

Unit 16 Celebrating human rights – citizenship activities for the whole school

About the unit

This unit illustrates how schools can use a specific annual event to support citizenship education. International Human Rights Day, on 10 December, provides an ideal opportunity for young people to focus on this important aspect of citizenship. This unit is a starting point for planning the involvement of the whole school in human rights education and for engaging pupils, teachers from a variety of subjects, and adults from outside the school in such activities. Activities can be combined to create an off-timetable day or adapted for use within the normal timetable. There are many other dates of significance where a similar whole-school approach can be used, eg 27 January – Holocaust Memorial Day, 2nd Monday in March – Commonwealth Day, 9 May – Europe Day. The *Teacher's guide* includes information about involving pupils in the organisation of events.

Where the unit fits in

This unit addresses the following aspects of the key stage 3 citizenship programme of study:

Knowledge and understanding about becoming informed citizens

Pupils should be taught about:

- 1a the legal and human rights and responsibilities underpinning society, basic aspects of the criminal justice system, and how both relate to young people
- 1f the work of community-based, national and international voluntary groups

Developing skills of enquiry and communication

Pupils should be taught to:

- 2a think about topical political, spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues, problems and events by analysing information and its sources, including ICT-based sources
- 2c contribute to group and exploratory class discussions, and take part in debates

Developing skills of participation and responsible action

Pupils should be taught to:

- 3a use their imagination to consider other people's experiences and be able to think about, express and explain views that are not their own
- 3b negotiate, decide and take part responsibly in both school and community-based activities
- 3c reflect on the process of participating

This unit can be used at any point in the key stage, with activities selected for each year group. Schools may make this an annual event and so build up expertise in both pupils and staff. This unit could be used in conjunction with unit 3 'Human rights'.

Expectations

At the end of this unit

most pupils: contribute to group and class discussions about Human Rights Day and understand its purpose. They know about some human rights issues. They contribute to decision-making about how activities should be planned, negotiate their own role in them, and take part responsibly in a school activity.

some pupils have not made so much progress and: contribute to group and class discussions about Human Rights Day and understand its purpose. They know about some human rights issues. They take part responsibly in a school activity.

some pupils have progressed further and: initiate discussion in groups and in whole-class settings, presenting well-argued views about human rights which draw on varied sources and previous knowledge and understanding. They develop skills relating to taking responsibility for aspects of event organisation.

Resources

Resources include:

- local organisations such as Victim Support, the Police, faith groups, local councils, the Youth Service, Magistrates

Many groups and organisations produce online resources that are relevant to citizenship. QCA has not printed these website addresses as it recognises that they can and do change, often at short notice. So that we can monitor and maintain a reliable and useful resource, the website addresses of the following organisations can be accessed through the key stage 3 citizenship scheme of work site at www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/schemes

- Community Service Volunteers' online database of voluntary organisations
- Amnesty International
- Refugee Council
- Human Rights Watch
- Oxfam
- Action Aid
- Home Office – Human Rights Unit
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
- Unicef
- Children's Express (*online newspaper*)
- Holocaust Memorial Day
- Commonwealth Institute

NB: care should be taken when encouraging pupils to access websites

Literacy and language

References to the Key Stage 3 National Strategy *Framework for teaching English, Years 7, 8 and 9* (NSE) are given in brackets and are indicated in appropriate sections of this unit.

Speaking and listening – through the activities pupils learn to:

- use talk to develop thinking about complex issues (year 7 S&L12, year 8 S&L10, year 9 S&L10)

Links with other subjects

ICT: unit 9 'Publishing on the web' in the scheme of work

Pupils should learn:

Pupils:

How can we celebrate Human Rights Day?

- to establish a focus for a whole-school Human Rights Day event, and identify appropriate activities and audiences
- Before Human Rights Day itself, ask pupils to work in class groups to establish their understanding of human rights. Approaches could include: class or group brainstorm; use of stimulus material, *eg newspaper clippings*; presentations by pupils or the teacher on the articles of the Human Rights Act or on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child; or pupils doing research using internet or printed resources.
- Groups discuss whether they should focus on one particular human right or on human rights more generally. Encourage pupils to use ranking exercises, *eg Diamond nines, voting, surveying opinion*, to decide which issues to explore further.
- Ask groups of pupils to discuss types of activity, *eg assemblies, displays, workshops, presentations, guest speakers*, and appropriate audiences, *eg their own year group, other year groups, parents, pupils from other schools*.
- Summarise preferred topics, types of activity and target audiences/participants.
- know what human rights are
- identify issues for further investigation
- identify what goes into making a special event
- Draw on human rights work from other units, or ask older pupils to lead discussions, using materials from earlier studies.
- Diamond nines: statements on human rights issues are written on pieces of paper, then pupils put these into priority order using a diamond pattern, with the statement they agree with most at the top of the pattern and the statement they agree with least at the bottom.
- Seek the support of human rights experts or those involved in human rights education activities.
- Use websites for support and ideas from the many national and international agencies listed in the resources section and in the *Teacher's guide*.
- Link with thinking skills: enquiry, creativity, evaluation.

Learning objectives

Pupils should learn:

Possible teaching activities**Learning outcomes**

Pupils:

Points to note**How can we plan our activities?**

- to engage in human rights education with both staff and other pupils – identifying interests and concerns, planning and delivering/facilitating events
- to use talk to develop thinking about complex issues (NSE)
- Set up a planning group of pupils and staff – pupils elect representatives from each class.
- At a meeting of the planning group, discuss suggestions made by pupils and determine which ideas can be incorporated into Human Rights Day events. The meeting could be chaired by pupils. Agree who should coordinate tasks such as investigating the availability of partners from other organisations and the wider community, and identifying individuals from within the school to lead specific aspects of the day's events. The planning group divides responsibilities between year/class groups. Representatives report back to pupils and staff, and within classes they negotiate and plan responsibilities and activities.
- demonstrate effective team-working
- increase their awareness of organisations that support human rights
- engage in active decision-making
- demonstrate negotiating skills
- Choose appropriate partners, eg *Amnesty International, The Refugee Council, Human Rights Watch, Oxfam, Action Aid, Muslim Aid, Christian Aid*. Local partners might include Victim Support, the Police, faith groups, the local council, the Youth Service, Magistrates. See also the CSV online database of voluntary organisations. Teachers with relevant subject expertise may also be helpful.
- See the *Teacher's guide* for details of how to involve pupils in organising and running an event.
- Support pupils who have not already been taught negotiating and decision-making skills.
- Link with NSE: year 7 S&L12, year 8 S&L10, year 9 S&L10.

Learning objectives

Pupils should learn:

Possible teaching activities**Learning outcomes**

Pupils:

Points to note**What activities shall we choose?**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that human rights issues can be investigated across the curriculum • about the work of an external agency – local, national or international • how to collaborate with other schools | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities with a human rights focus may be integrated into subjects across the curriculum, <i>eg by studying child labour in history, designing protest posters in art and design, reading poetry in English, examining questions of suffering in RE.</i> • Encourage year 10 or year 11 history students to research human rights issues, <i>eg child workers in the nineteenth century.</i> This can be compared with child labour issues in the present, and could include investigating the Human Rights Act or the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Pupils could design and organise a display of their findings, including information on relevant websites and case studies. They could also contribute to planning and facilitating a workshop to engage other pupils in active discussion about child labour, <i>eg asking whether they want cheap trainers and clothing at the expense of child exploitation.</i> • Ask pupils to investigate the work of external organisations, <i>eg the Amnesty International Junior Urgent Action Campaign.</i> Suggest pupil-led assemblies on these topics for pupils' own or other year groups, and internet discussions. • Invite year 7 pupils to work with year 6 pupils from feeder schools, to identify issues of concern to them. Focus on their rights on transferring to secondary school, <i>eg freedom from bullying, harassment and racism.</i> Plan a workshop, <i>eg relating to the school's anti-bullying policy,</i> to be jointly facilitated by year 7 and key stage 4 pupils for visiting children from a feeder school. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are involved in citizenship education with a wider range of subject teachers and other school staff • know about and understand specific human rights issues developed through enquiry and communication • find out about the work of local, community-based, national and international organisations • empathise with younger pupils' concerns and increase their own knowledge of issues through research, preparation and delivery of workshops | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School staff may have interests and expertise outside their subject areas. Involve non-teaching members of the school community. • Pupils in key stage 4 can be involved in facilitating and carrying out in-depth research for these activities. • For information on the Human Rights Act, refer to the website of the Home Office – Human Rights Unit (see www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/schemes). • For the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, visit the Unicef website (see www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/schemes). • For useful information on forming a school Amnesty group, visit the Amnesty International website (see www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/schemes). • Remind key stage 4 pupils that key stage 3 pupils are likely to have relevant knowledge and experience to contribute to the planning and delivery of workshops. |
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How successful was the day?

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how to review, evaluate and publish information about human rights • how to promote and celebrate the school's achievements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review with pupils – individually and in groups – their involvement in the Human Rights Day events and establish what was successful and what was less successful. Ask them to specify their reasons and record their evaluation for future events. • Pupils could work in groups to design a human rights page for the school website, entering existing information, designing a discussion page and providing links to other sites. • Consolidate learning by asking pupils to write a commemorative newsletter or an article for the local press, supporting their work with illustrations and photographs. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify factors relating to the success of planning and organising events, and record their own contribution • use ICT skills and citizenship knowledge and understanding, with an awareness of their audience • celebrate their achievements, involving the wider community in appreciating both the issues and the event | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's Express is an online newspaper to which pupils can submit articles for publication. • Include material relating to the day, and pupils' individual and group contribution to it, in a portfolio. • Link with ICT: unit 9 'Publishing on the web'. • Link with key skills: IT • Link with thinking skills: evaluation. |
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