

Human Rights in the News

No news is good news - or is it?



Complexity



10-13 years



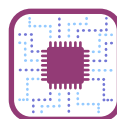
45-60 minutes



4-30



Human Rights



Digital
Environment



Participation

Type of activity

Scanning media, making a poster, discussion

Overview

Children scan the news for different human rights that are enjoyed, violated or defended, and make posters to display their findings.

Objectives

- To enhance awareness of human rights in the media and everyday life
- To examine how the media covers human rights issues

Preparation

- Collect newspapers of several kinds or print out a variety of news articles from online media
- Prepare poster templates for each group

Materials

- Newspaper pages or news article print outs
- Flipchart paper
- Sticky tape or glue and scissors
- Markers
- Copies of the child-friendly Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

Instructions

1. Explain that this activity is about human rights in the news. Remind the children of previous activities and discussion of human rights and reintroduce the UDHR.
2. Divide the children into small groups. Give each group a newspaper or some pages of news articles printed out, scissors, sticky tape or glue, a marker and a sheet of flipchart paper prepared as in the sample below.
3. Ask each group to create a poster with the following three categories with space to glue news stories in each:
 - Human rights being practised or enjoyed
 - Human rights being denied or violated
 - Human rights being protected
4. Explain that each group should look through their newspapers or news stories and cut out articles that relate to human rights and paste them in the relevant category. Remind children that features other than news stories, such as sports announcements and advertisements might also relate to human rights and that they should look through these as well.
5. When each group has found something for each category, ask the children to select one story to analyse, answering these questions:

- Which human rights were involved in the story? List the rights at the bottom of the poster.
 - Find the article(s) of the UDHR that relates to each right and write the article number(s) next to the right. If necessary, draw arrows from the rights to the story that it relates to.
6. Ask each group to present their poster. Ask them to choose one or two stories from each poster and explain their analysis of the story in terms of the UDHR.

Debriefing

1. Discuss the activity, using questions such as these:
 - Was it difficult to find stories for each of the categories?
 - Which human rights stories were easiest to find? Why?
 - Which human rights or UDHR articles were relevant?
 - How many of the stories about human rights issues explicitly mentioned human rights? Why do you think human rights were not mentioned in some stories?
 - Were children's rights mentioned in any of the stories?
 - As a child, or young person, which rights concern you most?
 - Based on these news stories, what seems to be the state of human rights in the world today? In Europe? In your community?
 - What is being done to protect human rights in these stories? Who is taking these actions?

Suggestions for follow-up

The activities 'Putting Rights on the Map' and 'Compasito Reporter' ask children to look at their own communities from a human rights perspective. 'Compasito Reporter' also engages children in reporting on what they observe.

Ideas for action

Leave the posters hanging, and encourage the children to bring in other newspaper clippings or articles. Reassess the posters when several new items have been added.

Choose one human rights issue of particular concern to the group and do an awareness-raising campaign (for example, the right to property may be linked with poverty; the right to education, especially quality education, may be important to the group). Allow them to choose the level they wish to campaign at – for example, local, national, or international.

Tips for facilitators

Children will need an understanding of what the UDHR is before doing this activity. You might want to start the activity with an introduction, if they haven't already been introduced to the UDHR.

Give children a selection of newspapers, print-outs of news articles and media and news magazines, including local and advertising papers. They do not need to be recent. If children have access to the Internet whilst doing the activity, they could also use online news sites directly, and print out the relevant articles.

At the start of the activity, circulate around the groups to make sure they have understood the task.

Encourage the children to consider parts of the newspaper or online news media other than new stories: e.g. advertisements: right to property; marriage or funeral notices: right to culture, to marry,

to thought, conscience and religion; sports: right to leisure; personal ads and notices of meetings: right to association.

In order to save time, or to simplify the activity for younger children, you could make a selection of articles yourself, rather than giving them whole newspapers or collections of news print-outs. Children will then not need to spend time looking, they only need to read the articles, understand them, and classify them.

Adaptations

All groups could contribute to three separate posters, one for each category, combining articles they find and creating a series of class posters.

Adaptations for younger children: Ask for only two categories: rights enjoyed and rights denied. Omit the analysis in Step 5 and ask them to simply present what their group found. Ask debriefing questions that focus on the child's experience of human rights in daily life.

Adaptations for older children: Invite children to compare coverage of the same human rights stories in different newspapers and/or different media outlets. Which differences can they observe in the importance given to the story? Is there a difference in emphasis on particular aspects of the story? Are there alternative versions of the same event? Did any version of the story explicitly mention human rights?

Ask the children to watch a news programme on TV or online, and write down the topics covered and the amount of time given to human rights related issues.



Handout

Sample poster

RIGHTS ENJOYED		RIGHTS DENIED		RIGHTS DEFENDED	
Analysis		Analysis		Analysis	
Right	UDHR article	Right	UDHR article	Right	UDHR article