

Unit III

Grades 6-8 Unit Lesson Plan

UNIT III: JUSTICE OR INJUSTICE

Key Question: How can we identify the acts of justice and address the injustices around us?

Activity Goal(s): Students learn about human rights through a justice/injustice model that will bring students into their communities and communities into their classrooms.

Time: Approximately 15 hours depending on activities selected

Materials: See individual activities

Setting: Grades 6-8

Student Learning Goals

Students will understand the following human rights principles, language and values:

Activist	Justice
Affirmative Action	Legal Rights
Collective Rights	Moral Rights
Community Action	Persecution
Convention	Political Justice
Covenant	Racism
Cultural Justice	Ratification
Declaration	Self-Determination
Economic Justice	Social Change
Human Rights	Social Justice
Inalienable Rights	Sovereignty
Injustice	Systemic Change
Interdependent	Treaty
Intergovernmental Agencies	

Students will apply the following human rights standards:

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

Minnesota Human Rights Act (MHRA)

Students will demonstrate the following human rights skills and practices:¹

- Investigate the impact humans have on the environment.²
- Examine changing forms of cross-cultural contact, conflict, and cooperation that

¹ All footnotes are specific MN Educational Standards that correspond to the unit's human rights skills and practices.

² Science: Grade 8: III.A.- Earth Structures and Processes

- resulted from the interconnections between Eurasia, Africa, and the Americas.³
- Begin to use historical resources.⁴
 - Recognize the importance of individual action and character in shaping civic life.
 - Articulate the range of rights and responsibilities in a republic.
 - Understand the importance of participation in civic life and demonstrate effective civic skills.⁵
 - Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of principles and beliefs upon which our republic is based.⁶
 - Demonstrate knowledge of influential and fundamental documents of the U.S. constitutional government.⁷
 - Describe the relationship the United States has with other nations in the world.
 - Understand other governmental systems in the world.⁸
 - Create informative, expressive and persuasive writing.⁹
 - Locate and use information in reference materials.¹⁰
 - Demonstrate understanding and communicate effectively through listening and speaking.¹¹
 - Critically analyze information found in electronic and print media and use a variety of these sources to learn about a topic and represent ideas.¹²
 - Apply skills of mathematical representation, communication, and reasoning.¹³

Note: Many other skills can be fostered by using this material, depending on the areas of study and action plans undertaken by the students. See the Resource Section of this kit for a more extensive list of the Minnesota Education Standards.

³ Social Studies: WHist 4-8/III.F.- World Civilization Toward a Global Culture, 1500-1770 AD

⁴ Social Studies: Hist Skills 4-8/IV.B.- Historical Resources

⁵ Social Studies: Gov't & Citizshp 4-8/VII.A.- Civic Values, Skills, Rights, and Responsibilities

⁶ Social Studies: Gov't & Citizshp 4-8/VII.B.- Beliefs and Principles of United States Democracy

⁷ Social Studies: Gov't & Citizshp 4-8/VII.C.- Roots of the Republic

⁸ Social Studies: Gov't & Citizshp 4-8/VII.D.- Governmental Institutions and Processes of the United States

⁹ Language Arts: 7/II.A., 7/II.D. - 7/II.A. - Types of Writing

¹⁰ Language Arts: 7/II.A., 7/II.D. 7/II.D. - Research

¹¹ Language Arts: List/Spk/Vewg 6/III.A.- Speaking and Listening

¹² Language Arts: List/Spk/Vewg 8/III.C.- 8/III.C Media Literacy

¹³ Math: Mathematical Reasoning 7/I.

Overall Impact

When first thinking about your lesson plan, it is recommended that you keep in mind its intended impact on four levels: (a) student, (b) school, (c) family, and (d) community. Below are some examples of possible impacts that might occur at each of these levels. Identify possible impacts with your students, and discuss how you might collect information to decide on whether or not they have taken place.

Student Impact	School Impact	Family Impact	Community Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to describe examples of injustice in the community • Ability to present conclusions based on valid information • Ability to suggest possible solutions to address these social issues • Ability to describe why justice is necessary at local, national, and international levels, and how it contributes to the protection and promotion of human rights • Increase in understanding of the UDHR, CRC, and MHRA principles that relate to justice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of a student-run club that addresses social justice issues • School commended by community organizations for its work on social justice issues • School becomes model for other schools in the district regarding social justice awareness • Students hold peer mediations on issues relating to acts of injustice • Decreased conflict between students due to greater appreciation of school regulations • Students are encouraged to create and implement rules/regulations to foster accountability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in discussions with family members about justice and injustice • Increase in discussions with family members about school-based projects • Decrease in family conflicts by educating students about the consequences of their actions on others. • Examination of how the above consequences are fair or unfair for the receiving person(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiating school events open to the public that showcase student work on justice, e.g., photographs, videos, skits, stories, and art journals • Increase in volunteerism with social justice organizations • Response from municipal government to letter-writing campaign of students on the lack of community social services for battered women • Greater community cohesion as community creates and implements neighborhood agendas to deal with acts of injustice

Activity A: Observe and Identify the Human Rights Issue

Key Question: What is at the heart of this human rights issue?

Activity Goal(s): Deepen understanding of the meaning of “justice”.

Time: 5 1/2 hours — approximately 8 sessions

Materials: Game Board (see “What are Human Rights?” section), Handout 1: Investigate Justice

Setting: Grades 6-8

Step 1: Participate in a human rights discussion.

Use the HR Squares Game Board (see the “What are Human Rights?” section), and link the observations to human rights.

Introduce and reinforce vocabulary:

Activist	Persecution
Human Rights	Racism
Inalienable Rights	Sovereignty

Discuss the students’ understanding of these terms in relation to other familiar concepts of law:

- Where do rights come from?
- Where does law come from?
- What is the relationship between human rights, the U.S. Constitution, and Minnesota Law?
- What are civil rights?
- What does it mean to “guarantee” a right?
- How are human rights guaranteed? Civil rights? Constitutional rights?

Step 2: Define justice.

Ask students to define justice and injustice in their own terms. Record their responses on a large sheet of paper. When all of the students’ definitions have been recorded, provide them with several different definitions from dictionaries, famous activists, or other sources. Next, have the students review all definitions and write down a new understanding of justice and injustice to keep with them throughout the unit.

Step 3: Discuss justice.

Discuss the following questions related to justice and injustice:

- How do the following institutions promote justice? How do they protect people from injustice?
 - Government
 - Non-governmental Organization (e.g. United Nations, Red Cross, Human Rights Watch, etc.)

- Business
- Media
- Neighborhood/Community
- School
- Family
- Individual

Responses can be recorded on the blackboard or large easel-sized paper. Alternately, this activity can be assigned as homework and discussed in class after all ideas have been turned in.

Step 4: Investigate justice.

Help students to investigate justice and injustice in the environment around them and through their own experiences. Model how to record their observations concisely using Handout 1: Investigate Justice. Provide opportunities for practice in investigating justice and injustice.

Step 5: Make a Wisdom Wall.

- a) Use a wall surface and paper that can be easily moved around as the class adds and categorizes responses. Suggestions: Use a wall surface on which you can attach sticky notes, or a piece of rip-stop fabric sprayed with adhesive spray. Any paper will stick to the fabric temporarily. This procedure is called Wisdom Wall because it is a way to capture the “wisdom of the group.” Everyone’s ideas count and are displayed together.
- b) Distribute half sheets of blank paper and ask students to work individually to print one example of justice or injustice on each half sheet.
- c) As they write, collect and start placing the sheets on the wall.
- d) Ask the students to group like responses together, engaging students in categorizing and discussing the similarities and differences among the data they collected. During this process you may need to call on students to clarify written comments so they can be categorized correctly. Repetitions are acceptable.
- e) After all responses have been placed, ask students to help you label the categories. For example, there might be a group of responses all related to people being treated badly because they come from a different culture or race. This category might be “inequality” or “racism.” Guide the labeling process in order to end up with 5-8 categories.
- f) Photograph the Wisdom Wall. The photo can be used as part of the visual material at the Human Rights Fair (see Activity G for more information on the Human Rights Fair).

Introduce human rights vocabulary:

Cultural Justice	Political Justice
Economic Justice	Social Justice

Step 6: Distinguish Human Rights Issues.

Post sheets with single UDHR abbreviated articles. Facilitate a discussion of the articles. Help students link the data that they collected, reduced, and categorized (Wisdom Wall). Provide information about the UDHR (“What is Human Rights Education?” section). Guide students to distinguish human rights issues from narrower interpersonal issues that do not impinge on a person’s human rights. See the Needs/Wants activity in the “What are Human Rights?” section of this resource for a full lesson on this topic.

Introduce and reinforce vocabulary:

Convention	Ratification
Covenant	Self-Determination
Declaration	Treaty

Step 7: Match observed issues to UDHR.

Model how to use UDHR documents as references as you guide students to finding the human rights connection to the issues they observed and documented in the previous activity.

Introduce and reinforce vocabulary:

Legal Rights and all terms introduced so far

Step 8: Select an issue.

Help each student to select a topic suitable for further research using questions such as:

- Can you link the issue to at least one of the UDHR articles?
- Will you be able to find information about the issue?

Possible Evaluation/Assessment Indicators:

- The student will demonstrate a deepened understanding of the meaning of “justice” through writing and discussion.
- The student will define the meaning of “justice” and provide examples to illustrate this.
- The student will identify issues of justice and injustice in relation to the UDHR.

Activity B: Describe and Share Human Rights Stories

Key Question: How have our ancestors worked to promote and protect this human right? Who within our schools, families, and communities promote and protect this human right?

Activity Goal(s): Discover a variety of viewpoints on justice and injustice through story-telling, interviews, analysis and interpretation.

Time: 2 1/2 hours — 4 sessions

Materials: Handout 2: Presenting My Story, Handout 3: About My Interview Subjects, Handout 4: Data Analysis Tool, Handout 5: Image Theater, “Getting to know the Activists Among Us” (see HR Fundamentals Section), paper and pen.

Setting: Grades 6-8

Step 1: Participate in story-telling.

Guide students through the Handout 2: Presenting My Story to describe how they are affected by issues of justice/injustice and their personal connection to the topic they selected for study. To help them select a story, guide a discussion using the following questions (relate them to the selected topic of study):

- Can you think of a time in your life when you were treated with justice (fairly)? What happened? What was special or unique about this event?
- Can you think of a time in your life when you were treated with injustice (unfairly)? What happened? What, if anything, did you do about it?
- Can you think of a time in your life when you observed someone else being treated with injustice? What happened? What, if anything, did you do about it?

Introduce and reinforce vocabulary:

Use human rights-related vocabulary that emerges from stories.

Step 2: Review the interview protocol.

Provide students with ground rules about how to gather information through interviews, and help them to formulate appropriate questions. Sample questions and protocol for interviews can be found in the activity “Getting to Know the Activists Among Us” in the “What is Human Rights Education?” section of this resource. Limit the number of questions the students can select to three.

Introduce and reinforce vocabulary:

Community Action Social Change

Step 3: Use the interview tools.

See Handouts 3 and 4 before and after the interviews. The purpose of these tools is to guide students to look for multiple perspectives on the topic. Have students look for similarities and differences in the responses and account for each.

Introduce and reinforce vocabulary:

Collective Rights Systemic Change

Step 4: Participate in the Image Theater activity.

- a) Help students interpret and draw conclusions from their interview data.
- b) Teach students the image theater techniques (using the body to create and share images of the selected issue)—see Handout 5: Image Theater at the end of this unit.
- c) Provide focus questions and directions for movement response to the stories they heard through the interviews. Examples: What do the stories make you think? How do they make you feel? What do the stories inspire you to do?

Introduce and reinforce vocabulary:

All terms introduced so far

Possible Evaluation/Assessment Indicators:

- The student will show a greater knowledge of diverse viewpoints on justice and injustice as exhibited in their Image Theater activities.
- The student will summarize results from his/her interview process.

**Activity C: Generate Human Rights Responses and Make Predictions
about Their Impact on the Community**

Key Question: What could we do? What will happen if we do that?

Activity Goal(s): Brainstorm in small groups about possible actions that could be taken to address selected issues of justice and injustice

Time: 50 minutes

Materials: Paper and pens, Handout 6: Stories of Students Who Took Action

Setting: Grades 6-8

Step 1: Participate in small group discussions about the possible actions students could take in order to have a positive impact on their selected issue.

- What action(s) do you propose?
- Have you ever taken an action like this before?
- What barriers might get in the way?
- What supports are available to help you?
- Who will be affected, and in what ways, if you take this action?
- How will you know if your action is effective?
- How long will your action take?
- What resources are required to take this action?

There are numerous websites devoted to ways in which young people can take action. See Handout 6: Stories of Students Who Took Action.

Possible Evaluation/Assessment Indicators:

- The student will discuss and respond to questions regarding possible human rights action plans.
- The student will summarize group discussion related to possible actions.

Activity D: Select a Human Rights Response and Take Action

Key Question: What is the best response or position?

Activity Goal(s): Take action to address injustice!

Time: Variable, depending on action taken — approximately 1 hour of teacher instruction

Materials: Variable, depending on action taken

Setting: Grades 6-8

Step 1: Utilize human rights resources.

a) See the following resources to help students with letter writing, petitions, service projects, artistic expressions, editorial essays and cartoons, community flyers, contacting legislators, and networking with governmental and non-governmental agencies: Resources taken from Human Rights Here and Now:

<http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/edumat/hreduseries/hereandnow/Default.htm>

[Handout 7: 10 Tips for Taking Action](#)

[Handout 9: The Power of the Pen](#)

[Handout 10: The Power of Petitions](#)

[Handout 11: Sample Letter to the Editor](#)

[Handout 12: Examples of Human Rights Service Learning Projects](#)

www.hrusa.org/league/essaycontest/essay.shtm

b) Encourage students to use information that they gathered from Activity B above.

Introduce and reinforce vocabulary:

Affirmative Action and all terms so far

c) Guide students in the use of Handout 8: Action Plan Worksheet or the Online Action Process Model

<http://www.hrusa.org/thisismyhome/project/resources.shtml#processmodel>

Possible Evaluation/Assessment Indicators:

- The student will select and implement an action plan that addresses justice and injustice.
- The student will explain why he/she decided to adopt their particular plan for action.

Activity E: Interview Community Members and Collect Information about the Impact of Your Human Rights Action.

Key Question: What happened when we took action? Whose lives did we impact?

Activity Goal(s): Use photography and video to document actions taken

Time: Variable, depending on action taken — approximately 1 hour teacher instruction

Materials: Variable, depending on action taken

Setting: Grades 6-8

Step 1: Use photography and video to document the actions.

Guide students using [Handout 8: Action Plan Worksheet](#).

Possible Evaluation/Assessment Indicator:

- The student will demonstrate effective use of photography and video to document human rights action plan.

Activity F: Reflect and Draw Conclusions on What You have Learned about Promoting and Protecting Human Rights

Key Questions: What did we learn? Did our action have the intended impact?

Activity Goal(s): Answer focus questions for reflection on human rights action.

Time: Variable, depending on action taken — approximately 1 hour

Materials: Variable, depending on action taken

Setting: Grades 6-8

Step 1: Answer reflection questions in groups.

One group member should record answers for use in Activity G. Example focus questions for reflection:

- How do you feel about the outcome of your action?
- What is the most important thing you learned by doing this?
- What were your biggest successes/disappointments?
- What could we have done differently/better?
- Did you have enough time to spend on this action?
- What impact did your project have? How do you know?
- What personal connections did you make or strengthen through this action?
- Is this something you would like to continue or repeat?
- What recommendations would you make to others who might like to take action concerning this issue?

Introduce and reinforce vocabulary:

Interdependent

Intergovernmental agencies

Possible Evaluation/Assessment Indicators:

- The student will reflect on the success of their human rights action plan.
- The student will restate responses to group reflection questions.

Activity G: Communicate and Demonstrate Your Human Rights Learning

Key Question: How can we share what we learned with our schools, families, and communities?

Activity Goal(s): Present skits, stories, photo journals, art journals, or collages to younger students, and create a story booth to communicate what students learned about justice and injustice

Time: approximately 3 hours — 2 sessions

Step 1: Demonstrate your learning creatively.

Present a story or skit to younger students, or an alternate activity: display a photo journal, art journal, or collage in school or a community location.

Provide focus questions for reflection. Students can use their reflections to create ways to communicate their project ideas to others.

Step 2: Make a Human Rights Booth.

Direct students to gather all of their projects to create a booth that would tell the story of their project from beginning to end.

Provide a checklist to help students plan what to include in their booth.

Example:

My booth shows that I can...

- ___ Communicate using human rights vocabulary in writing and speaking
- ___ Describe, with examples, how human rights are upheld or withheld
- ___ Gather, organize, and display data about a human rights topic
- ___ Consider more than one perspective in collecting and making sense of data
- ___ Draw my own conclusions based on the data I have collected
- ___ Communicate human rights concepts in ways my audience can understand
- ___ Create something appealing that will make people interested in finding out more about the human rights topic I chose

Possible Evaluation/Assessment Indicator:

- The student will communicate effectively what was learned about justice/injustice and human rights.

Possible Evaluation/Assessment Indicators

It is important to examine the impact of human rights actions on families, school and community. However, assessing these impacts is more subjective than assessing impact on the individual level. In order to address this, discuss measures that indicate impact in the areas of families, school, and community PRIOR TO BEGINNING THIS UNIT. Refer to the possible impacts on four levels: (a) student, (b) school, (c) family, and (d) community (p.69). Create a checklist that can be referred to over the course of the unit to gauge impact using these impacts, or the more specific student-focused indicators found at the end of each activity:

The student will:

- Demonstrate a deepened understanding of the meaning of “justice” through writing and discussion.
- Define the meaning of “justice” and provide examples to illustrate this.
- Identify issues of justice and injustice in relation to the UDHR.
- Demonstrate a greater knowledge of diverse viewpoints on justice and injustice as exhibited in their Image Theater activities.
- Summarize results from his/her interview process.
- Discuss and respond to questions regarding possible human rights action plans.
- Summarize group discussion related to possible actions.
- Select and implement an action plan that addresses justice and injustice.
- Explain why he/she decided to adopt their particular plan for action.
- Demonstrate effective use of photography and video to document human rights action plan.
- Reflect on the success of their human rights action plan.
- Restate responses to group reflection questions.
- Communicate effectively what was learned about justice/injustice and human rights.