

Chapter 1. Human Rights: An Introduction

Supplemental Resources

Activities, Study Questions, Critical Thinking, Research Suggestions, Discussion Topics, Readings

Chapter 1.1 An Introduction to Human Rights

1. Find additional stories that you think depict human rights violations.
2. Why do you think human rights is not a global values system?
 - a. Do you think it should be?

Chapter 1.2 Definitions of Human Rights

1. Form a group or work individually.
 - a. Which definition do you like the best? Why?
 - b. In these definitions, what are several characteristics that describe human rights?
 - c. Which definition is the best in your estimation? Why?
2. What other rights would you include in your list of human rights?
 - b. Which ones would you eliminate?

Chapter 1.3 Categories of Human Rights

1. Generation of Rights
 - a. Conduct research to find examples of each generation of rights.
 - b. Which one do you think is most important? Why?
2. Six Families of Rights
 - a. Conduct research to find examples of each of the six families of rights?
 - b. Which one do you think is most important? Why?

Chapter 1.4 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

1. Form a committee to write your own universal declaration of human rights.
 - a. Who will serve on your committee? How will they be selected?
 - b. What difference does it make as to who serves on the committee?
 - c. What rights would you include? Why were they included?
 - d. Who benefits from these rights? Who does not benefit?
 - e. What difficulties are you encountering in writing this declaration?
 - f. What benefits are you encountering in writing this declaration?

Chapter 1.5 Other Human Rights Documents

1. Evaluate the 10 Human Rights Documents in your book.
 - a. Add or subtract the document/s that you think should be included or eliminated. Why?

Chapter 1.6 Human Rights: Ten Characteristics

1. Conduct a survey of various people about what they think are characteristics of human rights. Compile your results and share with others.

Chapter 1.7 Why Human Rights?

1. Evaluate the different reasons as to why we promote human rights.

- a. What do you think is the most important one?
 - b. Conduct an informal survey among your friends to see which reason they pick as the most important?
 - c. Ask them to give a reason for their selection.
2. What worldview appeals to you the most? Explain.
 - a. Which worldview has the greatest influence on your own beliefs and behaviors? Which one the least?

Chapter 1.8: A History and Philosophy of Human Rights

1. Write your own Golden Rule?
2. Conduct research and create a project on different indigenous peoples throughout the world. What do they have in common? How are they different?
3. What is your opinion about Ubuntu? Do you think it could work in your country? Why or why not?
4. Keep in mind the historical time period, which of the rules in Hammurabi's Code do you think could be considered as "forerunners" of human rights?
 - a. Which of the rules are not "forerunners" of human rights?
5. Which commandment in the Ten Commandments do you think should be considered as contributing to the human rights agenda today?
 - a. Which do not?
 - b. Add three more commandments that you think should be included? Explain.
 - c. What three commandments do you think could be eliminated? Explain.
6. Documents: Compare and contrast Hammurabi's Code, the Ten Commandments, and Cyrus Cylinder.
7. Compare and contrast the Greek philosophers, Stoicism and Confucianism.
8. Which of the following religions/worldviews places an emphasis on the importance of ancestors?
 - a. Why do they feel that ancestors are so important?
 - b. Why don't Western philosophies place such an importance on ancestors?
9. Compare and contract Buddha and Asoka.
10. Compare and contrast Stoicism and Christianity. Compare and contrast Zeno and St. Aquinas.
11. Compare and contract Christianity and Islam. Compare and contrast Muhammad and Jesus.
12. Do you think the Magna Carta actually contributed to human rights today, or is its significance overstated? Explain.
13. Document Based Question (DBQ)
The following documents would serve well for a DBQ question:
U.S. Bill Of Rights <http://www.law.cornell.edu/constitution/constitution.billofrights.html>
English Bill of Rights <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1689billofrights.html>
French Declaration of Rights: <http://www.mindconnection.com/library/history/frenchdeclarationofrights.htm>
Virginia Declaration of Rights: http://www.constitution.org/bcp/virg_dor.htm
 - a. Note three similarities among the 4 documents.
 - b. Who benefits from these documents?
 - c. Who does not benefit?
 - d. Is there bias in the documents? Explain.
14. Which traditions discussed in this section do you think has had the greatest impact in shaping the concept of human rights today? Explain.

Overall Chapter 1

1. Why can almost all the nations and religions of the world basically agree with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights according to their traditions?

2. Map Activity: Locate on the map all the places that contributed to the development of human rights today.

3. Here is a Link to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

<http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/index.html>

a. What do these articles tell us about human rights?

4. Articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Article 1 All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood. (*some articles abbreviated)

Article 2 Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Article 3 Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 4 No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited.

Article 5 No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 6 Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Article 7 All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law.

Article 8 Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

Article 9 No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 10 Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal.

Article 11 Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defense.

Article 12 No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, or to attacks upon his honor and reputation.

Article 13 Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 14 Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.

Article 15 Everyone has the right to a nationality. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

Article 16 Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution. Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses. The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

Article 17 Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Article 18 Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 19 Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media.

Article 20 Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association. No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Article 21 Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives. Everyone has the right of equal access to public service. The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote.

Article 22 Everyone has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

Article 23 Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment. Everyone has the right to equal pay for equal work. Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

Article 24 Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

Article 25 Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control. Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same protection.

Article 26 Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary stages and shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace. Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Article 27 Everyone has the right to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits. Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

Article 28 Everyone is entitled to a social and international order.

Article 29 Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.

Article 30 Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

4. I have included a further explanation of the five precepts according to Thich Nath Hanh (b. 1926), a Buddhist monk from Vietnam who at the time of this writing continues to teach and lives in France.

a. What are these trainings trying to teach? Do you think these trainings are worthwhile? Explain.

5. The Five Mindfulness Trainings:

1. First Training: I am aware of the suffering caused by the destruction of life; I am committed to compassion and learning ways to protect the lives of people, animals, plants, and minerals. I am determined not to kill, not to let others kill, and not to ignore any act of killing in the world.
2. Second Training: I am aware of the suffering caused by exploitation, social injustice, stealing, and oppression. I am committed to promoting loving kindness and working for the well-being of all people, animals, and plants. I am committed to practice generosity by sharing my time, energy, and material resources with those who are in real need. I will not steal. I will respect the property of others, but I will prevent others from profiting from human suffering or the suffering of other species on Earth.
3. Third Training: I am aware of the suffering caused by sexual misconduct. I am determined not to engage in sexual relations without love and a long-term commitment. I will try to protect children from sexual abuse and to prevent couples and families from being broken by sexual misconduct.
4. Fourth Training: I am aware of the suffering caused by unmindful speech and the inability to listen to others. I am committed to encourage loving speech and deep listening in order to bring joy and happiness to others. Knowing that words can create happiness or suffering, I am committed to learn to speak truthfully, with words that inspire self-confidence, joy, and hope. I am determined not to gossip and not to criticize things of which I am not sure. I will not utter words that can cause division or disagreement. I will make all efforts to settle all conflicts, however small.
5. Fifth Training: I am aware of the suffering caused by unmindful consumption. I am committed to cultivate good health, both physical and mental, for myself, my family, and my society by practicing mindful eating, drinking, and consuming. I am committed to consume only items that preserve peace, well-being, and joy in my body, my family and society. I am determined not to use alcohol or any other intoxicant or to consume foods or other items that contain toxins, such as certain TV programs, internet, magazines, books, films, and conversations. I am aware that to damage my body with these poisons is to let down future generations. I understand that a proper diet is crucial for self-transformation and for the transformation of society.