

Effective practices for infusing human rights essay sample

[Sociology](#), [Human Rights](#)



1. Complete the Needs Assessment: Take the Human Rights Temperature of Your School. A handy tool, developed and distributed by the Human Rights Resource Center at the University of Minnesota, allows students and teachers to discover human rights strengths and pinpoint areas that need a more comfortable temperature. Available in Topic Book

1: Economic & Social Justice on pp. 67-72 or on-line at <http://www.hrusa.org/hrmaterials/temperature/interactive.php>.

2. Familiarize Yourself with State-of-the-Art Pedagogy and Facilitation Skills. Create a Human Rights Learning Community with your peers to develop a common vision, shared language, and unified practices. To aid you in this process, The Human Rights Education Handbook sets out working definitions of human rights education, gives an overview of the field, differentiates between the goals of learning about human rights (e. g. cognitive learning), and learning for human rights (i. e., personal responsibility and skills for advocacy).

It also addresses personal challenges human rights educators may face. If you don't feel confident as a facilitator already, you sure will after learning the myriad of ways to keep students engaged and asking for more. The Developmental Conceptual Framework on page 14 will help prepare you for the different age groups in your setting - <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/edumat/hreduseries/hrhandbook/part1Cextra.html>.

3. Introduce the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) to Your Students. Use the Amnesty Animated UDHR Video and/or America Needs

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Human Rights Video. Give each student the UDHR Passport for classroom study and personal use. Human Beings/Human Rights pp. 38-40 from Human Rights Here and Now leads participants to define what it means to be human and to relate human rights to human needs - <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/edumat/hreduseries/hereandnow/Part-3/Activity1.htm>.

Students can learn that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the most translated document in the Guinness Book of World Records and explore all the different languages at <http://www.unhcr.ch/udhr/index.htm>. For additional introduction activities, see The Amnesty International Resource Notebooks — Introducing Human Rights in the Middle School or Introducing Human Rights in the High School. To order the videos or Resource Notebooks, go to <http://www.humanrightsandpeacestore.org>. Please note: All italicized resources below are also available at the on-line store.

4. Create a Human Rights Culture in Your School/Classroom. Expose students to self-governing tools in addition to Robert's Rules of Order. The goal is to create a safe container where everyone's voice is heard and needs are taken into consideration. A Way of Council and Calling the Circle are highly recommended. Spend the first six weeks of school developing students' ability to resolve conflict with Conflict Resolution Skills for Teens and Other People's Children: Cultural Conflict in the Classroom.

Compare your School Student Handbook to the UDHR. What rights are supported and protected with the school discipline policy? What areas need further development? Discipline with Dignity, Motivating Students Who Don't

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Care and Power Struggles will help teachers and administrators create a school climate where human rights can thrive and flourish. The Bully Prevention Handbook is an excellent resource for administrators, counselors, and teachers and provides a school-wide approach to bully-prevention in K-12 schools. This approach can be infused in your school discipline policy.

Design the environment with posters such as the UDHR Poster, How to Build Community, posters of accomplished peacemakers and human rights workers, Earth Flag, Peace Flag, and classroom Peace Poles. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights Poster Series and Teacher's Guide, published by Amnesty International USA, is also a terrific resource available free of charge upon request - www.amnestyusa.org/education.

For additional help in creating a human rights community, see Creating A Human Rights Community pp. 92-95 in Human Rights Here & Now - http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/edumat/hreduseries/hereandnow/Part-4/5_action-activity1.htm.

5. Get to Know Students' Human Rights Issues through the Use of Emergent Curriculum. Ask students to share what they think needs to be more fully addressed at the global, local and individual level. Give your input as well. Ask students to compare their answers to the UDHR articles. Teachers use the information to make curriculum pertinent to students' lives and students use self-identified articles for further research and weave into ongoing assignments. Use the information students provide to develop curriculum activities. For in-depth study of integrating curriculum around significant

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problems, without regard for subject-area boundaries, check out Curriculum Integration: Designing the Core of Democratic Education.

6. Explore Human Rights through the Art of Storytelling. Expose students to people who have stood up for human rights with *The Compassionate Rebel: Energized by Anger, Motivated by Love*. Complement with *Compassionate Rebel Interview and Writing Skills* at [www. hrusa. org/september/activities/storytelling. htm](http://www.hrusa.org/september/activities/storytelling.htm).

Students learn ways to discover those who have made their own community a better place to live, work, or play. *Reading, Writing, and Rising Up* is a curriculum, which shares strategies for helping youth to find their voice and find power in the telling of their stories. To find stories of students who took action, check out *Human Rights Here & Now - Action Activity 2* - [http://www1. umn. edu/humanrts/edumat/hreduseries/hereandnow/Part-4/6_action-activity2. htm](http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/edumat/hreduseries/hereandnow/Part-4/6_action-activity2.htm).

7. Investigate Economic Social Injustice in Your Own Backyard. Students nationwide have identified poverty and homelessness as the number one issue to be addressed. Over 25% of people in poverty or who are homeless are under the age of 18. Invite students to gather stories in their community that demonstrate economic injustice. Activities for economic human rights can be found in *Economic and Social Justice: A Human Rights Perspective*. Expose students to the work of Project South: Institute for the Elimination of Poverty & Genocide at [www. peacenet. org/projectsouth](http://www.peacenet.org/projectsouth).

8. Teach Writing Skills for Promoting a Culture of Peace and Human Rights.

Prepare your students to use the power of the pen with Grassroots

Journalism: A practical manual for doing the kind of newswriting that doesn't just get people angry - but active - that doesn't just inform - but inspires.

Enter the Swakhamer Peace Essay Contest. The contest is open to all high school students throughout the world. First prize is \$1500. Visit www.wagingpeace.org for this year's theme and rules.

9. Connect Students with Peers Worldwide Working for Peace and Human Rights. Introduce the Convention of the Rights of the Child (Children's Treaty). Give each student a Convention on the Rights of the Child Passport for classroom study and personal use.

What Does a Child Need? p. 97 of the Human Rights Education Handbook stimulates thinking about the needs of children, links human rights to human needs, and increases familiarity with the articles of the Children's Treaty - <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/edumat/hreduseries/hrhandbook/activities/23.htm>. This

activity will help students understand the framework of youth groups worldwide working for Children's' Rights and the UDHR.

Invite your students to visit www.youthnoise.com, which is a group of young people - from all 50 states, the District of Columbia and more than 118 countries - together with a group of adults working to provide information from more than 300 nonprofit partners that will spark youth action and voice. Students can visit www.millennialpolitics.com and find

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online resources with lists of hundreds of organizations, research on activist issues and discussion boards with other activists.

Contact [www. haguepeace. org](http://www.haguepeace.org) and participate with youth worldwide in the Global Peace Campaign. You can also check out our Human Rights Web Library, with the most complete primary documents library in the world for human rights, topic briefing guides, and more than four thousand links to human rights organizations around the world <http://www1. umn. edu/humanrts/>. The site is available in Arabic, English, French, Japanese, Russian, and Spanish. A useful database for human rights education resources also exists at the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Office – <http://www. unhchr. ch/hredu. nsf>.

10. Protect and Promote the Human Rights of Women and Girls. Looking at the human rights framework from women's perspectives has revealed how much current human rights practices have failed to account for many of the ways in which already recognized human rights abuses often affect females differently than males. The concept of human rights has opened the way for hard questions to be posed about the official inattention and general indifference to the widespread discrimination and violence that women and girls experience around the world.

Introduce the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) with Local Action Global Change: Learning About the Human Rights of Women and Girls. This resource gives examples of issues in women's human rights, while also providing exercises that allow for

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exploration of the particular ways in which these questions affect the lives of any group of women, or men, girls or boys.

Participate in the Global Campaign for Education. More than 70 million girls in the world have never attended school and almost 600 million in the world are illiterate. In developing countries, the education of girls has been proven to be the key factor in determining economic development, better health, and longer life expectancy. Education is a human right, yet for twice as many girls as boys, it is not a reality.

In many developing countries, girls are entangled in the downward cycle of child labor and poverty, in which they must work to help support their families and forgo education as a route to economic stability. Inferior education quality, mandatory school fees, and the threat of gender violence also keep girls from attending school.

Learn more about this campaign and how your students can be involved by visiting [www. campaignforeducation. org](http://www.campaignforeducation.org)

11. Celebrate Human Rights Day – December 10. Ask students how they would like to celebrate Human Rights Day. Some schools choose to become a Peace Site on this day with a Peace Pole Planting Ceremony and distinguished leaders of the community. Since the Peace Pole, which says, “ May Peace Prevail on Earth,” and is available in fourteen languages, students can choose the languages representing their community. Learn more at [www. peacesites. org](http://www.peacesites.org). To order your pole and receive ceremonial consultation, call Melvin Giles at 651-298-1040.

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Get on the United Nations CyberSchoolBus. Outstanding teacher and student resource for information on global issues, the United Nations, countries around the world, Model UN, and other special days through the year are listed. Fall brings a myriad of celebrations including the International Day of Peace in September, Universal Children's Day and UN Day in October, International Week of Science and Peace and International Day for Tolerance in November, and Human Rights Day in December. Visit [www. un.org/Pubs/CyberSchoolBus](http://www.un.org/Pubs/CyberSchoolBus).

12. Teach Media Literacy. Students who know how to analyze the media in terms of stereotypes, misinformation, misrepresentation, mega numbers, sources, etc. are more apt to form their own opinions rather than simply be swayed with what they read. They know how to dig for more information and where to go to get it. Coupled with human rights education students will be able to read sources with a human rights lens as well as advocate for change with Change the World through Media Education.

With Human Rights in the News pp. 52-53 from Human Rights Here and Now, students develop an awareness of rights issues in everyday life and how they are being protected and enjoyed or violated - [http://www1. umn.edu/humanrts/edumat/hreduseries/hereandnow/Part-3/Activity6. htm](http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/edumat/hreduseries/hereandnow/Part-3/Activity6.htm).

Students can post their finished work in the hallway to make their analysis be available to other students and adults.

" Media Literacy in Post-9/11," a part of a collaborative initiative - [www. beyondseptember11. org](http://www.beyondseptember11.org), is an excellent activity to teach skills about

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critiquing media sources through a human rights lens - <http://www.hrusa.org/september/activities/medialiteracya.htm>.

Literature and Human Rights: Questions to Apply to Literature, Other Texts, and Media, pp. 71-74 from Human Rights Here and Now allows students to put poetry, fiction, non-fiction, textbooks, magazines, films, television, advertising literature and promotional literature in a human rights perspective - http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/edumat/hreduseries/hereandnow/Part-3/Activity_13.htm.

Expose students to alternative news outlets such as the World Press Review which illuminates issues often not seen in the mainstream U. S. Press. The Review translates, reprints, analyzes and contextualizes the best of the international press. See www.worldpress.org. Other sources to check out are: Ad Busters -www.adbuster.org, Alliance for Democracy - www.thealliancefordemocracy.org, Alternative Press Center -www.altpress.org/index.html, Alternet - www.alternet.org, American Newspeak -www.scn.org/news/newspeak, Democracy Now - www.democracynow.org, Essential Action - www.essentialaction.org, Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting - www.fair.org, and Global Exchange - www.globalexchange.org.

Annotations: A Guide to the Independent Critical Press showcases periodicals that are the essential vehicles of the controversy that generates democratic social, political and economic change. The diversity and talent reflected in these titles can renew one's faith in the possibilities of democracy.

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Participate in the NewzCrew Project. Be part of a dialogue group assigned a current event news article provided by the NewsHour with Jim Lehrer and monitored by Global Kids Leaders (high school students in Global Kids' (www.globalkids.org) youth leadership program. The site also offers a Teacher's Lounge, for educators to download news-related lesson plans for incorporating the NewzCrew into your curriculum as well as monitoring tools to track the youth's activities.

13. Community Service is More than just Giving Back to the Community. This generation seeks to connect their volunteer work with social change. See cityyear.org, which seeks to demonstrate, improve and promote the concept of national service as a means for building a stronger democracy. Service Learning for Human Rights: Ideas for Taking Action, pp. 88-89 from Human Rights Here and Now provides tips and ideas for taking action as well as The Complete Guide to Service Learning, Educating for Change, Doing Democracy and Good Things Happen When Students Take Action.

Start an Early Act Club for middle school students. Members are provided opportunities for active citizenship, developing leadership qualities and improving the quality of life in their school, community and world at large. Rotary club members act as mentors and facilitators. Visit www.hwrotary.org.

Provide training opportunities for high school students to be Peacemaker Teen Mentors to early childhood and elementary students with Expanding the Circle training materials. Developed by Growing Communities for Peace

and the White Bear School District in Minnesota, students have reported it as one of the most meaningful service projects they have ever done. Teens not only enjoyed improving their conflict resolution skills, but felt that the younger children will have skills they wished they had had at that age

Take the Kindness and Justice Challenge. This two-week initiative by Do Something, a non-profit group, in honor of Martin Luther King Day provides information as to how you can take action and stand up for what's right. Visit www.dosomething.org. Students also enjoy using Kindness Currency to recognize others acts of kindness.

Explore 108 Ways to Create a More Peaceful and Just World. The Peace Book: 108 Simple Ways to Create a More Peaceful World by Louise Diamond is a project of The Peace Company at www.peacebook.com. This book is dedicated to those who lost their lives on September 11 and is an activity in honor of the UN Decade for a Culture of Peace. Includes ways we as individuals can create peace them ourselves, families, friends, co-workers, people in public affairs, and the environment. A teacher's guide is included.

Give students the opportunity to be needed. Many students drop out of school and community life because they don't think their schools, families, and communities need them. Check out how your community can make sure youth feel a sense of belonging and get the other assets they need in order to succeed. Visit www.search-institute.org.

14. Eliminate Racism in School. In more and more of our public schools Black, Asian, Latino/a, Native American, and new immigrant students

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represent the majority. The following resources are helpful for educating students in our ever-increasing culture of diversity from a human rights perspective: *A White Teacher Talks About Race*, *Uprooting Racism*, *The Energy of a Nation: Immigrants in America*, *The Uprooted: Refugees in America*, *A Different Mirror*, *The Whiteness of Power*. United to End Racism has produced another excellent pamphlet on *Working Together to End Racism: Healing from the Damage Caused by Racism*, which provides insight into the damage caused by racism and tools to end institutional racism.

A free resource, “ *And Don’t Call Me a Racist!*,” is available from the Human Rights Resource Center. Call toll free at 1-888-HREDUC8.

15. Look at *Science and Technology from a Human Rights Perspective*. It has been said that the quality of conversations we have depends on the questions we ask. The questions posed in Activity 15, *Science, Technology, The Environment and Human Rights from Human Rights Here and Now* will help us have quality conversations regarding the influence and role technology can play in the advancement or hindrance of human rights.

Trash Conflicts starts where students are and moves them through a careful analysis of a complex series of interrelated issues, which include technology, economics, power, race, and class. It explores waste production and the impact of disposal methods from the personal to the community to the corporate. This comprehensive curriculum is easy to use and includes lesson plans, activities, student handouts, and readings that help teachers integrate

environmental education across subject areas, from science to English and social studies.

The Better World Handbook is one of the most practical guides for what students can do to promote a healthier and more sustainable environment.

16. Development of Self as an Individual and World Citizen. Individual and communal rights are at the heart of self-identity. Freedom of Religion and Belief Human Rights Resources are currently in draft form at the Human Rights Resource Center at the University of Minnesota. Anyone interested in piloting Lifting the Spirit: Human Rights and Freedom of Religion and Belief, call 1-888-473-3828.

The arts are often used as means of expressing our identities in our struggles and celebrations of human rights. Students in Minnesota have done outdoor mural projects in order to reach wider audiences and give fuller expression to their messages. Art Matters affords teachers the opportunity to express various multicultural traditions and views.

Music also plays a vital role in moving people to continue the struggle and/or share in the celebration. Check out the following resources:

- a. People's Music Network for Songs of Freedom and Struggle at <http://world.std.com/~pmn/#monthly>.
- b. Freedom Song Network (FSN) at www.emf.net/~cheetham/gfrnk1.htm. Affirms through songs and music, the right of all peoples, at home and abroad, to establish more free, just and equal societies and to live in peace.
- c. The Children's Music Network at www.cowboy.

net/~mharper/CMN. html. Empowers adults and young people to communicate through music and to be a positive catalyst for education and community-building. Publishes a journal called Pass It On! d. Children's Music Web!

At [http://www. childrensmusic. org](http://www.childrensmusic.org). Songs for Social Change Home Page at [http://www. globalvision. org/cl/sfsc/](http://www.globalvision.org/cl/sfsc/) Do a keyword search for songs by Cat Stevens, Pete Seeger, Charlie King, Ross Altman, Jim Savarino, Kristina Olsen, Anna Fisher, Joel Pelletier, Positively Negative (Bill Rotberg and Ray Rish), Larry Long, Darryl Purpose, Dana Lyons, Dan Scanion, Bob Franke, Bob Dylan, Arlo Guthrie, and Jackson Browne. Many of these songwriters have web pages. e. Be the Change CD and Change is a Thousand Hearts CD are the two newest social change releases from Larry Long and Rachel Nelson respectively.

17. Get to Know Our Neighbors. America is more than a country, it's a continent. The Resource Center of the Americas at [www. americas. org](http://www.americas.org) offers more than 5, 000 books and curricula on human rights, multiculturalism, immigration and social justice on specific countries in the Americas.

Focus on Geography. According to a National Geographic Society survey, many of the world's 18-24-year-olds are on the brink of geographic illiteracy. Young Americans are struggling the hardest. Among 3, 000 youth surveyed from nine countries, U. S. youngsters scored next to last followed by Mexico's youth. Less than 15 percent of American youth could locate Iraq and Israel and they struggled with the location of other well-known countries.

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The National Geographic Society has put together a coalition of media, policy, and education organizations to map out a plan for improvement. To test your students' literacy see <http://geosurvey.nationalgeographic.com/geosurvey/>.

Interface with Government Leaders and Policy Makers. Students can research community issues and develop reports for local government, policy makers, and the press. Invite students to join community leaders at town meetings and report back what human rights are being addressed. Mapping Human Rights in Our Community from Human Rights Here & Now provides a creative and visual way to chart and recognize the roles different services, agencies, and institutions help promote and protect human rights in your community - <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/edumat/hreduseries/hereandnow/Part-3/Activity7.htm>.

Learn the Human Rights History of Your Community. Who are the people, where are the places and events that shaped the community's human rights history? Submit research findings to the local historical society and send articles to the local newspaper.

18. Teach Parenting Classes to High School Seniors from a Human Rights Perspective. Roots, Rights and Responsibilities, The Peaceful Parenting Handbook and The 7 Habits of Peaceful Parents provide a framework for children to be parented with human rights in mind.

19. Practice Reconciliation & Connect Movements for Change. Long Night's Journey into Day: South Africa's Search for Truth and Reconciliation Video

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and Study Guide. Though the film depicts events in South Africa, it has much to say about American society, namely our struggle to recognize and cope with race, history, justice and reconciliation. The Center for Human Rights Education has produced a wonderful poster, which can be downloaded, providing an overview a Human Rights Movements in the US - [www. nchre. org](http://www.nchre.org).

20. Create a Human Rights and Peace Education Professional Library. All the materials italicized above are available for purchase at [www. humanrightsandpeacestore](http://www.humanrightsandpeacestore.com) along with other state-of-the art resources for PreK-College Classrooms. Short of funds? Approach service clubs for funding. Many of them are working to accomplish the same goals and will be delighted to know about these resources as well.

Developed by Rebecca Janke, M. Ed, Director of Growing Communities for Peace & Kristi Rudelius-Palmer, M. Ed. Co-Director of Human Rights Resource Center, U of Minnesota

For other questions, fellowship grants, and training opportunities, call the Human Rights Resource Center ([www. hrusa. org](http://www.hrusa.org)) at 1-888-473-3828 or e-mail us at [Check out www. humanrightsandpeacestore. org](mailto:info@humanrightsandpeacestore.org) for additional middle school and high school human rights resources.