

Work, Religion, Family and Criminal Justice: The Rights of Youth Here and Around the World

Teacher's Guide

Introduction:	<p>In this activity, students step into the shoes of a judge, lawyer or social worker to write a persuasive or explanatory text on one of these four themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• freedom of religion of children and teenagers• children and teenagers and work• the rights of children when parents divorce• criminal system punishments for teenagers
Objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• become familiar with the concepts of “human rights” and “children’s rights”• understand that many children don’t benefit from the protections offered by the Convention• find ways to improve the lot of children around the world• learn ways to build convincing arguments
Target Audience:	Secondary 4 and 5
Length:	Flexible, but we suggest four class periods.
Suggested Courses:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• English Language Arts• Ethics and Religious Culture• Français, langue seconde• History

IMPORTANT NOTICE

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(Last Update, 2017.)

Step 1. Introduction to Children’s Rights

Length: One period of 60 minutes

Introduction

Explain to students that on November 20, 1989, many countries around the world adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child (the “Convention”) to protect the rights and well-being of children.

The Convention, designed for children under 18 years old, defines the fundamental needs of children. Countries that signed the Convention agreed to respect the rights listed in it.

The Convention has now been adopted by almost every country, making it the most widely-accepted human rights treaty in history. To mark the importance of the Convention, November 20 has become the official children’s rights day.

To learn more about the Convention, see the website of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Discussion

Continue the class by inviting students to reflect on children’s rights. To kick off the discussion, here are some questions you can ask students:

- Who fits the definition of a “child”?
- What rights do children have?
- Why do we need a convention specifically for children?
- How are children’s rights different from the rights of adults?
- Until what age do children need special protection?

By answering these questions, students will better understand the concept of “children’s rights” and be ready for their next challenge: answering the essay questions.

End of Class

You can hand out copies of the Convention, available at www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/crc.pdf

Step 2. Essay Writing

Time: Two to three 60-minute periods

Preparation for Writing

Ask students to read the text called “Introduction to the Convention on the Rights of the Child” as well as the background documents on the four themes.

Essay Writing

Ask students to write an explanatory or persuasive essay that answers one of the questions created by Éducaloi. You can also select a question for all students to answer.

Step 3. Wrap-Up

Time: 30-45 minutes

To wrap up the activity and review what students have learned, organize a class discussion. Students can share their answers to the essay questions.

During the discussion, remind students of these points:

- In all countries, there are children living in difficult circumstances. The Convention is meant to protect them.
- Some children in Quebec and elsewhere in Canada face hard challenges: poverty, difficult living conditions, school drop-out rates, health problems, etc.
- Human rights are protected under various laws, conventions and charters, but there is still work to do, even in so-called “developed” countries.

Continue the discussion by asking students to identify other problems facing children in Canada, and then recommend solutions to these problems.