Advocating for Children’s Rights

A classroom resource that raises awareness of children’s rights. This resource can be used as a companion to the WE Are Silent fundraising initiative.

Grades 1 to 3
American Edition
Dear Educator,

Welcome to the WE Movement. We are so glad you’ve joined us in our mission to inspire, educate and empower students to find their place in the world. With 16,000 schools and groups thriving in WE Schools, we are delivering impressive results in academic engagement, life skills and civic engagement. Through the WE Schools process of experiential service-learning, students will become engaged in local and global issues through collaboration and independent reflection.

In 1989, the United Nations established the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which outlines the fundamental rights and freedoms that all children around the world are entitled to. All the countries that have ratified this agreement made a commitment to uphold the rights of their children and youth. However, even though this commitment has been made, many children around the world are still being denied access to things like education, clean water, nutritious food and adequate health care.

This classroom resource is designed to help your students become informed about children’s rights issues and to provide them with the skills and tools they need to become advocates for other children, locally or globally, who are being denied their rights. Your students will be empowered to use the power of their voice to speak out in support of young people around the world. Or your students can choose to participate in the WE Are Silent campaign and take a vow of silence to raise awareness within their school or local community about these issues for those who don’t have a voice.

This is an exciting time to be an educator. Together, we have the power to reignite the fundamental purpose of education: moving students to want to learn and preparing them with the life skills to better the world and forge their own paths to success.

Thank you for having the heart and the passion to bring the WE Schools program into your class. We are honored and encouraged to work with such a dedicated and enthusiastic group.

We are stronger together,

Craig and Marc Kielburger
Co-Founders, WE
Essential Question: What is experiential service-learning and how can I incorporate it into my classroom instruction with WE Schools curriculum resources?

WE Schools

WE Schools is a unique, step-by-step program that challenges young people to identify the local and global issues that spark their passion and empowers them with the tools to take action. Educators and students work together to learn about the world and to take action to create meaningful change. Delivered in 16,000 schools and groups across North America and the UK, the program provides educators and students with curriculum, educational resources and a full calendar of campaign ideas.

The Four Steps of WE Schools

1. Investigate and Learn
   Students explore topics related to a real-world challenge or opportunity.

2. Action Plan
   Students develop a plan to implement their service-learning project, including one local and one global action.

3. Take Action
   Students implement their action plan.

4. Report and Celebrate
   Students present the results of their service-learning initiatives.

What Is Experiential Learning?

Experiential service-learning is based on a structured academic foundation that goes beyond volunteering and community service. It’s a practice that engages teachers and students with their communities in a structured way and allows students to meet their learning objectives while addressing their community’s needs.

Setting Students Up For Success: In School, the Workplace and Life

WE Schools Introduction: WE.org/we-at-school/we-schools/

Living WE: Is about improving our lives and our world by reaching out to others. It involves focusing less on “me” and more on “we”—our communities, our country and our world.

Social Emotional Learning: The WE Learning Framework is grounded in social emotional learning principles, helping students develop the skills to manage their emotions, resolve conflicts and make responsible decisions.

Global Mindset: The ability to operate comfortably across borders, cultures and languages is invaluable. WE Schools programming promotes global mindedness and cultural competency amongst student populations during their formative years.

Active Citizenship: Students act on their growing knowledge by connecting with others in their communities, thereby generating interest, further research and engagement in local and national causes.

Reflection is a key component of our experiential service-learning model. Our reflection activities direct students’ attention to new interpretations of events and provide a lens through which service can be studied and interpreted.
Advocating for Children’s Rights Overview

In 1989, the United Nations established the Convention on the Rights of the Child that sets out the civil, political, economic, social, health and cultural rights of children around the world. However, in many countries, these rights are consistently denied and the voices of children and youth are silenced. This classroom resource is designed to help students become aware of the stories and experiences of children and youth whose rights have been denied. It will also empower students to become advocates for the rights of children and youth around the world. After participating in this resource, students will be ready to take action in the WE Schools WE Are Silent fundraising initiative.

Rationale
This classroom resource will help students develop a strong understanding of children’s rights, as outlined by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). To achieve this, students will begin by developing an awareness of cultures and communities that are different from their own. Then students will learn to distinguish between needs and wants, and discover how basic needs are the foundation of the rights that all children around the world are entitled to. The UNCRC is a lengthy and comprehensive document so, for the purposes of this classroom resource, the lessons focus on five of the 54 articles. These five are: the right to education, the right to safety, the right to play and rest, the right to food, and the right not to be discriminated against for any reason.

Assessing the Learning
You know your students best—their learning styles and preferences, skill levels and knowledge. You are also in the best position to anticipate the habits of mind that will make this classroom resource successful. We are mindful that students may be at different reading levels, including English Language Learners (ELL), and may have learning differences. In response, the Educator Notes throughout the resource make suggestions for differentiation along with extension and enrichment ideas that can be used.

Teaching strategies include read aloud, T-charts, Venn diagrams, think-pair-share and games.

Assessment strategies include entry/exit slips, observation, discussions and presentations.

This classroom resource includes suggestions for a variety of books, videos and other resources designed to engage student interest and deepen understanding. Before beginning, visit your Teacher-Librarian, local library or school district resource center to get access to the resources listed in the Appendices.

Explore other resources and current campaign offerings at WE.org
Subject(s): Social Studies, English Language Arts

Grade Level: Grades 1 to 3

WE Learning Framework Skills:

Essential Questions:

► How can an understanding of wants and needs lead to an understanding of children’s rights?

► Are the rights of all children and youth equal?

Materials and Resources

- Chart paper or craft paper
- Computers or tablets
- Paper and writing utensils
- Art materials (markers, glue, colored paper, scissors, etc.)
- Appendix 1: Classroom Observation Forms
- Appendix 2: Resource List
- Blackline Master 1: I Have the Right To...

Word Bank

Deny—To refuse to grant.

Human Rights—A legal or moral entitlement believed to belong to every person.

Need—Something that is necessary, a necessity.

Right—A moral or legal entitlement to have or do something.

Want—Something that is desired.

Source: Oxford Dictionaries www.oxforddictionaries.com
Lesson 1:
Identifying Needs and Wants

Suggested Time: 30 minutes

Common Core State Standards:
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.1 - Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.1 - Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 1 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.1 - Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.2.1 - Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 2 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1 - Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.1 - Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 3 topics and texts, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.

Learning Goals:
Students will:
• Understand the difference between a need and a want

Investigate and Learn

1. Before students arrive, prepare for the first activity by placing a strip of tape along the center of the floor. Label one side of the tape with the word Need and the other side with the word Want.

2. Read Those Shoes by Maribeth Boelts (June 9, 2009, Candlewick) to introduce students to the concept of needs and wants.

3. Recommended Assessment For Learning: After reading, explain to students they will demonstrate what they know about needs and wants by playing a game. Identify an item from the following list and ask students to consider whether the item is something they need or something they might want. Then ask students to move to the side of the tape on the floor that corresponds with their opinion.

   | Water  | Bicycle | Food |
   | Running Shoes | Medicine | Television |
   | Toys | Laptop/Tablet/Video game | Pets |

4. Recommended Assessment Of Learning: Ask students to explain their choices. If any students find it difficult to make a choice or to explain their choice, ask: What would happen if you didn't have this item? Does everyone have this item? Continue with each item on the list to help students come to an understanding of the difference between things they need versus things they might want.

5. Recommended Assessment Of Learning: Encourage students to think about what might happen to a person who doesn’t have access to something they really need. Ask students to write their reflections on an exit slip. This is an opportunity to assess students’ understanding of the difference between needs and wants before moving on to explore food as a basic human need.

If students need support to start their reflection, provide them with the following sentence frame:

Everyone needs ___________, and without it _______.

Depending on the needs of your students, provide a model for how to complete the sentence frame before asking students to write independently.

Educator’s Note: If students are having difficulty relating to the experiences of others, consider reading The Very Hungry Bear, by Nick Bland (2012, Scholastic) before moving to step 3. Then ask students to imagine how the bears might feel when they don’t have the things they need (e.g., food, shelter). Students may find it easier to imagine the experiences of animals before moving on to understanding the experiences of people.

Extension: Ask students to write a class book about wants and needs that can help other children understand the difference. Share the story with students from other classes or create a digital copy of the book that can be shared with parents, on the school website or on other social media platforms.

Educator’s Note: The focus of this activity is for students to reach a consensus and discover the definitions of need and want. After the activity, post the definitions of need and want in the classroom to use as reference.

Educator’s Note: For English Language Learners or students who require visual support, consider using images to accompany the items on the list. Students may also use cards with need on one side and want on the other at their desks, if space is a consideration.

• Items on the list may be altered to reflect the interests and experiences of the students in the classroom.
Lesson 2:

Examining the Rights of the Child

Suggested Time:
40 minutes

Common Core State Standards:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.1 - Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.1 - Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 1 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.1.1 - Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or name the book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply a reason for the opinion, and provide some sense of closure.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.1 - Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.2.1 - Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 2 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.1 - Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or name the book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply reasons that support the opinion, use linking words (e.g., because, and, also) to connect opinion and reasons, and provide a concluding statement or section.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1 - Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of the text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.1 - Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 3 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1 - Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons.

Learning Goals:

Students will:
- Understand how children's rights connect to basic needs
- Identify the rights that children around the world are entitled to

Educator's Note: The following activity will introduce students to human rights and the UNCRC. It is not necessary for young students to explore all 54 articles of the UNCRC. For this lesson, focus on the following five rights:
- The right to education.
- The right to safety and protection.
- The right to play and rest.
- The right to safe water and nutritious food.
- The right not to be discriminated against for any reason.

For more information on the entire UNCRC, or if students are ready to explore more than the five rights listed above, refer to “The Convention on the Rights of the Child in Child Friendly Language” www.unicef.ca/sites/default/files/imce_uploads/UTILITY%20NAV/TEACHERS/DOCS/GC/CRCPosterEN_FA.pdf.

1. Recommended Assessment Of Learning: On an entry slip, ask students to use words and images to create a list of things they need, based on what they learned about needs and wants. Ask students to share their ideas with the class. Collect these entry slips and record student responses on one of the forms from Appendix 1: Classroom Observation Forms to determine where students are in their understanding of needs before introducing human rights. Alternatively, use sticky notes as entry slips to make it easier to collect student responses.

2. Explain that the things we need to be happy and healthy can also be called our human rights. A human right is something that everyone should have access to. Post the definition of human rights in the classroom to use for reference.

3. Explain to students that an organization called the United Nations has created a list of those human rights called The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. They have also created a list of rights specifically for children, called the Convention on the Rights of the Child, or the CRC. We refer to these as children's rights.

Educator's Note: If students do not have previous knowledge of the United Nations consider watching "How Does the United Nations Work?" www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qol-afzc0k74 (1:55) to briefly explore the history and function of the organization.

4. Introduce students to children's rights using one of the following books or one of the resources from Appendix 2: Resource List.
- I Have the Right to be a Child, by Alain Serres, Groundwood Books, 2012.
5. While reading the book, prompt students to identify what is helping the children in the story to be happy and healthy.

6. **Recommended Assessment Of Learning:** Make a list of student ideas on a piece of chart paper or on the front board using the sentence prompt: All children have the right to... Focus specifically on the five rights identified earlier. Encourage students to connect children’s rights to their basic needs by asking, Are these things the children need or want? How do you know? Are these similar to any of the needs you identified? Refer to the definitions of need and want if students need further clarification.

7. Explain to students that the rights they listed on the chart paper or on the front board are the rights that all children should have, no matter where they live, what language they speak or what religion they believe.

8. **Recommended Assessment Of Learning:** Provide each student with the copy of Blackline Master 1: I Have the Right To... Ask them to choose one of the rights from the list and illustrate how they have access to that right in their own life. For example: students may choose the right to nutritious food and illustrate how they eat a healthy breakfast, lunch and dinner each day.

**Educator’s Note:** If students require more support, as a class, choose one right from the list and brainstorm what types of illustrations could represent that right. Model for students how to record their ideas using Blackline Master 1: I Have the Right To...
Lesson 3:

When Children’s Rights Are Denied

Suggested Time:
40 minutes

Common Core State Standards:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.1 - Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.1 - Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 1 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.1.1 - Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or name the book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply a reason for the opinion, and provide some sense of closure.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.1 - Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.2.1 - Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 2 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.1 - Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply reasons that support the opinion, use linking words (e.g., because, and, also) to connect opinion and reasons, and provide a concluding statement or section.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1 - Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.1 - Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 3 topics and texts, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1 - Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons.

Learning Goals:

Students will:

- Recognize differences between their lives and the lives of other children
- Understand how children’s rights can be denied

1. **Recommended Assessment Of Learning:** To review students’ understanding of children’s rights from the previous lesson, play a brief game of charades. Ask one student to select a right from the list from Lesson 2 and act it out while the other students try to identify it.

2. Explain to students that even though individuals, governments and other organizations agree that all children should have these rights, sometimes these rights are denied.

3. Read students one or more of the books recommended below or from Appendix 2: Resource List to demonstrate to students how the rights of children around the world can be denied.

**Educator’s Note:** Students may need support using respectful and inclusive language when discussing the lives and stories of others. For example: students may see a character in the story eating something they don’t recognize and say “Gross!” It’s important to reinforce that sometimes unfamiliar things can seem strange, however, they may be a common part of another culture and should be respected. Encourage students to ask questions to learn more about things that are unfamiliar to them.

As students begin to explore the lives of children around the world they may feel strong emotions about what they are learning. For example: student may be upset to learn that some children are afraid to leave their house because their neighborhoods aren’t safe, or they may be angry that some children work and can’t play or go to school. It’s important to allow sufficient time for discussion and debriefing as a group or individually.

4. After reading, divide students into pairs or small groups and ask them to discuss the following questions to identify similarities and differences between the main character’s story and their own experiences. Display the questions on the board to support students as they discuss.
   - Where does the main character live? How is it similar to or different from where you live?
   - Does the main character eat any of the same foods as you or participate in any of the same activities as you?
   - Is there something the main character needs that they don’t have? Is this the same for you? (E.g., clean water, time to rest, safety and protection.)
   - Is there something the main character needs to do but is not able to? Is this the same for you? (E.g., can the main character go to school? Can they play soccer with their friends?)

5. **Recommended Assessment Of Learning:** While students are discussing the questions, circulate and use one of the forms from Appendix 1: Classroom Observation Forms to document your observations of how students recognize and respond to similarities and differences between themselves and the main characters. Can students recognize how some children do not have access to the things they need? Are students beginning to understand that, even though their rights are upheld, the rights of many children are denied.
6. Give each pair or group a large paper with a T-chart on it. Ask students to use the chart to organize the similarities and differences they can identify between their lives and the life of the main character in the story. Consider where the main character lives, what they eat, what they wear, if they go to school and if they participate in leisure activities. If students are familiar with Venn diagrams, allow them to use a Venn diagram to organize their thinking.

7. **Recommended Assessment Of Learning:** Invite each group to present their T-chart or Venn diagram to the class. Encourage students to connect the basic needs the main character does not have access to with the rights that the main character is being denied. Focus specifically on the five rights listed in Lesson 2.

8. **Recommended Assessment Of Learning:** Provide students with an exit slip or a sticky note. Ask them to use words or pictures to demonstrate one example of how the rights of the main character in the story are being denied.

**Enrichment:** If students have a strong understanding of children’s rights, consider taking the discussion further. Discuss:

- Is it fair that some children’s rights are denied?
- How would you feel if one of your rights was being denied?
- What would you do about it? Are there people in your life who could help you?
- Does the character in the story have anyone to help them or speak up for them?

Consider asking students to write or draw their reflections and responses to these questions.
Lesson 4:
Supporting Children’s Rights

Suggested Time:
120 minutes (over three classes)

Common Core State Standards:
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.1.5 - With guidance and support from adults, focus on a topic, respond to questions and suggestions from peers, and add details to strengthen writing as needed.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.1.6 - With guidance and support from adults, use a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.5 - With guidance and support from adults and peers, focus on a topic and strengthen writing as needed by revising and editing.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.6 - With guidance and support from adults, use a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.2.4 - Tell a story or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking audibly in coherent sentences.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.4 - With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.5 - With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.6 - With guidance and support from adults, use technology to produce and publish writing (using keyboarding skills) as well as to interact and collaborate with others.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.4 - Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking clearly at an understandable pace.

Learning Goals:
Students will:
- Create an action plan to raise awareness for children’s rights
- Build presentation skills by raising awareness for children’s rights

Action Plan

1. Tell students that now, with an understanding of children’s rights and knowledge about the lives and experiences of children around the world, they can help others become aware as well.

2. Show students a variety of posters that raise awareness for children’s rights such as:

3. Discuss:
   - What does it mean to raise awareness?
   - Why are pictures and images important for raising awareness?
   - How can we use pictures and images to help the staff and students in our school learn about children’s rights?

4. As a class, create an action plan for how students can use media texts or visual art as well as their presentation skills to raise awareness for children’s rights within the school. Students can choose to focus on one specific right or on the story of one child they have learned about.

5. Recommended Assessment Of Learning: Before students begin creating their work, build a list of criteria for what makes a successful awareness-raising campaign. The criteria should include items such as clear images, understandable language and a well-organized presentation.

   Tell students that because they will share their work with an audience, it’s also important to build criteria for what makes an effective presentation. Ask students to brainstorm the strategies they can use to make sure their audience will understand what they are sharing. Encourage students to consider voice level and speed, eye contact, and body language.

6. Give students time to prepare their presentation. Students could consider creating a collaborative mural, a set of posters or a bulletin board display.

   Extension: Allow students to explore other creative formats that can be used to raise awareness of children’s rights (e.g., dioramas or other 3D models).

Take Action

7. Recommended Assessment Of Learning: Ask students to prepare to share their presentation by first presenting to each other in the class. Using one of the forms from Appendix 1: Classroom Observation Forms, assess students’ understanding of children’s rights and how they are upheld or denied and how well students use presentation skills to communicate information.
8. Display students’ media texts or artwork within the school to raise awareness of children’s rights. Invite staff and students from other classes to view the displays and hear students’ presentations. Parents can also be invited to hear the presentations, or, as an alternative, record the students’ presentation and share them with parents online or by email.

Reflect and Celebrate

9. Recommended Assessment Of Learning: As a class, reflect on students’ learning and experiences from the Action Plan and Take Action sections. What were the most important things students learned about children’s rights? How will this change their actions in the future? (E.g., what they read, what they watch, what they buy.) Have students record their reflections on a sticky note using words and images, and add them to the display.

10. Give students the opportunity to share and celebrate their learning experiences and the results of their actions with others. This can be done in person, by sharing with staff and student groups or the parent council, or it can be done online, through the school website or other social media platforms. Review your school or school district’s Internet-use guidelines before engaging with social media.

11. Now that students have a deeper understanding of children’s rights and the social justice issues that arise when children’s rights are denied, they are ready to participate in the WE Schools WE Are Silent fundraising initiative, www.WE.org/wearesilent. Students can raise awareness of what it’s like when a child is denied their rights and their voice goes unheard by taking a vow of silence. Students can also use this opportunity to fundraise to support the rights of children in WE Villages communities around the world.
# Appendix 1: Classroom Observation Forms

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<th>Classroom Observation Form 1</th>
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## Appendix 1: Classroom Observation Forms

### Classroom Observation Form 2

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<th>Lesson/Activity:</th>
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# Appendix 1: Classroom Observation Forms

Classroom Observation Form 3  

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<th>Observations</th>
<th>Questions/Concerns</th>
<th>Next Steps</th>
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Appendix 2: Resource List

- *Brothers in Hope: The Story of the Lost Boys of Sudan*, by Mary Williams, Lee and Low Books, 2005
- *I Have the Right to be a Child*, by Alain Serres, Groundwood Books, 2012
- *Nasreen’s Secret School: A True Story from Afghanistan*, by Jeanette Winter, Beach Lane Books, 2009
Blackline Master 1: I Have the Right To...

I have the right to  ____________________________