

UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES



RECOMMENDED GRADE LEVEL: Grades 9 to 12

SUBJECT: Canadian and World Studies

Suggested time: 90 minutes

Essential Question: Are the rights of all Canadians equal?

LEARNING GOALS

Students will:

- Demonstrate an understanding of rights and the role they play in a Canadian and global context
- Develop an awareness of the cultural, political, social, and economic issues facing Indigenous Peoples of Canada

WORD BANK

Declaration—a formal or explicit statement or announcement; a written public announcement of intentions or of the terms of an agreement (Oxford Dictionary)

Right—a moral or legal entitlement to have or do something (Oxford Dictionary)

United Nations—an international organization that promotes political and economic cooperation between governments

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- Computer/tablet with internet access
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf
- Know Your Rights! United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples for indigenous adolescents files.unicef.org/policyanalysis/rights/files/HRBAP_UN_Rights_Indig_Peoples.pdf?utm_content=buffer2847f&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer

EDUCATOR'S NOTE: The first part of the lesson is aimed at reviewing students' understanding of human rights. Consider prefacing this lesson with a deeper exploration of the topic, focusing specifically the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Additional Resources: Constitution Act, 1982: Part I Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms www.laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/Const/page-15.html

1.

RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING: Put the words STRONGLY AGREE, AGREE, DISAGREE, STRONGLY DISAGREE in four different corners of the classroom. Tell the students you are going to make statements about yourself as a teacher and they must move to the corner of the room that corresponds to their opinion of the statement.

This activity can also be done by giving each student four different coloured sticky notes representing the four opinions. Students can respond by holding up the sticky note that corresponds to their opinion.

Present students with the first statement "I have the right to give you three hours of homework every night". Give students a moment to think about the statement and then ask them to move to a corner. Ask three or four students to justify their opinions in order to assess their prior knowledge of rights. Present students with five or six more statements such as "I have the right to arrive thirty minutes late to school on Fridays", "I have the right to have a break for lunch", "I have the right to talk on my cell phone in class", "I have the right to wear whatever I want to work".

2.

Start to develop a collective understanding of rights by asking students to give suggestions of the rights they feel they have as students in the classroom. As students start to give suggestions record all of the ideas on the board and discuss whether these suggestions are reasonable (e.g. "I have the right to share my thinking in a safe and respectful environment") or unreasonable (e.g. "I have the right to juggle textbooks during class"). Create two different lists by asking questions such as:

- What makes a suggestion reasonable or unreasonable?
- What is the difference between something you need and something you want?
- Does it interfere with or infringe upon the rights of someone else?
- Does the right apply to everyone? Is it fair to everyone?

3.

RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT AS LEARNING: Once students have developed an understanding of what a right is, explain that rights are often expressed as declarations. A declaration is an official or formal announcement of an agreement. Model for students how to declare something by using the sentence frame:

"I, _____ declare that _____"

Give each student a sticky note and ask them to use the sentence frame to declare one right that they have as students in the classroom based on the previous discussion. Once students finish ask them to share their note with the class and add it to a chart paper on the front board. Make sure that everyone has included something different and that everyone agrees on each note. Remind students that suggestions must fit their understanding of what a right is. Once all the notes have been added tell students that they have now created The Declaration of the Rights of Students in _____ (e.g. Grade 8, Room 12).

4. Introduce students to the story of Shannen Koostachin, a youth education activist from of the Attawapiskat First Nation in Ontario using the video "Heartspeak about Shannen's Dream" www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Gy38grr35c (11:00).

EDUCATOR'S NOTE: Consider exploring the story of Shannen Koostachin, including the work being done by children and adolescents to raise awareness for the "Shannen's Dream" campaign.

- Wilson, Janet. *Shannen and the dream for a school*. Toronto: Second Story Press, 2011.
- "Hi-Ho Mistahey!" – National Film Board of Canada www.nfb.ca/film/hi-ho_mistahey_en/

Using the think-pair-share strategy, ask students to reflect on and discuss the following questions with a partner:

- Who was Shannen Koostachin?
- What right was she fighting for?
- In what way was that right being denied? What impact did this have on the children in the community?
- What connections can you make to Shannen and the children in her community?
- What would you do if one of your rights was being compromised or denied?

As a class, discuss the students' thoughts about the video.

EDUCATOR'S NOTE: If students do not already have an understanding of the United Nations and its role in the world consider exploring the following resources in more detail before going on to the next section:

- The United Nations www.un.org/en/index.html
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child www.unicef.org/crc/
- Castle, Caroline. *For Every Child*. Dial Books Young Readers, 2001.

5. Tell students that the United Nations has created the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfi/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf that outlines the rights of Indigenous Peoples all over the world, including Canada. The declaration is designed to express the rights that Indigenous Peoples have in their communities.

As a class, read page 10 from "Know Your Rights! United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples for indigenous adolescents" files.unicef.org/policyanalysis/rights/files/HRBAP_UN_Rights_Indig_Peoples.pdf?utm_content=buffer2847f&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer titled "About UNDRIP".

Discuss:

- Why did the United Nations create a declaration that specifically addresses Indigenous Peoples?
- Why is there a declaration that is different and separate from other declarations, including the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which aim to protect "all human beings"?
- How could this Declaration relate to the story of Shannen Koostachin and the children of the Attawapiskat First Nation community?

6. In pairs or small groups have students investigate one of the first six articles in the Declaration which highlight the main themes of the document. "Know Your Rights! United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples for indigenous adolescents" provides a basic summary of each article. Have each pair or group present their article to the class.

7.

RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING: Have students write a reflective paragraph based on what they have learned. What are rights? What are declarations and why are they important? What would you do if one of your rights was being compromised or denied? In what way could the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples support the rights of Indigenous youth in Canada? What steps could you take to raise awareness of the rights of Indigenous Peoples of Canada? As an alternative, students may prepare a short oral piece that can be recorded or presented to the class.



EXTENSION: Investigate other stories where the rights of the Indigenous Peoples of Canada (especially Indigenous youth) are being compromised or denied. Give students the opportunity to explore books, movies and other media texts that present these social, cultural, political and economic issues from the perspective of the people who are directly affected by them.

Global Voices: A room of his own: The legacy of Chanie Wenjack – www.WE.org/we-schools/columns/global-voices/room-legacy-chanie-wenjack/

Vice News – Indigenous news.vice.com/topic/indigenous

Indspire: Indigenous Education, Canada's Future – indspire.ca



ENRICHMENT:

Option 1:

Choose one of the issues currently facing the Indigenous Peoples of Canada and consider how it relates directly to one of the articles in the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Students may explore all 46 articles in more detail. What is being done in Canada to support this issue? How is the article being implemented? What needs to be done?

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples" – www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfi/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action – www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

Option 2:

Investigate the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples of Canada. What are they? How do they represent a different view of the rights of Indigenous Peoples? How are they reflected or not reflected in government policies?

The Government of Canada's Approach to Implementation of the Inherent Right and the Negotiation of Aboriginal Self Government
www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100031843/1100100031844

Understand First Nation Sovereignty
www.chiefs-of-ontario.org/faq

What are First Nation Inherent Rights?
www.ictinc.ca/blog/what-are-first-nation-inherent-rights