

Topic: Human rights and responsibilities

Lesson 3: The contemporary relevance of the Holocaust	KS or Year Group: KS3
Resources: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Resource 7 – Universal Declaration of Human Rights2. Resource 8 – news article on the Olympics	Outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students will learn key ideas about the Holocaust.• Students will be able to understand the repercussions and relevance of the Holocaust today.• Students will be more able to engage with the Holocaust experience in a compassionate and imaginative way.

National Curriculum

Key Concepts: 1.1b, 1.2b
Key Processes: 2.1a, 2.1b, 2.1c
Range and Content: 3a
Curriculum Opportunities: 4g

Lesson 3

This lesson is the third in a series of four lessons which look at links between the Holocaust and various facets of the world we live in today, including the global day of commemoration, the responsibilities of the United Nations and our understanding of genocide (particularly in relation to Darfur). The aim of the series is to demonstrate how the repercussions of the Holocaust have been profound and continue to affect key areas of society and politics today.

This third lesson elaborates on the link between the Holocaust and the formation of the UN by focusing more fully on how the concept of human rights came to set a universal standard to which every government around the world can be held.

Starter

NOTE: The selection of audio material here needs to be made in advance of the lesson.

- In this starter, students will hear a small selection of survivor testimonies.
- There are an extensive number of survivor testimonies available on the internet. Starting with the sites mentioned below, preview and select two or three audio files to play in class (teacher discretion advised).
- Rather than relying on your internet connection and access to the sites during the lesson, it would be preferable to make an audio recording of your selected testimonies or if possible save them as mp3 files to your computer.
- Many other testimonies are available across different sites, but the following two sites provide an excellent array of resources:

The British Library – particularly from 'The Camps' section

<http://www.bl.uk/learning/histcitizen/voices/testimonies/survivors.html>

Remember.org – particular the testimony of Harold Gordon

<http://www.remember.org/audiovideo/>

- Play a small selection of survivor testimonies, being careful to put the testimony in context before playing the extract and allowing time for students questions afterwards.
- Ask the students to again imagine themselves as having gone through such an experience. Their fears would be self-evident, but what would these survivors hope for? How might they wish that the world would change? What would need to happen to ensure that it never happened again? Put all of their suggestions on the board, but pay particular attention to any that link closely to the protection of human rights.

Main activity

Activity 1

- Distribute copies of **Resource 5 – UDHR simplified**.
- Explain that this resource provides a simplified version of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These rights were formalised by the United Nations in 1948. In the aftermath of the Second World War, the United Nations was accused of not fully defining the rights it sought to uphold. So, for the first time, they issued a universal standard of the rights that should belong to every person in the world.
- Allow students time to read through the sheet and ask questions about items that they do not understand.
- Divide the class into groups. Ask each group to discuss two questions amongst themselves:
 - Which of these rights were denied to the concentration camp prisoners?
 - Considering what they have learnt in the last two lessons, what are the most important five rights. Why?
- Allow the groups to feedback on their decisions. The answer to the first question should be fairly obvious, i.e. all of these rights were denied. The class should debate the second question more thoroughly. Are the students able to come to any kind of consensus as to which rights might be more fundamental than others? Explain that some people think that a 'core' or 'first tier' of the most important rights should be defined. Do the students think this is a good idea? Why or why not?

The contemporary relevance of the Holocaust

Activity 2

- Distribute copies of **Resource 6 – news article on the Olympics**. Allow the students to read the report in their own time.
- Access to some human rights is poor in China. Do students know which rights are largely denied to the Chinese population? Amongst the most significant rights denied in China are the right to vote, the right to a free media and the right to free speech.
- One of the proposed countermeasures to the denial of human rights in China is for other countries to boycott the Olympics. Using the points raised in the article, what are the arguments 'for' and 'against' the boycott? Put these on the board. Ask students to bolster these points with any arguments of their own.
- Hold a class vote on the question: 'should there be a boycott of the Olympics due to the human rights situation in China?'

Plenary

Ask the students to write down the results of the vote about whether to boycott the Chinese Olympics and summarise the key arguments that were made to support that vote.

Aim high

Ask the students to research charities and organisations that seek to protect human rights around the world (e.g. Amnesty International). According to these groups, where are the most serious human rights violations happening at this moment in time? Ask the students to prepare a brief 1-2 minute presentation on these violations for the next class.

Resource 7 – UDHR simplified

- All humans should be born free.
- All humans should be allowed to have all thirty rights.
- All humans should have the right to life.
- All humans should have the right to be free from slavery.
- All humans should have the right to be free from torture or degrading punishment.
- All humans should be classed as 'people' in court.
- All humans should be equal in court.
- All humans should have the right to challenge the courts if the courts aren't fair.
- All humans should be free from arrest unless there is a reason for the arrest.
- All humans should be treated fairly if criminal charges are brought against them.
- All humans should be innocent until proved guilty.
- All humans should have the right to privacy and to have a good reputation.
- All humans should be able to travel.
- All humans should be able to seek asylum.
- All humans should be able to have a nationality.
- All humans should be able to get married and start a family.
- All humans should be allowed to own property.
- All humans should have freedom of thought and religion.
- All humans should have their own opinions.
- All humans should be allowed to meet up in groups.
- All humans should have the right to take part in government.
- All humans should have access to social security.
- All humans should have the right to a job.
- All humans should have the right to rest and leisure.
- All humans should have a decent standard of living.
- All humans should have the right to education.
- All humans should have access to culture.
- All humans should have the right to sensible laws in society.
- All humans should have the right to develop their personality.
- All humans should protect this list of thirty rights.

Resource 8 – news article on the Olympics

Human Rights Overshadow Beijing Games

March 04, 2008

As the Beijing Olympics draws ever closer so the clamour over China's human rights record grows ever louder.

The British government has so far refused to back any call for a boycott of the Games. However, Foreign Secretary David Miliband, who is in China, said he had raised the human rights issue at talks with his counterpart. "We do not believe that issues of human rights should be restricted to the Olympic year," he said. "Those universal values ... are an issue for every year, not just for one particular year. "We believe that the Olympics are an opportunity to celebrate the progress that has been achieved in China."

Beijing has been desperate to keep politics out of the Games and foreign minister Yang Jiechi launched a spirited defence of his government's record. He said: "People in China enjoy extensive freedom of speech."

Try telling that to Yang Chulin. Campaigning for the rights of farmers kicked off their land in the country's frantic and often corrupt land-grab, he organised an internet petition under the slogan: "We want human rights not the Olympics." He was arrested and thrown into jail charged with incitement to subvert state power. His sister Yang Chunping said. "They have spent billions on the Olympics, invested all that money but China's human rights problems go on."

Back in Beijing, when questioned by Sky News about Yang Chulin's detention Yang Jiechi was defiant. "No one will get arrested because he said that human rights are more important than the Olympics," he said. It is a message that has yet to reach Yang Chulin or his family. He is due for sentence later this week.