

## **Lesson Plan 4: THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS**

**Grade Level: 6-12**

### **Overview:**

The Spanish Conquest and the Debate at Valladolid in 1550-1551 between Gines Sepulveda and Bartolome de Las Casas started a discussion about human rights that has not yet ended. In this lesson, students will explore the meaning of the 30 articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was passed by the United Nations unanimously in 1948. They will use art to visually show how each of these articles relates to their own lives and then write an editorial discussing their opinion about the value of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

### **Objectives:**

The students will:

- Explain the history and meaning of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- Develop a caption and visual depicting their understanding of one of the articles from the UDHR.
- Write an editorial discussing their opinions about the value of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- Decide whether they support the UDHR or not.

### **Related National Standards:**

#### *History:*

- Understands major global trends since World War II.
- Understands the search for community, stability, and peace in an interdependent world.

#### *Civics:*

- Understands how the world is organized politically into nation-states, how nation-states interact with one another, and issues surrounding U.S. foreign policy.
- Understands the impact of significant political and nonpolitical developments on the United States and other nations.

- Understands the influence that American ideas about rights have had on other nations and international organizations (e.g., French Revolution; democracy movements in Eastern Europe, People’s Republic of China, Latin America, South Africa; United Nations Charter; Universal Declaration of Human Rights).
- Understands issues regarding personal, political, and economic rights.

***Language Arts:***

- Demonstrates competence in the general skills and strategies of the writing process.
- Writes persuasive compositions that evaluate, interpret, and speculate about problems/ solutions and causes and effects.

***Arts:***

- Understands and applies media, techniques, and processes related to the visual arts.

**Materials:**

Art materials

Copies of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (See <http://www.udhr.org/UDHR/default.htm>)

**Procedure:**

- 1) Begin the lesson by asking students to recall the human rights they have and list these on the chalkboard. They will probably mention religion, speech, press, etc., the rights they are familiar with from the Bill of Rights to the US Constitution. As they suggest rights, ask them, “Is that all? Don’t you have any other rights?” Ask them if other countries have these same rights, and why they might or might not. Where did these rights come from?
- 2) Post a copy of or distribute handouts to students of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Go over these briefly, pointing out how this document lists in black and white many human rights which we probably enjoy in the United States, but which are “understood” and not formally listed in our Constitution. Discuss with students some of the basic history of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and how the momentum for passage of this document arose after World War II after the effects of the Jewish Holocaust were better understood. A great deal of support for passage of the UDHR also came from diplomats from Latin America, who remembered the history of the Spanish Conquest and colonization period.
- 3) Announce that the students will be studying each of the 30 UDHR articles to see what each of them means and how they relate to their lives and to the lives of

people throughout the world. At the end of the lesson, they will be asked if they agree with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and would be willing to sign as a supporter or not.

4) Discuss with students the meaning of the 30 articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or ask them to research them. Assign students to develop a caption in their own words for each article and develop a visual to show how they personally interpret the meaning of the article for themselves and for people around the world. This might be a symbolic representation of the article or an example of the protection or abuse of the right.

5) Is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights being followed around the world? Ask students to find examples from the past and present when the human rights of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights have or have not been protected. If possible, arrange speakers from Amnesty International or from countries where the rights are not protected to come to the classroom to discuss these examples with the students.

6) Ask each student to write an editorial about his or her feelings about the value of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. What value does it hold for the world today? Must anything else be done to ensure the protection of human rights for all people in the world? Why or why not?

7) Conclude by posting the captions, visuals and editorials for the UDHR articles on the classroom wall or in the school hallway so students in the school can better understand the meaning of this significant document. Encourage the students to read the editorials and decide whether they agree with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Provide a “Will you Sign On?” poster opportunity for students to add their signatures to the document to show their support.

#### **Assessment Recommendations:**

Assess the visuals and editorials to see how well the students communicate their knowledge about the UDHR and use relevant examples, facts, and details.

#### **Extension and/or Adaptation Ideas:**

Develop a school-wide information day and assembly devoted to human rights and the UDHR.

Ask the students to present information about the UDHR to other classes, and ask the students whether they wish to “sign on” as supporters or not. Print student editorials in the school and community newspapers.

#### **Recommended Online Resources:**

<http://www.udhr.org/UDHR/default.htm>

<http://borealis.lib.uconn.edu/ArcticCircle/VirtualClassroom/case2a/case2avc.html>

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