



Lesson 1: An Introduction to Human Rights and Responsibilities

Note: The Introduction to Human Rights and Responsibilities resource has been designed as two unique lesson plans. However, depending on your students' level of engagement and the depth of content that you wish to explore, you may wish to divide each lesson into two. Each lesson consists of 'Part 1' and 'Part 2' which could easily function as entire lessons on their own.

Key Learning Areas	Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS); Health and Physical Education
Year Group	Years 5 and 6
Student Age Range	10-12 year olds
Resources/Props	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital interactive lesson - Introduction to Human Rights and Responsibilities https://www.humanrights.gov.au/introhumanrights/ • Interactive Whiteboard • Note-paper and pens for students • Printer
Language/vocabulary	Human rights, responsibilities, government, children's rights, citizen, community, individual, law, protection, values, beliefs, freedom, equality, fairness, justice, dignity, discrimination.

◇ Suggested Curriculum Links:

Year 6 - Humanities and Social Sciences

Inquiry Questions

- How have key figures, events and values shaped Australian society, its system of government and citizenship?
- How have experiences of democracy and citizenship differed between groups over time and place, including those from and in Asia?
- How has Australia developed as a society with global connections, and what is my role as a global citizen?"

Inquiry and Skills

Questioning

- Develop appropriate questions to guide an inquiry about people, events, developments, places, systems and challenges ([ACHASSI122](#))

Analysing

- Examine different viewpoints on actions, events, issues and phenomena in the past and present ([ACHASSI127](#))

Evaluating and Reflecting

- Reflect on learning to propose personal and/or collective action in response to an issue or challenge, and predict the probable effects ([ACHASSI132](#))

Knowledge & Understanding (History)

- Experiences of Australian democracy and citizenship, including the status and rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, migrants, women and children ([ACHASSK135](#))



Year 5 & 6 - Health and Physical Education

Personal, Social and Community Health

Being Healthy, Safe and Active

- Examine how identities are influenced by people and places ([ACPPS051](#))

Communicating and interacting for health and wellbeing

- Recognise how media and important people in the community influence personal attitudes, beliefs, decisions and behaviours ([ACPPS057](#))
- Practise skills to establish and manage relationships ([ACPPS055](#))

Contributing to healthy and active communities

- Identify how valuing diversity positively influences the wellbeing of the community ([ACPPS060](#))

◆ Lesson Overview

Over two lessons students will be introduced to the concept of ‘Human Rights’ and the strong link between rights and personal responsibility. They will design their own class charter and explore the broader topic of human rights and responsibilities through challenging and thought-provoking experiences.

◆ Interactivity

These lessons are accompanied by online interactive activities to support the teaching of human rights.

You can locate these activities at <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/introhumanrights/>.

These activities are accessible on any internet enabled device however they work particularly well using an interactive whiteboard.

◆ Aim

Upon completion of **An Introduction to Human Rights and Responsibilities**, students will be able to demonstrate a basic understanding of the concepts encompassed by the term ‘human rights’ and underlying principles of **freedom, equality, fairness and justice**.

◆ Learning Outcomes

In these lessons, students will:

- develop an understanding of what human rights are
- appreciate the relationship between rights and responsibilities
- analyse who is responsible for upholding human rights
- appreciate the meaning and significance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- apply the concepts of human rights to their own lives

Teacher Note

When teaching about human rights it is important to create a safe and positive classroom environment, which encourages participation and cooperation. The activities in these lessons are significant because they empower students to make rules about how they want to be treated by both teachers and their peers.

By helping to create an environment where rights are respected, students are encouraged to actively take part in advancing respect for the rights of others in the classroom and beyond.





◇ Introduction

Pre-Lesson Quick Quiz (10 minutes)

Note: You may choose to have the students complete the quiz independently (on computers or tablets), in small groups, or as an entire class.

Conduct the pre-lesson Quick Quiz in the interactive lesson.

1. A 'right' is a moral or legal entitlement to have or do something.
True.
2. Human rights are only for people living in Australia. People who do not live in Australia don't have human rights.
False. Human rights are for everyone, no matter who you are or where you live.
3. There are responsibilities that go with every right.
True, human rights involve responsibility toward other people and the wider community. Individuals have a responsibility to ensure that they use their rights, while also thinking about the rights of others. Acting with respect for the rights of others helps people to live together in harmonious communities.
4. A person can have their human rights taken away if they don't deserve them.
False. Your human rights cannot be taken away from you. Everyone has the right to be treated fairly and equally. However this doesn't mean that abuses and violations of human rights don't occur.
5. Human rights are only rights to be free from certain things, such as the right to be free from violence or slavery.
False. While these are human rights, they are examples of negative rights, which are the rights to be free from something. There are also positive rights, which are the rights to have something, for example the right to education and the right to a decent standard of living.

◇ Main Body of Teaching

Brainstorm discussion: 'What are rights?' (5 minutes)

- Brainstorm students' existing knowledge of the concept of 'rights'. Consider the multiple meanings for the word (e.g. 'correct', 'opposite of left' or 'just').
- Consider common expressions like 'We're within our rights' or 'You have no right to say that.'
- Provide students with the [Oxford Dictionary](#) definition of a 'right':
- 'A moral or legal entitlement to have or do something'

Interactive Activity: 'What are the responsibilities that come with rights?' (10 minutes)

- This activity explains the essential connection between rights and responsibilities.
- Ask students to identify what responsibilities might be connected to the rights displayed in the interactive lesson slides.
- After students have provided their ideas for each right shown on the interactive slides, click on the button to reveal a related responsibility. These answers are provided on the following page.
- Explain to students that the responsibility revealed is just one example of a responsibility that is linked to that particular right. Students may have suggested other examples and these are also valid options.



'What are the responsibilities that come with rights?' - Activity questions and answers

Right: I have a right to feel safe

Responsibility: I have a responsibility to behave in a way that will keep myself and others safe.

Right: I have a right to speak freely and express my ideas and opinions

Responsibility: I have a responsibility to be respectful of other people's ideas and opinions even if they are different to mine.

Teacher Note:

This could also be phrased as a responsibility not to say things that deliberately hurt the feelings of others, for example: talking about someone else's secrets or private business, or calling someone hurtful names.

Right: I have the right to be treated the same as everyone else, no matter my age, sex, race, nationality, beliefs or other personal characteristics.

Responsibility: I have a responsibility to treat others equally, without discrimination.

Teacher Note:

This may require a brief discussion of the word 'discrimination'. Discrimination is when a person is treated less favourably than another person in a similar situation because of a particular personal characteristic, such as their age, sex, race, nationality, or beliefs.

Right: I have the right to believe in a particular religion or belief, or in no religion at all

Responsibility: I have the responsibility to respect the different religions and beliefs of other people and the ways they choose to practice their beliefs

Extension Question:

What might happen to your rights if no one acted on the responsibilities you have discussed?

Interactive Activity: Classroom Rights and Responsibilities (20 minutes)

Part 1: Wants, Needs and Rights

- Begin this activity by dividing students into smaller groups and asking them to brainstorm what things they would have in their ideal classroom. Encourage students to identify both objects (such as computers, games and books) and concepts (such as respect, safety, free time, a clean environment). Come together as a whole class and write the students' ideas in a list on the interactive whiteboard. Press the light blue "plus" button to enter the answer into the table.
- Next, as a class, go through this list and ask students to decide whether each item on the list is:
 - » a 'want' (something that is nice to have in the classroom, but not essential)
 - » a 'need' (something that is essential to have in a good classroom)
 - » a 'right' (something that is so important to have in the classroom that students have a right to expect it).
- Explain to students that things can fall into more than one category. Some things may be a 'want', a 'need' and a 'right', but it is important for students to identify that not all things will be rights.



Discussion Questions:

- Was it difficult to decide whether some things were wants, needs or rights?
- What is the difference between a 'want' and a 'need'?
- How did you decide when something was important enough to be a 'right'?
- Why would some 'needs' be protected as 'rights'?

Part 2: Creating a Classroom Charter of Rights and Responsibilities

- The items that students identified as classroom rights will appear on the next slide.
- Refer students back to the earlier activity of converting rights into responsibilities. Ask students to rephrase each of the classroom rights into a classroom responsibility and record these on the interactive whiteboard.
For example: 'Everyone has a right to express their opinion in the classroom' might be rewritten as 'Everyone has the responsibility to consider others' feelings before speaking or acting'.
- Explain to students that this list will become their Classroom Charter of Rights and Responsibilities. Ask students if they would like to add or change anything.
- Once the class has agreed on the Classroom Charter of Rights and Responsibilities, the interactive page can be printed and displayed in the classroom and referred back to throughout the year.
- Conclude this activity by asking students to suggest some ways of putting the Classroom Charter of Rights and Responsibilities into action. For example:

Question: *"How do we ensure that everyone has a chance to voice their opinion in class?"*

Answer: *"Raising hands to indicate when someone wants to talk", "listening while others are talking".*

Discussion: 'What are human rights?' (5 minutes)

- Pose the question to the class: 'What are human rights?'
- Students 'think, pair, share' their ideas with the class (think individually for 30 seconds, discuss in a pair for a minute, share their ideas with the class).
- Explain that human rights are the rights we have as human beings. They belong to all of us, regardless of who we are or where we live, and they cannot be taken away. They are the things we need in order to thrive and participate fully in society, and they protect every person's individual dignity.
- Explain that human rights can be rights to have something positive, as well as rights to be free from something negative. For example:
 - » **Rights to have something (positive rights):**
 - The right to health
 - The right to education
 - » **Rights to be free from something (negative rights):**
 - The right to be free from slavery
 - The right to be free from discrimination
- Ask students what they think the underlying values of human rights are, allowing them to brainstorm ideas in groups. (For example: equality, respect, freedom, dignity and justice).



- Explain that many of the values that underpin human rights are important values in Australia's democracy. Moral and ethical values determine what people think is right and wrong, and this is reflected in the law. In a democracy, citizens will pressure the government to amend or introduce laws that reflect the values of the society.
- Explain that one of the key underlying values of human rights is the principle that you should: 'treat others as you wish to be treated.' This is known as the 'Golden Rule'. It is an idea that has been repeated throughout history in many different cultures and religions.
- Ask students to discuss why human rights are important. Answers may include:
 - » Human rights are necessary for people to live full and satisfying lives
 - » Human rights are important for making sure that people are treated equally and fairly.
 - » Human rights recognise the value and dignity of each person
 - » Human rights recognise the importance of mutual respect between people and help us to live together cooperatively

◆ Conclusion

Explain to students that you want to see how much they learned so you are going to ask them the same questions from the first "Quick Quiz" at the beginning of the lesson.

Post-Lesson Quick Quiz (10 minutes)

Note: you may choose to have the students complete the quiz independently (on computers or tablets), in small groups, or as an entire class. If you divided students into small groups for the pre-lesson quiz, you might like to consider assigning them to *different* groups for the post-lesson quiz.

Conduct the post-test Quick Quiz.

1. A 'right' is a moral or legal entitlement to have or do something.
True.
2. Human rights are only for people living in Australia. People who do not live in Australia do not have human rights.
False. Human rights are for everyone, no matter who you are or where you live.
3. There are responsibilities that go with every right.
True, human rights involve responsibility toward other people and the wider community. Individuals have a responsibility to ensure that they use their rights, while also thinking about the rights of others.
Acting with respect for the rights of others helps people to live together in harmonious communities.
4. A person can have their human rights taken away if they don't deserve them.
False. Your human rights cannot be taken away from you. Everyone has the right to be treated fairly and equally. However this doesn't mean that abuses and violations of human rights don't occur.
5. Human rights are only rights to be free from certain things, such as the right to be free from violence or slavery.
*False. While these are human rights, they are examples of negative rights, which are the rights to be **free from something**. There are also positive rights, which are the rights **to have something**, for example the right to education and the right to a decent standard of living.*

◆ Homework Task

- Ask students to have a discussion at home about their learning on human rights and the Classroom Charter of Rights and Responsibilities they developed.
- Instruct students to ask their family members what rights they believe are important in the family home.
- They should also discuss with family members who they think should be responsible for making sure these rights are respected.
- Students should use this information they have collected to design a visually appealing, one-page family charter (similar to the charter of rights and responsibilities developed in class) to present in class.



◆ Suggestions for Additional/Extension Learning

Ask the class to develop their own glossary of key terms

- Assign each student/pair 1-2 terms and ask them to come up with their own definition of what these terms mean
- Collate and post in classroom

Introduce different human rights issues and examples of human rights violations, by showing stories or video clips related to currently relevant issues

◆ Useful resources for extended learning

[RightsED](#) (Australian Human Rights Commission)

- The Commission's series of education resources - RightsED - are designed to help students gain a critical understanding of human rights and responsibilities, and to develop the attitudes, behaviours and skills to apply human rights in everyday life.

[BTN \(Behind the News\)](#)

- Behind the News is a high-energy, fun way for upper primary and secondary students to learn about current issues and events in their world.

[TeachUNICEF](#)

- TeachUNICEF provides educators with global learning resources and programs. Through a focus on global citizenship and child rights, TeachUNICEF engages students in an exploration of humanitarian issues and inspires them to take action to improve their world.

[The World's Largest Lesson](#)

- The World's Largest Lesson is an initiative to introduce the UN's Sustainable Development Goals to teachers and students around the world. There are a variety of lesson plans and creative resources available to support teachers.



◇ Glossary

Charter: A document that outlines the fundamental principles of an organisation.

Children's rights: children's rights are special rights that belong to all children under the age of 18. Children have the same human rights as everyone else but they also have extra rights that place a responsibility on adults to make sure that children receive the special care and protection they need to grow up healthy and happy. These rights are written down in the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#).

Citizen: A person who is a member of a political community, such as a state or a nation, that grants certain rights and privileges to its citizens and in return expects them to fulfil certain duties, such as to obeying the law.

Community: A group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic and a shared sense of identity in common.

Dignity: A value owed to all humans, to be treated with respect.

Discrimination: When a person is treated less favourably than another person in a similar situation because of a particular personal characteristic such as their; age, sex, race, nationality, or beliefs.

Equality: The quality of being equal. Equality is an important value in human rights and is the central idea behind all human beings having universal human rights.

Fairness: The quality of treating people in a way that is right or reasonable.

Freedom: The power or right to act, speak, or think as one wants. Or, the state of being free rather than in confinement or under physical restraint.

Global citizen: A person who understands that they have rights and responsibilities at a global level, beyond geographical or political borders, because they are part of the global human community. These rights and responsibilities do not have the same legal authority or sanctions that those conferred by a nation have.

Government: A group of people with the authority to govern a country or state.

Human rights: Rights that come from being human. They ensure people can live freely and that they are able to flourish, reach their potential, and participate in society. They ensure that people are treated fairly and with dignity and respect. You have human rights simply because you are human and they cannot be taken away.

Justice: The moral principle ensuring fairness in the way people are treated.

Law: A system of rules that a particular country or community recognises as regulating the actions of its members, and which it may enforce by an imposition of penalties and sanctions.

Respect: Taking into account the views and desires of others in how you treat people.

Right: A right is a moral or legal entitlement to have or do something.

Rights and responsibilities: Entitlements and obligations that are associated with living in any country with a democratic justice system. Rights and responsibilities are a cornerstone of modern democracies. While all people in Australia enjoy certain rights (for example, freedom of speech), there are also responsibilities (for example, paying taxes, jury service). Citizens also have the right to vote and the responsibility of voting at elections.

United Nations: An international organisation that was founded in 1945 by the governments of the world with the aim of promoting global peace and security, and human rights.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights: The key United Nations document establishing the standards of basic human rights for everyone. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 10, 1948.

Values: Values are principles, ideals, standards, or world views which act as general guidelines for behaviour. They can also be points of reference in making decisions when evaluating beliefs or actions. Values are closely connected to personal integrity and personal identity.



◆ AHRC Creative Commons information

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