

# Picture Games

*A picture says a thousand words – and more!*



Complexity



8-13 years



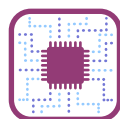
30 minutes



4-30



Discrimination



Digital Environment



Human Rights

## Type of activity

Playing with pictures

## Overview

Children work with pictures to explore stereotypes, different perspectives, and how pictures can inform and misinform.

## Objectives

- To raise awareness of human rights in everyday life
- To develop 'visual literacy', listening and communication skills
- To promote empathy and respect for human dignity

## Preparation

Do some brief research into the history of flags by searching online or using the library.

Print out or project a selection of flags or symbols, where you can explain the meaning / origin / colours to children. Include general flags not linked to countries, e.g. the Rainbow flag, Red Cross, Peace flag, flag of the United Nations, etc.

## Materials

- Coloured pencils and A3 paper for each small group
- Flip chart and markers
- Examples of flags printed out or projected onto a screen

In these activities, you will find three different ideas on how to work with pictures on various human rights themes. Try the one that suits your group of children best.

## Captions

### Overview

Children make captions for a group of pictures and compare their different impressions.

### Preparation

- Select 8-10 interesting pictures. Mount each one on a sheet of paper and give them a number.
- Make caption strips by cutting paper into strips. You will need 2 or 3 for each child.

### Materials

- Numbered pictures
- Caption strips, and pens
- Glue or tape and scissors

## Instructions

1. Arrange the mounted pictures on a table or on the floor. Explain to the children that they are going to write captions for the pictures. Be sure that children understand what a caption is.

2. Divide the children into small groups of four or five, give them a number of empty caption strips and ask each group to select one or two pictures. Ask everyone to write captions for the pictures. Explain that they may have different views and can write their own captions or complete what others write. Encourage them to write neatly because others will need to be able to read them.
3. When everyone has finished, hold up the pictures in turn and ask a few volunteers to read out their captions.
4. Stick all the posters (pictures and captions) on the wall.
5. Briefly tell the children about any relevant background information for each picture, such as the context or where you took it from.

## Debriefing and Evaluation

1. Discuss the activity using questions such as these:
  - Was it difficult to write the captions? Why or why not?
  - What makes a good caption?
  - If “a picture is worth a thousand words”, why do they need captions?
2. Relate the activity to diversity and human rights:
  - Were there differences in the way people interpreted the picture? Why do you think this happened?
  - Do you think any of the captions were “wrong”?
  - Why is it important to have different interpretations of the same event? Why can it be dangerous?
  - The CRC guarantees all children freedom of thought, freedom of expression and access to information and media. When should this freedom be limited and by whom?
  - Can you think of any times when other children have not been able to enjoy this right?

## Tips for the facilitator

Look for pictures that are both interesting and diverse, perhaps also ambiguous about what is going on. You could use some of the pictures from the New York Times website: [www.nytimes.com/column/learning-whats-going-on-in-this-picture](http://www.nytimes.com/column/learning-whats-going-on-in-this-picture). This is an interactive site where young people are invited to submit comments for a weekly picture.

Use coloured paper and pens to make the posters more attractive.

## Speech Bubbles

### Overview

Children analyse pictures and give the characters cartoon speech bubbles. They use their speech bubbles to compare and discuss their impressions.

### Preparation

- Copy some pictures: you can use pictures from the Internet, magazines, or the illustrations of the human rights themes in Chapter 4. Make sure there is at least one character (person or animal) in each picture and attach speech bubbles to each character.
- Display, or write up on a board or flipchart, the following question words: Who? What? Where? When? How?

**Materials**

- Paper and a pen for each pair
- A worksheet (empty paper larger than the pictures, for example A3 size)
- Selected pictures
- Glue

**Instructions**

1. Divide the children into pairs. Give each pair a picture, worksheet, paper, pen and glue. Make sure that for each picture, at least two pairs work on it separately.
2. Give the children the following instructions:
  - Glue the picture onto the worksheet.
  - Look at the picture carefully, and try to answer these questions about it:  
*Who? What? Where? When? How?*  
Write down your answers on the paper.
  - Now think about what the characters in the picture might be saying. When you have decided, write it down in the speech bubbles to show this.
3. When pairs have finished, hold up the pictures in turn and ask volunteers to read out what the characters are saying.
4. Ask the pairs to post their pictures on the wall, placing the same pictures side by side for comparison. Ask the children to look at all the pictures and read the speech bubbles.

**Debriefing and Evaluation**

1. Discuss the activity using questions such as these:
  - How hard was it to answer the questions about the pictures?
  - Was it hard to write speech bubbles? Why or why not?
  - How did your analysis of the same picture compare with the analysis of the other pair(s)?
2. Relate the activity to stereotypes and human rights by asking questions such as these:
  - Did you find any stereotypes represented in the pictures? Did any of the speech bubbles show stereotypes?
  - The CRC guarantees children the freedom of expression and access to information. When should this freedom be limited and by whom?
  - Are there situations in which children may abuse or violate the rights of other children by what they say? Can you give examples of that, for example through social media?

**Tips for the facilitator**

In addition to pictures of people, use some pictures with animals. This can be effective in discussing stereotypes. Start out by pointing out how often animals are cast as stereotypes in cartoons and then get the group to look for examples of stereotyping in their pictures and speech bubbles.

For a younger group it may be difficult to answer all the questions. Ask them to speak generally about the picture, explaining how they see it, and then to imagine the speech bubbles.

## Half of the picture

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>Overview</b>    | Children discuss and react to pictures, developing interpreting and critical thinking skills.   |
| <b>Preparation</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Select a picture from the Internet. You should know the source of the picture and the story behind it. Some Internet or media sites have the rubric “Picture of the day”, which you could use. Other interesting pictures can be found at: <a href="http://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/learning-multimedia">www.nytimes.com/spotlight/learning-multimedia</a></li> <li>• Print out a copy of the picture for each small group. Cut each one into two pieces, so that certain important elements are missing in each of the pieces.</li> <li>• Stick one piece from each picture onto its own sheet of A3 or flipchart paper ensuring there is still space around the picture to write words. Do this so that all small groups have a copy and keep the other piece from each picture aside.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Materials</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A suitable picture, printed and copied for each small group</li> <li>• Scissors and glue</li> <li>• A3 or flip chart paper for each small group</li> <li>• Markers</li> </ul>  |

### Instructions

1. Divide the children into small groups of three or four. Give each group one of the pieces of flip-chart paper with part of the picture stuck in the middle. Ask children to look at the picture and try to imagine the story behind it, then to write key words around it on the paper. To prompt their imagination, use questions such as these:
  - What is happening in the picture?
  - Who are the people in the picture?
  - Where was the picture taken?
2. Give them time to discuss the ‘story’ behind the picture and write up key words.
3. Hand out the other half of the picture to each group. Again, ask them to comment and write up key words on the paper.
4. When they have finished, collect all the ‘stories’ together and place them on the floor or wall so that the children can see them all. Give the whole group a few minutes to walk around and look at the words other groups wrote down.
5. Ask them to react to other groups’ interpretations before telling them the “official” story behind the picture.

### Debriefing and Evaluation

1. Discuss the activity using questions such as these:
  - How did you find the activity?
  - Was it hard to imagine the story behind this picture? Why, or why not?
  - Did you alter your story after you saw the second piece of the picture? Why?
  - Why do you think that different groups had different stories?
  - What do you think about the images or videos you see on TV or the Internet: do they always tell the ‘whole’ story? Can you think of any examples in life where something important was missing?

2. Relate the activity to media literacy and human rights, by asking questions such as these:
  - Who writes the stories about images we see online? Can we always trust them to give us the *whole* picture?
  - Why does it matter if we don't know the real story behind some pictures? Can you think of examples where it might matter?
  - How can we make sure we always try to see the whole picture?
  - The CRC guarantees children freedom of expression and access to information. Can you think of situations where news and information only tell part of the story? What can we do when we notice partial news or views?

## Suggestions and follow-up

The activities 'Compasito reporter', 'Advertising Human Rights' and 'Human Rights in the News' are useful as follow-up activities.

## Ideas for action

Children can produce a newsletter or bulletin about something that happened in their school or community. They could experiment with different media: for example, an online blog or article, a short radio programme or video reportage.

Try to arrange a visit to a local newspaper, or see if you can invite a local journalist to talk to your group.

## Tips for facilitators

Selecting the picture is the key to the activity. Try to find pictures that will be both puzzling and stimulating for children. Encourage them to ask questions and use their imagination.

Be careful not to choose pictures that may reinforce stereotypes, or which may raise sensitive issues for some of the children. Children are very observant and may even perceive things in the picture that you had missed. Try to select the pictures in part using 'their' eyes.

In the debriefing, build on what they say, and try not to correct them according to what you "know" about the picture. It is less important that they arrive at the "right" answer, but that they learn to analyse what they are seeing, and why they are drawing certain conclusions. As Augusto Boal said, "The most important thing in an image is not the image of the reality, but the reality of the image".

## Adaptation

You could repeat the activity with a second – and even third – picture. See if the children's powers of interpretation change from one picture to the next, or whether they become more cautious about jumping to conclusions. You could also try using different pictures in the different groups. For younger children, you could ask them to react to the picture while you write down key words.

Activity adapted from *Compass: A Manual on Human rights education with Young People*, Council of Europe, 2002