



ILLINOIS HOLOCAUST MUSEUM
& EDUCATION CENTER

Take a Stand Center

Activities for Students

The *Take a Stand Center* is a unique, site-specific exhibition that combines human and civil rights issues with civic engagement lessons and practice. The exhibition is designed to support students' intellectual growth and to position them to: understand lessons of the past; identify societal issues today; develop robust investigations into pressing social issues; consider possible solutions and consequences using new knowledge and tools; communicate and act upon what they learn; and empower them to put their passions and skills to work throughout their lives.

This *Take a Stand Center* Educators Guide converts the lessons from *Take a Stand Center* into an online tool kit to teach the aftermath of the Holocaust, The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the actions of historic and contemporary Upstanders, as well as how students can turn knowledge into action with *Take a Stand Lab* activities.

What Are Human Rights?

"Human rights are not a subject that can be studied at a distance. Students should not just learn about the Universal Declaration, about racial injustice, or about homelessness without also being challenged to think about what it all means for them personally. As human rights educators, we must ask our students and ourselves, 'How does this all relate to the way we live our lives?' The answers to this question will tell us much about how effectively we have taught our students," - David Shiman, "Introduction," Teaching Human Rights

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Human rights refer to the idea that people, regardless of race, creed, color, or gender, whoever and wherever they live, have some basic rights that no individual state can take away from them. We have these rights simply because we are human.

"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood."



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Developed by the Take A Stand Center at the Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center

- Article 1 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Twentieth century history served as a catalyst to the phenomenon of international human rights. In the aftermath of the Nazi Holocaust and end of the Second World War, the world was confronted with the systemization of mass murder and death on a truly industrial scale. The Holocaust helped define our notions of genocide. And, though it remains a controversial term, it was genocide that was on the mind of the newly formed UN when considering a Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and when it finally made the Declaration in the form of 30 articles on 10 December 1948.

The Universal Declaration was the first international agreement to use the term human rights and to apply human rights concepts to everyone worldwide. The universal declaration was non-binding but it was remarkable for its time and laid the groundwork, not just for hundreds of subsequent international treaties, but for more recent constitutions of countries such as India and South Africa.

“...Recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.”

- Preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948

The 30 articles of the Declaration together form a comprehensive statement grounded on the principles that human rights are held by all persons equally, universally, and forever. In addition, the UDHR was predicated on the assumption that basic human rights are indivisible (all rights are equally important) and that the different types of rights listed are inextricably linked. In claiming rights of the UDHR, everyone accepts the responsibility not to infringe on the rights of others and to support those whose rights are abused or denied. ([30 Articles of the UDHR](#))

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- ✚ What exactly are human rights?
 - What are the most important human rights in today’s world?
 - Should some rights take priority over other rights?
 - What problems do we currently face in our community?

- ✚ What actions should be taken to protect human rights?
 - Who is responsible for upholding human rights?
 - Can individuals stand up for human rights?

- ✚ What is empathy?



- How does one go from empathy to activism?

- ✚ What does it mean to be an Upstander?
 - Who are the Upstanders of the past and present? Why are they important?

- ✚ How does history frame and shape our present day realities?
 - What can we learn from the past to change the future?
 - What TV show, movie, or song that you are interested in examines a human rights issue and explain what the show, movie, or song is saying about human rights?

WHAT ARE OUR HUMAN RIGHTS?

Question: What are some of the rights people need or deserve in order to live in peace and freedom?

1. Each student should read the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) or watch the video by TedEd "[What are the Universal Human Rights](#)"
2. Students pick three human rights they think are the most essential.
3. Have each student write a research paper answering the following questions:
 - Why are these rights the most important for all to have?
 - Does everyone have access to these rights?
 - Who does not have access to these rights and why not?
 - Who is responsible for upholding these particular rights? The national government? The international community? The local community?
 - How can we take action to defend these human rights?
 - Who has advocated on behalf of these rights?



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