CANADIAN MUSEUM FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
MUSÉE CANADIEN POUR LES DROITS DE LA PERSONNE

Human Rights Reference Sheets Grades 7-12

Adapted from:

Equitas -– International Centre for Human Rights Education, Speaking Rights

Human Rights Education Toolkit for Youth

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Reference Sheet 1: Educational Approach of this Resource

What is the educational approach?

This educational resource, which includes activities and reference sheets, was developed using a transformative learning model. The activities are designed to go beyond simply transmitting knowledge and skills and aim to engender in young people an awareness of human rights values by having them critically reflect on their own lived experiences.

The approach promotes the active participation of students in a capacity-building process that encourages them to incorporate human rights values into their lives by developing:

- **Knowledge** of rights and responsibilities, diversity within the community, local and global issues.
- **Skills** such as critical thinking, teamwork, peaceful conflict resolution, active participation, self-awareness, creative and technical skills.
- **Values, behaviours and attitudes** such as openness to diversity, self-esteem, responsibility, respect, acceptance, cooperation.

What is the goal of this approach?

The approach, based on students' experiences and critical thinking, fosters attitudinal and behavioural changes in youth by encouraging them to incorporate human rights values into their lives.

Activities are intended to promote change on several levels: increased participation in the school, community and family; better cooperation and team spirit; increased respect for diversity and differences; greater inclusion and acceptance of everyone; better ability to express feelings, prevent and resolve conflict peacefully and a heightened sense of responsibility. Students can then apply what they have learned in other contexts, such as at home, with friends and in the broader community.

How do the activities work?

Each activity has as its starting point the experience of the students and provides them with the opportunity to live a concrete experience together in their group from which they can learn.

A group discussion is the last step of each activity, which engages the students in a process of critical reflection. The students have the opportunity to talk about what they experienced, reflect on their behaviour in relation to human rights values, and propose ways of integrating human rights values into their lives.

Participating in an activity (*concrete experience*) followed by a group discussion (*critical reflection*) helps to build in the students an awareness of human rights values and reinforces positive behaviours based on these values (*action*). Because human rights education is an ongoing process, it is important to regularly conduct activities that promote these values in order to sustain and reinforce the students' learning.

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As children develop from children to teenagers to adults they go through a series of developmental stages that are important to all aspects of their personhood including physical, intellectual, emotional and social. Though the activities are aimed at grade specific groups, we encourage you to adapt them to suit the needs and abilities of your class. Be creative!

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Reference Sheet 2: Group Discussion

What is the group discussion?

The group discussion is a time for students to share their thoughts and feelings after an activity. There are 3 steps in a group discussion:

- **Feel** – students talk about how they liked the activity and the feelings they experienced.
- **Think** – students reflect on their behaviour (during the activity and in other situations) and make connections to human rights values.
- **Act** – students propose actions for incorporating these values into their daily lives.

What is the purpose of the group discussion?

The group discussion encourages students to think about what happened during the activity and to draw life lessons that they can then apply in other contexts. The group discussion gives students the opportunity to discover – for themselves – the importance of human rights values. It also encourages them to propose ways of actually living these values. The group discussion encourages students to fully participate by giving them the opportunity to exercise their right to express their views and to be heard.

What role does the teacher play during the group discussion?

The teacher's role is to facilitate the group discussion by:
- Asking questions
- Encouraging students to express their views
- Listening carefully to the students' ideas, without judging them
- Ensuring that each student has the opportunity to speak and be listened to
- Balancing the group's needs and individual needs
- Being responsive to the overall group dynamic
- Creating a safe learning and sharing environment

How often should the group discussion take place?

It is recommended that a group discussion take place after each activity. If you repeat an activity, it is important to have a group discussion every time. An activity will always take a slightly different course, and the group discussion makes it possible to express any new ideas that emerge. A new group discussion allows for deeper discussion and for reinforcing the learning from the activity.

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How long does the group discussion last?

On average, the group discussion lasts from 3 to 10 minutes. Teachers need to adapt the group discussion to the number of children, their ages and interests. If the children want to continue the group discussion, the teacher should encourage them to do so as time permits.

How can teachers overcome the challenges of facilitating the group discussion?

Facilitating a group discussion is exciting, but not always easy. At the beginning, students may participate less actively. This is normal. However, with experience, both you and the students will find group discussions to be easier, richer and more interesting. Here are some tips to help you overcome some of the challenges you might face.

What to do if….

The left hand column of the table below lists some challenges teachers may face while leading a group discussion. Suggested approaches to each challenge are provided in the right hand column of the table.

Challenges	Approaches
Nobody wants to speak	• Be the first to share your observations and opinions of the activity, and then ask the students if they agree with you and why.
Students are not listening to each other	• Use a "talking stick"—or a stone or some other object you designate. When a student holds the object in his/her hand, no one else may speak. Students pass the talking stick until it has gone around the whole group. Suggest that everyone get equal speaking time, for example 30 seconds.
It is always the same ones who speak	• Invite students to take turns speaking one after the other, around the circle. Suggest that each student speak at least once before a child who has already spoken is allowed to speak again. • Give each student 2 or 3 "chips." Each time a student speaks, he/she hands you 1 chip. When a student has no chips left, he or she can no longer speak.
A student does not want to speak	• Encourage the student to speak, but do not force him/her. If the student does not want to speak, invite him/her to listen. • Explain to the student that you would enjoy hearing what he/she thinks. • Ask the student to respond to someone else's idea. • Give the student a specific responsibility, such as being the "Key Listener" in charge of ensuring that silence and speaking time limits are respected.
Some students are not fluent in the language	• Translate for the students if possible. You may also ask a student, who is able, to act as an interpreter. • Ask very basic questions that can be answered with gestures. For example, you may ask students to put their thumbs up when they like an activity or when they agree, or down when they do not. • Invite students to draw or choose a picture that expresses how they feel.

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Challenges	Approaches
Many students did not like the activity	• Ask students why they did not like the activity? • Ask students to suggest ways to improve the activity or to create variations.
A student makes an inappropriate comment	• When you intervene link the comment and or behaviour to human rights values (e.g. respect, respect for diversity). • Intervene immediately or if the time is not right, mention to the student that you will speak with him or her later about this incident. Avoid ignoring the incident or acting as if it were harmless behaviour.
A student shares a difficult personal experience	• Show empathy for what the student is going through. Be supportive, reassure the student, and thank him/ her for sharing this experience with the group. • Relate the shared experience to human rights values. • Encourage the other students to be supportive, respectful and discreet about what they heard.

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Reference Sheet 3: Selecting and Facilitating Activities

How to select an activity

When selecting an activity, it is important to consider the context and the needs and interests of the students in your group, as well as your comfort level. Select the activities that best meet the needs of your class.

How to facilitate an activity

The following table explains how to facilitate an activity. The left hand column lists the steps the teacher should take to prepare and facilitate an activity. The right hand column explains each step.

Steps	What you need to do
Getting ready	- Read over the purpose, and instructions to make sure you understand the activity and are able to explain it clearly to students. - Ensure you have all the materials and the appropriate space for doing the activity. - Prepare to facilitate the group discussion (Reference Sheet 2).
Explaining the activity	- Use simple words and short sentences...as well as a dash of humour! - Demonstrate the activity or give examples when necessary. - Encourage students to ask questions. - If you are not sure that everyone has understood, ask students to summarize the instructions.
Facilitating the activity	- If you need to form teams, try to use a method that ensures nobody is picked last. For example, to form 2 teams, ask students who were born on even days to form 1 team and those who were born on odd days to form the other. - During the activity, review the steps and safety rules. Step in if things get confused or conflicts arise. - Get involved in the activity and show your enthusiasm. Depending on the activity or the group's needs, you may take on different roles, acting sometimes as a participant in the activity, or leader. - Pay attention to the students' attitudes and to any incident that may occur. Remember that you will discuss the way the activity went during the group discussion.
Ending the activity	- Thank students for participating in the activity. - Invite students to sit and start the group discussion.
Group discussion	Refer to group discussion tips (Reference Sheet 2)

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Reference Sheet 4: Accessibility and Participation

The United Nations (UN) *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC) and the *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (UNCRPD) outline the rights of children and young people with disabilities.

Tips for Facilitation are provided for each of the activities in this educational resource. These have been developed drawing on the social model of disability which focuses on building positive attitudes and minimizing or removing barriers that prevent students with disabilities from accessing the same opportunities as other students.

All children deserve to have a healthy, happy childhood and youth, as well as the chance to be the best they can. The participation of children and youth with disabilities should be an ongoing and flexible process. It is not a question of whether they can participate, but how we ensure that it happens!

How can you encourage the participation of all students?

What is participation?
Child participation is a fundamental right recognized in the Convention of the Rights of the Child and 1 of the 4 guiding principles of the Convention. According to this principle, children have the right to express themselves and to be heard. They must have the opportunity to express their opinions regarding decisions that affect them and their opinions must be taken into account. This being said, the child's age, level of maturity, and best interests should always be kept in mind when considering the ideas and opinions of children.

The concept of participation is implicit in Article 4 – Protection of the rights of the child; Article 12 – Respect for the views of the child; Article 13 – Freedom of expression; Article 14 –Freedom of thought, conscience and religion; Article 15 – Freedom of association; Article 16 – Right to privacy; and Article 17 – Access to information and mass media.

What factors influence students' participation?
Research shows that students with disabilities often have more barriers and less support than those without disabilities. The disabilities of students can affect traditional communication and lead to misunderstanding and teasing. The teacher's attitude towards his/her students plays a significant role. It will set the tone of the class and influence how students accept one another's differences. Research shows that students with disabilities, who feel supported by their classmates, are more likely to participate in the classroom and school community.

Tips for encouraging participation

- Don't make assumptions about a student's ability to participate

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- Identify potential barriers to participation in an activity and develop solutions cooperatively
- Empower students to make their own decisions
- Give enough time
- Listen carefully
- Make the activity meaningful for everyone
- Make it fun!

How can the activities encourage participation of all students?

Part not apart

Students with disabilities should enjoy the same rights and opportunities as other students and should be fully respected in and outside their classrooms.

Meaningful outcomes

One of the most effective approaches to developing respect for difference and for combating social exclusion is to involve students themselves in identifying and implementing solutions. The activities in this educational resource foster meaningful conversations that lead to identifying positive actions and or solutions to complex problems like discrimination and exclusion. They also build skills in critical thinking, conflict resolution, communication and cooperation.

Tips for Facilitation

Below are some general inclusive practices. Activity specific tips are also provided at the end of each activity.

Ensuring everyone can perceive

- If a student is unable to see, enlarge the print on role cards and handouts, or create some of the role cards and handouts in Braille.
- Use high contrast materials –white paper and black markers—when students are engaging in activities which require drawing or writing.
- Provide special lighting such as low vision lights which simulate daylight and increase the contrast, clarity and reduce glare.
- Provide an exemplar with high contrasting colours, dimensional paint or glue to help the student understand the activity.

Ensuring everyone can understand

- Face students when giving instructions and ensure assistive devices are working.
- Instruct students to face each other and speak clearly and confidently.
- Speak clearly, loudly or quietly depending on the effectiveness for the students.
- Repeat and reword instructions if needed.

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- Write the instructions or steps on the board.
- Model the activity to clarify the instructions.
- Provide an exemplar where appropriate.

Ensuring everyone can participate

- Ensure there are no obstacles in the way. If required, move the activity into a large open space such as a gymnasium.
- If a student has difficulty with mobility, work cooperatively as a class to come up with creative solutions for activities that require movement.
- Use ability grouping and partnering to support all students.
- When necessary, slow down the pace of the activity.
- Use reinforcement incentives to motivate students.

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Reference Sheet 5: Youth Rights and Values

Who are Considered Youth?

Article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) states that a child is a person below 18 years of age, unless the age of majority is younger under a given country's laws. In the human rights activities for Grades 7-12 in this educational resource, we will use "youth" or "young people" instead of "children" to refer to 13-17 year-olds.

What are Youth Rights?

The rights of children and youth aim to ensure that each young person has the opportunity to reach his/her full potential, without discrimination. This includes, for example, access to quality education and health care, the opportunity to grow up in an appropriate environment, to be informed about his/her rights, and to participate actively in society.

Respect for the rights of young people can only be fully achieved when everyone, including young people themselves, recognize that every person has the same rights, and then adopts attitudes and behaviours that are respectful, inclusive and accepting of others.

Moreover, the human rights proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights apply to all human beings regardless of their age, and as such youth benefit from the same rights as adults. However, because of their vulnerable position in society, youth also have specific rights that afford them special protection under the CRC.

What is the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)?

The Convention on the Rights of the Child is an international treaty that recognizes the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of individuals under the age of 18.

This treaty was adopted by the United Nations on November 20, 1989. In December 1991, Canada ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and thus committed itself under international law to respect, protect, promote and fulfill the rights of children in Canada.

The CRC requires governments from around the world to respect and uphold children's rights, particularly through the laws they develop at a national level.

However, in order for children and youth to fully enjoy their rights, the fundamental principles of the CRC must be respected and promoted by all members of society from parents, to educators, to the children and youth themselves.

What are the human rights values promoted in the activities?

The values promoted in the activities stem from human rights as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). By promoting these values and incorporating them into our everyday behaviour, we can demonstrate respect for human rights. When these values are not well-understood or respected,

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incidents of discrimination and racism become more commonplace. These values are fundamental to uphold the key principles of human dignity and equality, underpinning the UDHR.

The table below lists the human rights values promoted in the activities. The left hand column lists the values. The right hand column provides suggestions on how to promote each value.

Human rights values	How to promote the values
Cooperation is working together to achieve a common goal.	Exchanging ideas and pooling our talents to accomplish a group task that is meaningful to all the students in the class.
Respect is recognizing that every person is important and must be treated with dignity. In the context of human rights, respect does not need to be earned; it is the right of every person in all circumstances.	Treating each person with dignity by calling him/her by his/her correct name and avoiding mean-spirited nicknames.
Fairness is affording to every person the same importance, the same rights, and the same opportunities.	Choosing together a series of activities that will satisfy the interests of both girls and boys, or both younger and older students.
Inclusion is recognizing that every person is a full member of society and of the group.	Exploring together ways to modify an activity so that everyone can participate.
Respect for diversity is recognizing and appreciating individual differences.	Valuing the many differences in the group so that each student can feel proud of who he/she is, his/her physical appearance, individual tastes, lifestyle, beliefs, way of dressing, speaking or thinking.
Responsibility is thinking before we act and being ready to accept the consequences of our actions (or inaction).	Behaving in ways that contribute to the positive functioning of the group, for example, listening to and following instructions, picking up our things, and participating to the best of our abilities.
Acceptance is acting to ensure the full participation of everyone without exception.	Encouraging each student to express his/her ideas without fear of being judged or rejected because of his/her age, sex, culture, religion, sexual orientation, ability or any other characteristic.

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Reference Sheet 6: Right to Non-Discrimination

What is discrimination?

Discrimination is the act of excluding an individual or a group or denying them, for example, a job, housing or access to public space or a service or treating them differently because of particular "characteristics" such as age, sex, ethnic origin, etc.

What is the right to non-discrimination?

The right to non-discrimination means that all people have the right to be treated equally. Every human being is entitled to exercise all the fundamental rights, "without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status."

What are some of the basis of discrimination?

According to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and to provincial human rights charters, laws or codes, there are many bases of discrimination. In most Canadian provinces, it is illegal to discriminate against someone based on:

- Age
- Sex
- Social condition (income, occupation, education, etc.)
- Skin colour
- Political beliefs
- Civil status (undocumented, adopted, single-parent family, common-law, etc.)
- Pregnancy
- Disability
- Language
- Sexual orientation
- Ethnic or national origin
- Religion

Article 2 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child address discrimination. It states "all children have these rights, no matter who they are, where they live, what their parents do, what language they speak, what their religion is, whether they are a boy or girl, what their culture is, whether they have a disability, whether they are rich or poor. No child should be treated unfairly on any basis."

What is racism?

Racism is the conscious or unconscious belief that certain people or groups are inherently superior to other people or groups simply because they belong to a particular "race." Racism is based on prejudices and stereotypes, which maintain that biological differences among "races" justify domination, persecution or aggression. Racism generally manifests itself in the form of attitudes and behaviours that bring harm to people or groups for no other reason than the colour of their skin or their ethnic origin.

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The term race usually refers to characteristics, such as skin colour, hair or ethnic origin. However, there is no scientific proof to support the existence of different "races." Human beings are genetically too similar to talk about differing 'races'. Race is a social construct that mainly serves to justify the perpetuation of inequalities and injustices.

What is homophobia?

Homophobia is all negative attitudes that can lead to rejection and discrimination, whether direct or indirect, against gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, transgender or intersex people, or any person whose appearance or behaviour fails to conform to male and female stereotypes.

What is ableism?

Ableism is a set of practices and beliefs that assign inferior value (worth) to people who have developmental, emotional, physical or psychiatric disabilities. Ableism also describes prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory behaviours toward persons with a disability. Definitions of ableism hinge on one's understanding of normal ability and the rights and benefits afforded to persons deemed normal. Woolbring (2008) explains ableism as a system that favours certain abilities over others.

What is audism?

Audism is a form of ableism. It is based on the belief that people with hearing are superior to those who are deaf or hard of hearing. It is a form of direct, indirect and/or systemic discrimination or prejudice against people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

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