

**Who's Got Rights? An Introduction to Human Rights and Human Rights Defenders**  
**High School – American Government/Civics, U.S. History**

**Elaborated Lesson Focus**

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce students to the concepts of human rights and human rights defenders. Students will draw on their personal knowledge and experience to identify historical and contemporary examples of human rights violations. They will also learn the importance of defenders of human rights, considering Martin Luther King, Jr., as an example.

**Georgia Standards of Excellence**

**SSUSH21 Analyze U.S. international and domestic policies including their influences on technological advancements and social changes during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations**

- b. Connect major domestic issues to their social effects including the passage of civil rights legislation and Johnson's Great Society, following the assassination of John F. Kennedy.
- c. Describe the impact of television on American culture including the presidential debates (Kennedy/Nixon, 1960), news coverage of the Civil Rights Movement, the moon landing, and the war in Vietnam.
- d. Investigate the growth, influence, and tactics of civil rights groups, Martin Luther King, Jr., the Letter from Birmingham Jail, the I Have a Dream Speech, and Cesar Chavez.
- e. Describe the social and political turmoil of 1968 including the reactions to assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr., and Robert F. Kennedy, the Tet Offensive, and the presidential election.

**SSCG6 Analyze the meaning and importance of each of the rights guaranteed under the Bill of Rights and how each is secured.**

**SSCG7 Demonstrate knowledge of civil liberties and civil rights.**

- a. Define civil liberties as protections against government actions (e.g., First Amendment).
- b. Define civil rights as equal protections for all people (e.g., Civil Rights Act, Brown v. Board of Education, etc.)
- c. Analyze due process of law as expressed in the 5th and 14th amendments, as understood through the process of incorporation.
- d. Identify how amendments extend the right to vote.

**Enduring Understanding / Essential Questions**

Human rights are the fundamental freedoms essential to living a full life. Regardless of your sex, race, ethnicity, national origin, economic status or sexual orientation, human rights belong to all people. Throughout history and still today, not everyone enjoys full realization of these rights. Individual defenders of human rights work passionately to uphold the neglected, victimized and ignored.

- What are human rights and how are they codified?
- When have human rights been threatened or violated in history?
- Why are individual defenders of human rights important to building a more equitable and just global society?

**Procedure**

**1. Warm-up Activity: *Human Rights Squares***

This activity accesses students' pre-existing knowledge of human rights and issues that interest them. Each student will receive a copy of the "Human Rights Squares" handout and move about the room trying to get an answer and signature from a *different* classmate for each square. Stop after five minutes.

Students will discuss the following questions:

- a. Which were the easiest squares to find answers for? The most difficult? Why?
- b. Which squares had global answers? U.S. answers? Local or community answers?
- c. How would you define "human rights"? Give examples.

The teacher will write the students' definition and examples on the board. This will serve as a foundation for continued discussion about human rights. (Assessment – Dialogue and Discussion, Teacher Observation)

## **2. Making Connections: *Universal Declaration of Human Rights***

In pairs, students will read and analyze the UDHR. They will identify – by circling – rights that correspond to those listed on the board in the previous exercise. The class will then discuss which rights were not circled. Students will define terms or concepts with which they are unfamiliar. (Assessment – Dialogue and Discussion, Teacher Observation)

## **3. Identifying Rights Through Images**

Students will consider the images presented on the overhead screen and identify which human rights from the UDHR are being depicted or symbolized using the “Human Rights Through Images Worksheet.” For each image, students will describe a historical or contemporary example of when people have not received that basic right. NOTE: Teacher can use transparencies or a PowerPoint to show images. (Assessment – Worksheet Rubric)

## **4. Synthesis: Human Rights Require Defenders**

In light of historical and contemporary instances of human rights violations identified by the students, the class will consider the importance of individuals in defending human rights. Offer Martin Luther King, Jr. as an example by writing his name on the board. Students will list and discuss the basic rights and principles for which he campaigned. They will develop a working definition of ‘human rights defender.’

After discussion, each student will write an essay in which he/she discusses MLK’s role as a human rights defender. Students will explain why MLK is a defender of human rights; give examples of how his leadership contributed to solving injustice; and consider possible consequences if Dr. King had not taken on the role of defender. Students should rely on King’s example to comment more broadly on the importance of human rights defenders today, giving a contemporary example of human rights under threat and how a human rights defender could help the situation. (Assessment – Dialogue and Discussion, Teacher Observation, Essay Rubric)

### **Additional Online Resources**

Visit [www.cartercenter.org/defenders](http://www.cartercenter.org/defenders) for more information about human rights and The Carter Center Human Rights Defenders Initiative. The Teacher and Student pages have additional learning tools for you and your students.

## Human Rights Squares

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Using members of the class as sources of information, get an answer for as many squares as you can and write it in the corresponding square. Each answer should come from a *different* person, who must initial that square for you. Stop when time is called.

A human right	Country where human rights are violated	Document that proclaims human rights	Group in your country that wants to deny rights to others	Country where people are denied rights because of their race or ethnicity
Organization which fights for human rights	Film/Video that is about rights	Singer who sings about rights	Right your parents have/had that you do not	Country where human rights situation has improved recently
Type of human rights violation that most disturbs you	Book about rights	Right sometimes denied to women	Right all children should have	Country where people are denied rights because of their religion
Human right not yet achieved by everyone in this country	People denied right to establish their own nation or homeland	Human right being achieved around the world	Right of yours that is respected	Someone who is a defender of human rights

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**Universal Declaration of Human Rights – Abbreviated Version**  
*Adopted and Proclaimed by the United Nations on 10 December 1948*

Article 1  
Right to Equality

Article 2  
Freedom from Discrimination

Article 3  
Right to Life, Liberty, Personal Security

Article 4  
Freedom from Slavery

Article 5  
Freedom from Torture and Degrading Treatment

Article 6  
Right to Recognition as a Person before the Law

Article 7  
Right to Equality before the Law

Article 8  
Right to Remedy by Competent Tribunal

Article 9  
Freedom from Arbitrary Arrest and Exile

Article 10  
Right to Fair Public Hearing

Article 11  
Right to be Considered Innocent until Proven Guilty

Article 12  
Freedom from Interference with Privacy, Family,  
Home and Correspondence

Article 13  
Right to Free Movement in and out of the Country

Article 14  
Right to Asylum in other Countries from Persecution

Article 15  
Right to a Nationality and the Freedom to Change It

Article 16  
Right to Marriage and Family

Article 17  
Right to Own Property

Article 18  
Freedom of Belief and Religion

Article 19  
Freedom of Opinion and Information

Article 20  
Right of Peaceful Assembly and Association

Article 21  
Right to Participate in Government and in Free  
Elections

Article 22  
Right to Social Security

Article 23  
Right to Desirable Work and to Join Trade Unions

Article 24  
Right to Rest and Leisure

Article 25  
Right to Adequate Living Standard

Article 26  
Right to Education

Article 27  
Right to Participate in the Cultural Life of  
Community

Article 28  
Right to a Social Order that Articulates this  
Document

Article 29  
Community Duties Essential to Free and Full  
Development

Article 30  
Freedom from State or Personal Interference in the  
above Rights

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Identifying Rights Through Images, I

1



2



3



## Identifying Rights Through Images, II

4



5



6



## Human Rights Through Images - Worksheet

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** For each image presented to you on the screen, identify the basic human right it depicts or symbolizes. Also include the UDHR article associated with it. Then, briefly answer the questions that follow.

**Image 1** Right: \_\_\_\_\_ UDHR Article: \_\_\_\_\_

- Historical or current example of violation of this right for an individual or group:
- Why was/is this right not yet enjoyed by these people?

**Image 2** Right: \_\_\_\_\_ UDHR Article: \_\_\_\_\_

- Historical or current example of violation of this right for an individual or group:
- Why was/is this right not yet enjoyed by these people?

**Image 3** Right: \_\_\_\_\_ UDHR Article: \_\_\_\_\_

- Historical or current example of violation of this right for an individual or group:
- Why was/is this right not yet enjoyed by these people?

**Image 4** Right: \_\_\_\_\_ UDHR Article: \_\_\_\_\_

- Historical or current example of violation of this right for an individual or group:
- Why was/is this right not yet enjoyed by these people?

**Image 5** Right: \_\_\_\_\_ UDHR Article: \_\_\_\_\_

- Historical or current example of violation of this right for an individual or group:
- Why was/is this right not yet enjoyed by these people?

**Image 6** Right: \_\_\_\_\_ UDHR Article: \_\_\_\_\_

- Historical or current example of violation of this right for an individual or group:
- Why was/is this right not yet enjoyed by these people?

## **Rubric for Human Rights Through Images Worksheet**

- Image 1: Right to participate in government and free elections (UDHR Article 21)  
Examples: communism, authoritarianism, dictatorship, Cuba, North Korea
- Image 2: Right to marriage and family; Freedom from interference with family; Right to adequate standard of living (UDHR Articles 16, 12, 25)  
Examples: slave trade, human trafficking, poverty, famine
- Image 3: Right to remedy by trial/tribunal; Right to fair public hearing; Right to innocent until proven guilty (UDHR articles 8, 10, 11)  
Examples: Guantanamo Bay detentions, authoritarian regimes, mob justice
- Image 4: Right to free opinion; Right to assembly and association; Freedom of speech (UDHR articles 19, 20)  
Examples: censorship of press in China, U.S. sedition acts (historical)
- Image 5: Right to free belief and religion (UDHR article 18)  
Examples: Holocaust/persecution of Jews, discrimination against Muslims post 9/11 in U.S., pilgrims and puritans came to America to escape persecution
- Image 6: Right to equality; Right to a nationality; Right to participate in cultural life of a community (UDHR articles 1, 15, 27)  
Examples: Palestinians post-1967, African-Americans post-Civil War America

## **Rubric for Human Rights Defenders Essay**

- 4** Offers thorough analysis, including specific examples of MLK's role as a human rights defender. Presents in-depth discussion of implications of his leadership on human rights for African Americans. Provides specific and current example of human rights situation and thoroughly explains how defender could help. Constructs an organized, well-written essay without factual errors or mistakes in punctuation, spelling, or grammar.
- 3** Offers analysis, including general examples of MLK's role as a human rights defender. Presents discussion of how MLK's leadership advanced human rights for African Americans. Provides general example of current human rights situation and discusses how a defender could help. Constructs an organized, well-written essay with minimal factual errors and minimal mistakes in punctuation, spelling, or grammar.
- 2** Offers limited analysis of MLK as a human rights defender. Discusses MLK's impact only generally and does not connect his leadership with advancement of human rights. Provides general example of human rights in question today. Constructs essay with some factual errors and mistakes in punctuation, spelling, or grammar
- 1** Offers little analysis and does not explain MLK as a human rights defender. Fails to account for impact of MLK on African Americans human rights. Provides no example of human rights in question today. Constructs an essay with factual errors and several mistakes in punctuation, spelling, or grammar.