also two international covenants (treaties) based on the Declaration which bind those countries that sign onto them. One covenant is on civil and political rights, the other is on economics, social and cultural rights. Several other treaties on specific rights, such as the rights of women and children have been adopted by the UN.



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For each pre-film and post-film discussion question, please write the students' responses on a flip chart or a large sheet of paper. Keep these responses and submit them with your feedback form.

Pre-Film Discussion

1. Can you name your human rights? *As a group, have members of the class name human rights – please record their responses. If possible, record how many students agree that each right named is a human right.*
2. What are Human Rights? *As a group, develop a brief definition of human rights.*
3. How can you participate to improve human rights?

Film Screening

Post Film Discussion

1. Having viewed the film – what do you think your human rights are? *You can use the first list as a guide – and mark those that are viewed as human rights both before and after the film. If possible, record how many students agree that each right named is a human right.*
2. Why are having and guaranteeing human rights important?
3. Having seen the film – do you think you can work to ensure that human rights are respected here in Canada and across the world, and if so what would you do?



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** Please complete the pre & post film discussion questions with your students first.
If you have time, here is an activity to illustrate Human Rights to your students*

Activity (after film)

The Pen Game

AGE GROUP: all ages
GROUP SIZE: any size

MATERIALS NEEDED:
- a pen

PURPOSE: Show the rules or laws that are made without consulting people lead to unfairness and injustice. The rules of the game like human rights can sometimes not apply to all citizens.

ACTIVITY BREAKDOWN:

- The group sits in a circle and are told they are going to play the "Pen Game". Tell them the rules of the game will not be explained and they have to figure them out.
- Give the pen to one person and ask them to start the game by passing the pen to the next person in the circle
- After the pen is passed, announce that the passer had broken a rule, and say what the rule is. It can be any arbitrary thing.

Examples: passing the pen with the left hand, passing the pen with the tip forward, passing the pen with cap off, passing the pen with crossed legs

- Ask the second person to continue by passing the pen to the next person
- Every so often, announce another rule was broken; continue the game until the pen returns to the person who started

Discussion

- What mistakes were made?
- What were the rules of the game?
- Did they accept their mistakes?
- Was the game fair?
- Who is to blame for the errors, the participants or the facilitator?
- What was wrong with the game?
- How should it be changed?
- How can the game be made fair and just?

Human Rights are those rights that are essential for us to live as human beings (give some examples). Unlike the rules in the Pen Game, human rights are agreed upon by everyone, make sense and are fair. They are meant to protect people from unfair rules, and ensure not only access to basic needs such as food and shelter, but also the chance to grow and develop beyond what is required for survival.



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Evaluation

Please print off and fill out the attached **Teacher's Feedback Form** regarding the effectiveness of the activity.

Please mail back to UNA-Canada along with the student discussion papers (complete mailing instructions outlined on form)

This evaluation process is important as it is part of the United Nations Associations of Canada's project "A Sense of Belonging"; a 2-year initiative to identify and address local issues of racism and discrimination facing Canadian communities. With support from Canadian Heritage, the program is working in 9 communities across the country (Yellowknife, Kamloops, Calgary, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Kingston, Montreal, Moncton, and St. John's).

To learn more visit: www.unac.org/sb



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MORE INFORMATION

UN Human Rights Day

www.un.org/events/humanrights/2006

Human Rights Day is observed by the international community every year on 10 December.

United Nations Human Rights (OHCHR)

www.ohchr.org

The OHCHR is the United Nations office with primary responsibility for promoting and protecting the enjoyment and full realization of human rights for all.

Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC)

www.chrc-ccdp.ca/default-en.asp

The Commission works with employers, service providers, individuals, unions, governmental and non-governmental organizations, provincial and territorial human rights bodies— to foster understanding and commitment for achieving a society where human rights are respected in everyday practices.

Childrens' Rights Centre

<http://discovery.cbu.ca/psych/index.php?/children/index.php>

A centre that helps develop education curricula, reviews government legislation, policies, and laws dealing with children's rights as well as provides training workshops on children's rights for teachers and professionals working with children.

Human Rights Program

www.pch.gc.ca/progs/pdp-hrp/canada/index_e.cfm

A program that undertakes educational and promotional activities involving the public, educators, non-governmental organizations, government departments and others.

Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children

<http://www.rightsofchildren.ca/>

The Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children (CCRC) has been representing children's organizations in Canada since 1989. The CCRC brings together Canadian organizations and individuals who are concerned about the rights of children.

Canadian Race Relations Foundation (CRRF)

www.crr.ca

An agency dedicated to the elimination of racism in the country. The Canadian Race Relations Foundation Act was given Royal Assent on February 1, 1991. The Act was proclaimed by the Federal Government on October 28, 1996.