

# 20 Years 20 Lessons

## What are Human Rights?

Year group 7

### Context

This is an introductory lesson to human rights, to get students thinking about their own perceptions of what 'human rights' are, what it means to have rights, and the potential implications if a right is taken away. It was created by Dr Verity Currie, deputy headteacher and experienced citizenship teacher, and she has submitted this as part of ACT's 20th Anniversary Celebrations.

### Introduction

This lesson is aimed at year 7 students. The expectation is that they would have had some exposure to human rights at primary school. Hopefully they will be able to recall some of those lessons. You might find that this can raise some controversial issues, that you might want to tackle at a different time. The emphasis here should be that rights are for everybody, no matter where they live, how old they are, or their situation. Every person has human rights just because they are human.

### Citizenship Skills and Concepts

Skills: critical thinking; reasoned argument and justify ideas; consider perspectives of others; cooperate with others; use discussion, debate and deliberation to explore issues and ideas

Concepts: rights and responsibilities

### Learning Objectives

- To explain what human rights are
- To describe the importance of human rights
- To explain why human rights should be respected and protected

### Essential Teaching Guidance

This lesson does include the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, but this is more for information, and does not have to be explored in detail at this stage. The lesson is introductory, so is designed to recap and build on what students may have learned in primary school, as well as being used as a basis for further examination later on.

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### Resources

Post-its or paper for mindmapping (optional)

Rights cards

Scenario cards

### Assessment for Learning

The introductory activity can be used as a baseline assessment for students' existing knowledge and understanding of human rights, which can be further built upon and questioned as the lesson proceeds..

Use the human rights cards and freeze frame activities to question students reasoning and opinions, and challenge their perceptions and thinking..

### Introduction/Hook

5 Mins

Start by asking students what they know already (if anything) about human rights:

- What are they?
- Where do they come from?
- Why they are important?

They could do this individually or in pairs, using post-it notes on a graffiti wall, or writing on to a large mind map. Explore some responses as a class.

### Activity 1

14 Mins

Using the information gained by the introductory activity, ask pairs if they can define 'Human rights'.

Take feedback, then share Amnesty International's definition on slide 4. Do students agree with it? How does it compare to their own definition? Ask pairs to rewrite it in their own words.

Using slide 5, ask students which human rights they think we all have. They should make a list, then join up with another group to discuss and compare what they have come up with. Finally, ask the group to choose three rights that they think are the most important, and be prepared to say why.

At this point you could look at the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child with students (link is included in the notes beneath the slide). Are there any similarities with the list they came up with? Are there any differences, or things which surprise them?

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### Activity 2

15 Mins

Ask students to work in small groups, and give each group a set of the Human Rights cards. Ask group to lay these out on the table, then take one away. They should then take away any other card which is affected by the first one being removed (this might not be immediately obvious, so they should consider each card carefully and the full impact of removing it).

What do they notice?

Ask them to try it with a different card to begin with. What do they notice this time?

Using slide 8, discuss whether all human rights can be protected, and how this is possible (e.g. through national and international laws, governance, policy, expectation etc). Can students come up with any other words that mean 'protect'?

### Activity 3

15 Mins

Give each small group a Human Rights card from the set they used earlier. Ask them to create a freeze frame of a scenario that might occur if:

- a) this right was upheld
- b) this right was violated

Students can present their freeze frames to the rest of the class in different ways e.g. they can explain both scenarios and how the right is related; the rest of the class could guess what the human right is that is being presented.

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### Plenary

🕒 8 Mins

Using slide 13, challenge students to write their own response to the statement: *Respecting human rights is only for adults to worry about.* Do they agree or disagree? They can use the help box to help them structure their answer, but they should draw on what they have learned in this lesson to support their opinion.

### Take away task

🕒 3 Mins

For homework - Share the final slide: if you were to include one more thing in an exhibition about human rights, what would it be?

Ask students to consider what they believe to be true about human rights. Ask them to find an image, quote, article, or anything else which represents their belief. They should come to the next lesson prepared to share this for inclusion in the 'exhibition'. (This could also form part of a class display, or real exhibition).

### Glossary

Rights

Responsibilities

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)