

## Unit Plan

**Title:** Equality: Are Some More Equal Than Others?

**Description:** High school students work in groups to build an understanding of the history of the struggle for human rights in the United States and around the world.

### At a Glance

**Grade Level:** 9-12

**Subject sort (for Web site index):** Social Studies

**Subject(s):** United States History, Government, Contemporary World Issues

**Topics:** Human Rights, Civil Rights, Universal Suffrage

**Higher-Order Thinking Skills:** Investigation, Synthesis, Evaluation

**Key Learnings:** Historical Analysis, Political Responsibility

**Time Needed:** 13 class periods over 5 weeks

**Background:** New Mexico, United States

### Unit Summary

Students take part in a series of activities to develop an understanding of how individuals throughout the world have worked to achieve equal rights for themselves and others.

Students are introduced to the topic of human rights by creating a timeline that depicts the history of human rights in a specific area relevant to students. Following this, groups of three to six students select a specific topic related to human rights around the world to investigate further. Within the group, each person researches a person who has been active in human rights and takes on that person's role during a simulated international conference on human rights. The final project is the production of a newsletter focusing on human rights in a specific country. At the end of the unit, students take a written exam that requires them to synthesize the information from the conference and the newsletters.

### Curriculum-Framing Questions

- **Essential Question**  
Whose responsibility is it to create the conditions that promote equal rights for all?
- **Unit Questions**  
Why does the definition of human rights vary among different cultures and countries?  
What are ways in which individuals influence public policy on human rights issues?
- **Content Questions**  
What issues have historically been significant in the human rights movement, in your country and around the globe?  
What significant events have occurred in struggles for equality, in your country and around the world?

Who are some people who have participated in human rights movements, and what were their contributions?

### Assessment Processes

View how a variety of student-centered [assessments](#) are used in the Equality: Are Some More Equal Than Others? Unit Plan. These assessments help students and teachers set goals; monitor student progress; provide feedback; assess thinking, processes, performances, and products; and reflect on learning throughout the learning cycle.

### Instructional Procedures

#### Days 1–3: Human Rights Timeline

Show the [introductory multimedia presentation](#) and conduct a short discussion on what students know about human rights in their country and around the world as well as the Unit Question, *Why does the definition of human rights vary among different cultures and countries?*

Choose a human rights topic that is relevant to your students to examine as an introduction to the topic (such as civil rights, religious freedom, rights of children, and so forth).

Present video and/or Web materials related to human rights topic selected (such as the PBS video on women's rights, *Not for Ourselves Alone*).

Using the [timeline resources](#) handout, select a resource related to the area of human rights you have chosen for your class to investigate, and divide the timeline into sections. Assign one section to each group of three to six students. Distribute the [human rights timeline assignment sheet](#) and the [timeline rubric](#) to all students. Discuss guidelines for the activity and answer any questions. Direct each group to use the Web site timeline on the topic you chose for the class to create, and identify information to be investigated further. The timeline should be completed by the end of the second day. Show the [women's rights timeline](#) as an example of how one section of a timeline would look. (This activity is intended to be exploratory and may not need to be evaluated, although a rubric is provided.) After students complete their sections of the timeline, ask them to create questions as described on the timeline assignment sheet.

Collect questions written by the groups about their timelines at the end of the second day and shuffle them into sets to be answered by groups on Day 3.

Give students time to look over all the timelines, and then give each group a set of five questions to answer on chart paper. A spokesperson for the group should share the group's responses with the class.

After the group presentations, conduct a whole-class discussion on the following questions:

- *What motivated the people who played a role in the struggle for rights on the topic they investigated?*
- *How is this struggle relevant, here and today?*
- *Who is responsible for ensuring that all people have equal rights?*

- *In what ways can individuals influence public policy on human rights issues?*

### **Days 4–8: International Conference**

Distribute the [international conference assignment sheet](#), and assign the International Conference presentations in which groups of students select an area of human rights (such as children’s rights, political imprisonment, employment, or violence against women) and investigate the issue around the globe. Ask students to examine the timelines and look at some of the recommended Web sites to choose a topic to investigate. Give students three to four days to work on their presentations, monitoring their progress using the [international conference job aid](#) and [conference presentation rubric](#).

Ask students to take notes during the presentations, especially as they relate them to the Essential Question, *Whose responsibility is it to create the conditions that promote equal rights for all?* Students will be able to use these notes in the final written exam.

### **Days 9–12: Publication**

Assign a [newsletter](#) in which groups of students select one country, investigate several historical or current human rights issues, and write articles about the issues. Monitor progress using the [newsletter job aid](#) and [newsletter rubric](#). See the example on [women’s rights in India](#).

### **Days 13–14**

Give students a copy of the [United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)\*. In a class discussion, have students come up with the 10 most important rights listed in the document. The rights should not be listed in any kind of order.

Using the [Visual Ranking Tool](#), place students in groups and ask them to rank the rights from different perspectives and then compare their rankings using the following questions:

- *How would they as a group rank the rights?*
- *How do they think one of the countries researched by the class would rank them?*
- *How might different groups struggling to achieve equality rank them?*

After the ranking activity, ask students to discuss the following questions in small or large groups:

- *What rights might have been more important in the past than now?*
- *What rights might have been less important in the past than now?*
- *What new rights might surface in the future?*
- *What can or should ordinary people do to help others achieve equality in human rights?*

Be sure to review comments written by the students while using the tool in order to assess understanding and higher-order thinking.

Distribute the [final exam assignment sheet](#) the day before the exam and encourage students to collect any information they think they can use to bring with them.

On the final day of the unit, ask students to write a unit essay exam in response to the following prompt:

- *What conditions create equal rights for all citizens, and who is responsible for creating those conditions?*

Ask students to use specific information from their own research, the International Conference presentations, and the newsletters to support their conclusions. Students can use the [final exam rubric](#) to guide their work.

### Prerequisite Skills

- Basic word processing and research skills
- Use of publishing, spreadsheet, and multimedia presentation software

### Differentiated Instruction

#### Resource Student:

- Group the class into small, heterogeneous groups to provide support for all students
- Provide choices that allow the student to participate equally in the project while using materials at their ability level that interest them
- Provide frequent checkpoints and job aids to help the student stay focused and on track

#### Gifted Student:

- Encourage the student to select more challenging texts to read, research topics in more depth, and apply higher-level thinking to the assigned tasks

#### English Language Learner:

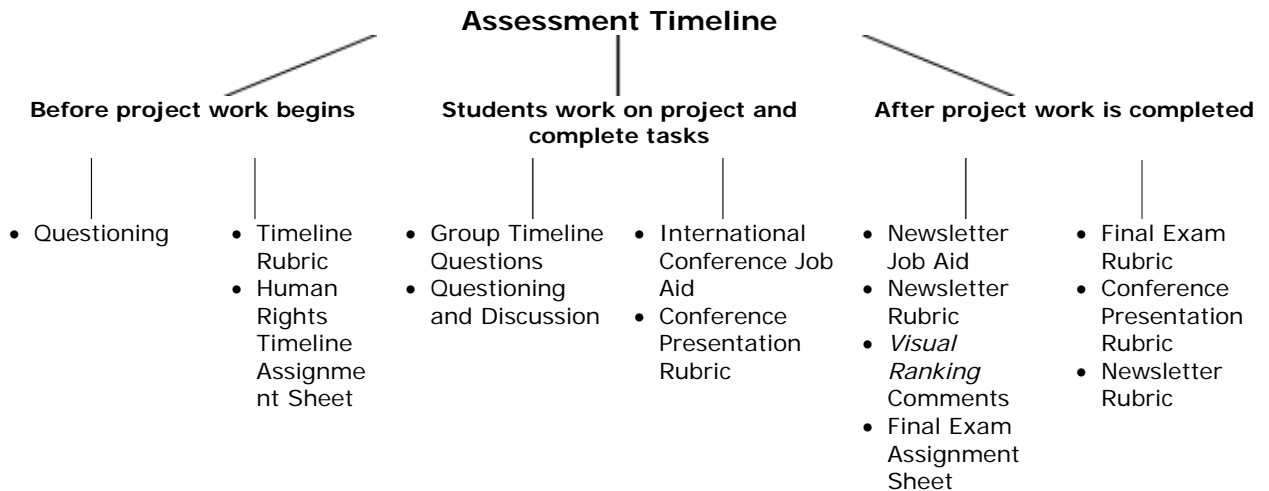
- Allow the student to conduct research in the student's native language, even to investigate the student's country of origin if desired
- Encourage the student to bring special knowledge of another culture into the classroom
- Form heterogeneous groups to allow the student to practice using English for a purpose in an informal environment

### Credits

A teacher participating in the Intel® Teach Program developed this idea for a classroom project. A team of teachers expanded the plan into the example you see here.

## THINGS YOU NEED

### Assessment Plan



Students use the [timeline rubric](#) and the [human rights timeline assignment sheet](#) as guides for the activity and to help them stay on track during their explorations. The quality of the comments in their *Visual Ranking Tool* project, and the questions and answers in their group presentations help both teacher and students monitor progress and understanding of the content. Questioning and discussion take place throughout the unit to help students develop their higher-order thinking skills and process content. Ask students to use the [international conference job aid](#) and [conference presentation rubric](#) to self-assess their progress on their presentations. The rubric is also used to assess presentations. Students use the [newsletter job aid](#) and [newsletter rubric](#) to help them self-assess work prior to completion. The [newsletter rubric](#) is also used to assess and grade the final project. Introduce the [final exam assignment](#) sheet and [final exam rubric](#) to students before they begin their culminating essays to clearly lay out expectations. After students complete the exam, use the rubric to grade their unit essay exams.

### Targeted Content Standards and Benchmarks

#### New Mexico Standards

- Analyze concepts such as role, status, and social class during conflicts among individuals
- Apply ideas, theories, and modes of historical inquiry to understand historical and contemporary developments in order to make informed decisions and take appropriate action concerning public policy issues
- Analyze historical periods and patterns of change within and across cultures
- Evaluate the roles of citizens and their participation and involvement in civic projects

#### ISTE Technology Performance Indicators

- Routinely and efficiently use online information resources to meet needs for collaboration, research, publication, communication, and productivity
- Select and apply technology tools for research, information analysis, problem solving, and decision making in content learning

- Collaborate with peers, experts, and others to contribute to a content-related knowledge base by using technology to compile, synthesize, produce, and disseminate information, models, and other creative works

### Student Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Identify significant events and people in various struggles for human rights
- Generate high-level questions about human rights issues
- Make comparisons between historical and international human rights struggles and current issues
- Recognize and understand the different ways in which human rights are understood and interpreted around the globe and throughout history
- Use a variety of research skills to find, interpret, and synthesize information
- Make effective oral and written presentations using software
- Interpret historical events in terms of their cultural context
- Collaborate with peers effectively to plan and develop products
- Form and defend personal opinions about human rights issues

### Materials and Resources

#### Supplies

- Chart paper

#### Internet Resources

##### Resources About Human Rights

- Human Rights Resource Center  
[www.hrusa.org](http://www.hrusa.org)\*  
A collection of human rights print and media resources
- Human Rights Watch  
[www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org)\*  
Information about human rights around the world, conveniently organized by geographic area
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights  
[www.un.org/Overview/rights.html](http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html)\*  
Statement by the United Nations, available in over 300 languages
- Amnesty International  
[www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org)\*  
A highly political organization dedicated to promoting human rights around the world
- Human Rights Education Associates  
[www.hrea.org/sitemap.html](http://www.hrea.org/sitemap.html)\*  
A collection of resources for teachers and students in different languages
- National Archives and Records Administration  
[www.archives.gov/search](http://www.archives.gov/search)\*  
A searchable database with primary documents and other information

##### Resources about Women's Rights

- WWWomen  
[www.women.com/category/histor1.html](http://www.women.com/category/histor1.html)\*

- A general site about women's issues
- Historical Text Archive  
<http://historicaltextarchive.com/links.php?op=viewslink&sid=0&cid=20>\*  
A collection of historical texts related to women's history
- Internet Women's History Sourcebook  
[www.fordham.edu/halsall/women/womensbook.html#Latin%20America](http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/women/womensbook.html#Latin%20America)\*  
A collection of essays and other writings about women from ancient times to the present and around the world (some information may be too sophisticated for some students)
- American Memory Collections  
<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/mdbquery.html>\*  
A searchable site with many primary documents, including sheet music, advertisements, and photographs
- Encyclopedia Britannica's Guide to Women's History  
<http://search.eb.com/women/pri/Q00162.html>\*  
Profiles of 300 women who changed the world
- "The Subjection of Women " by John Stuart Mill  
[www.constitution.org/jsm/women.htm](http://www.constitution.org/jsm/women.htm)\*  
Mill's 1869 essay on women that served as a foundation for many arguments for women's suffrage
- Women's Rights and Gender Issues  
[www.twinside.org.sg/women.htm](http://www.twinside.org.sg/women.htm)\*  
Information on global issues related to women
- Anti-suffrage Arguments and Activists  
<http://womenshistory.about.com/od/suffrageanti>\*  
Resources about women who opposed women's suffrage

### Resource about Teaching Primary Documents

- Teaching with Documents  
[www.edteck.com/dbq/more/analyzing.htm](http://www.edteck.com/dbq/more/analyzing.htm)\*  
Information on how to incorporate the use of primary documents in history classes

### Other Resources

Burns, K. (Director). (1999). *Not for ourselves alone: The story of Elizabeth Cady Stanton & Susan B. Anthony*. [VHS/DVD]. Alexandria, VA: PBS Paramount.

### Technology—Hardware

- Computers for researching information about human rights around the world

### Technology—Software

- Desktop publishing to create newsletters
- Word processing for the final essay exam
- Spreadsheet software to create the timeline
- Multimedia presentation software for the International Conference presentation