



# change

Students learn that everyone has a role to play in upholding human rights – in their school, community and world. They read poetry that acknowledges struggles and difficulties but also possibilities to change the world for the better. Students are asked to write their own dream for the future triggered by I Dream A World by Langston Hughes.

# change

## AIMS

- To understand that human rights are relevant to all of us and we can all contribute to change
- To explore poems that imagine change
- To write a poem about a change you want to see

## HUMAN RIGHTS FOCUS

Universality of human rights, human rights change

## YOU'LL NEED

PowerPoint, speakers and internet access  
Resource Sheet 1 Universal Declaration of Human Rights summary version  
Whiteboard or visualiser  
Notebook or folders (for students to keep their poetry in)

### Poems and films

### Extension

Leaving Home by Michael Rosen (film on PowerPoint)  
I Dream a World by Langston Hughes  
And Still I Rise by Maya Angelou (film on PowerPoint)

## **STARTER**

Play the film of Leaving Home by Michael Rosen (Slide 2) and/or hand out the poem.

Ask the class:

- Tell me about this poem
- What do you like/dislike?
- Did anything puzzle you or feel familiar?
- Did you notice any patterns? Pace? Rhythm?
- What experiences is the poet trying to convey?
- Does it trigger any feelings in you?
- Do you relate to anything in the poem? Any part, word, image or phrase?
- What questions does it raise?

## **ACTIVITY 1**

Show slide 3. Read out the following quote to the class.

'Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home – so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person; the neighbourhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm, or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.'

Explain that this was written by Eleanor Roosevelt, an American politician, diplomat and activist. She served as the first chair of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and oversaw the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), established in 1948. The UDHR contains 30 articles of the human rights that every human being is entitled to.

If appropriate, hand out Resource Sheet 1 Universal Declaration of Human Rights summary version so students can read and briefly discuss the rights.

Ask the class if they agree with Eleanor Roosevelt's assertions that human rights are:

- Universal (they belong to all of us)
- Relevant in our schools, neighbourhoods and workplaces and
- We all have a part to play in upholding human rights.

Show slide 4. On the board draw concentric circles labelled: school, local community, world.

Ask students to write on post-it notes the changes they would like to see on each of these levels. For example:

- School – no bullying
- Local community – more access for people with disabilities
- World – all children go to school

Stick the post-it notes in the right circle. Discuss any patterns and links to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

## ACTIVITY 2

Read I Dream a World by Langston Hughes to the class. This is how the poet imagined the world.

Now ask students to write a three-stanza poem imagining change in their school, community or world. Each stanza should start ‘I dream...’

While students are writing, create your own poem on the board or using the visualiser so that they can see you being a poet at the same time. Model making choices and editing as you change your mind.

Would anyone like to read out their poem?

Ask them to add their work to their notebook or folder.

## EXTENSION

Watch poet and civil rights activist Maya Angelou perform And Still I Rise, published in 1978 (slide 5). Although written with the black slavery and civil issues in mind, it focuses on a hopeful determination to rise above any oppression and abuse, difficulty and discouragement.

Discuss:

- tone, important or favourite lines, the message behind the poem, feelings by the end;
- what kind of attitude and behaviour is needed to demand change in the world.

Students may find it inspiring to research Maya’s life, and how it influenced her poetry.

## LEAVING HOME

By Michael Rosen

I ran away from home. I said, I'm going on the Aldermaston March to ban the bomb. They said that this was out of the question, the boy's mad. Crazy. My mother said, Where will you stay? You'd have nothing to eat, you don't know anyone, what would you eat? You're not going. Harold, say something, he's too young, look at him, he's packing. You can't go without a spare pair of trousers, how can he carry a bag like that for twenty miles a day? Stop him, Harold. What would you do in the evening? You need to eat, you get ill if you don't eat. Take a tin of beans. You can always eat beans. Harold, stop him. There's the chicken. Take the chicken. If you're taking a tin of beans, take two. He's thirteen, Harold. Go next year, wait till next year, they won't have banned the bomb by then, believe me. There'll be another march. Go on that one. You must keep eating fresh fruit. And you like dates. He's always liked dates, hasn't he, Harold? Just squeeze them in down the side of the bag. Couldn't he wait till the last day, when we'll be there? We can all go to Trafalgar Square together. Harold, have you got the chicken? Just because it's Easter, doesn't mean it's warm. It can snow at Easter. Wear the string vest. Who's organized the coaches? Do we know these people, Harold? One orange! Take five. And raisins. He's thirteen. It's ridiculous, He can't go. Keep the chicken wrapped. Phone us if you need more food. Goodbye.



POEMS

## I DREAM A WORLD

By Langston Hughes

I dream a world where man  
No other man will scorn,  
Where love will bless the earth  
And peace its paths adorn  
I dream a world where all  
Will know sweet freedom's way,  
Where greed no longer saps the soul  
Nor avarice blights our day.  
A world I dream where black or white,  
Whatever race you be,  
Will share the bounties of the earth  
And every man is free,  
Where wretchedness will hang its head  
And joy, like a pearl,  
Attends the needs of all mankind-  
Of such I dream, my world!



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POEMS

## UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS SUMMARY VERSION

- 1 We are born free and equal, and should treat others in the same way.
- 2 We have all these rights in the Declaration, no matter who we are, where we're from or what we believe in.
- 3 We have the right to life, and to be free and feel safe.
- 4 Nobody has any right to make us a slave. We cannot make anyone else our slave.
- 5 Nobody has any right to hurt, torture or humiliate us.
- 6 Everyone has the right to be protected by the law.
- 7 The law is the same for everyone. It must treat us all fairly.
- 8 We can all ask for the law to help us when we are not treated fairly.
- 9 Nobody has the right to put us in prison, or to send us away from our country, without good reasons.
- 10 If we are accused of breaking the law, we have the right to a fair and public trial.
- 11 Nobody should be blamed for doing something until it has been proved that they did it.
- 12 Nobody has the right to enter our home, open our letters or bother us or our families without a good reason.
- 13 We all have the right to go where we want to in our own country and to travel abroad as we wish.
- 14 If someone hurts us, we have the right to go to another country and ask for protection.
- 15 We all have the right to belong to a country.
- 16 When we are legally old enough, we have the right to marry and have a family.
- 17 Everyone has the right to own things or share them.
- 18 We all have the right to our own thoughts and to believe in any religion.
- 19 We can all think what we like, say what we think and share ideas and information with other people.
- 20 We all have the right to meet our friends and work together in peace to defend our rights. It is wrong to force someone to belong to a group.
- 21 We all have the right to take part in the government of our country. Every grown up should be allowed to vote to choose their own leaders.
- 22 The place where we live should help us to develop and to make the most of all the advantages (culture, work, social welfare) on offer. Music, art, craft and sport are for everyone to enjoy.
- 23 Every grown up has the right to a job, to a fair wage and to join a trade union.
- 24 We all have the right to rest and free time.
- 25 We all have the right to a decent living standard, including enough food, clothing, housing and medical help if we are ill. Mothers and children and people who are old, out of work or disabled have the right to be cared for.
- 26 We all have the right to education.
- 27 We have the right to share in our community's arts and sciences, and any good they do.
- 28 There must be peace and order to protect these rights and freedoms, and we can enjoy them in our country and all over the world.
- 29 We have a duty to other people, and we should protect their rights and freedoms.
- 30 Nobody can take away these rights and freedoms from us.

This version of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has been simplified by Amnesty International UK and is especially useful for younger people. Download a full version at [www.amnesty.org.uk/universal](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/universal)

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