

FREE?

Stories celebrating Human Rights

Upper primary/Lower secondary



Free? is published in association with Amnesty International to celebrate the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It contains short stories by outstanding writers especially for children aged 10 to 15. Each story is inspired by a different human right, such as education, freedom of speech, faith, asylum and law.

Former Children’s Laureate Jacqueline Wilson has written the foreword to the book and says: ‘So many brave writers have drawn attention to the horrors of repressive regions, even though they’ve suffered as a result. The authors contributing to this beautiful book have given us much food for thought. Life isn’t fair, but we can do our best to right the wrongs.’

Each story is short enough to read out in class, and the book includes a mix of writing styles and techniques useful to English teachers. Authors include Michael Morpurgo, Roddy Doyle, Patricia McCormick, Eoin Colfer, Jamila Gavin, Theresa Breslin, Meja Mwangi and David Almond.

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**Walker Books in association with
Amnesty International UK**

BACKGROUND

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was agreed by most countries in the world in 1948. There is a brief history and simplified list of all 30 Articles at the end of the book.

IDEAS FOR THE CLASSROOM

Teaching note: There are some suggestions for discussion on individual stories as well as general ideas for considering the anthology as a whole.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

***Klaus Vogel and the Bad Lads* by David Almond**

1. Why do you think it is so important to Klaus to resist Joe's orders?
2. How does Article 1 of the UDHR relate to different characters in the story? (eg, Mr Eustace, the narrator, Klaus Vogel's parents)

***If Only Papa Hadn't Danced* by Patricia McCormick**

1. Why did the family have to leave?
2. Why did the neighbouring community reject them?

Creative response:

Write the next episode in the story or write your own story on the same theme.

***Wherever I Lay Down My Head* by Jamila Gavin**

This story looks at Article 22 We all have the right to a home. Looking at the summary of the UDHR at the back of the book, what other human rights are Padma and her child being denied?

***No Trumpets Needed* by Michael Morpurgo**

The title of the story refers to the Bible story in which the walls of Jericho fall to the trumpets blown by the Israelite army led by Joshua.

1. How have Said's family suffered?
2. What do the kites symbolise for the children?

Teaching note: You can read a longer version of this story in Michael Morpurgo's novel *The Kites are Flying*.

GENERAL IDEAS

Genre

The stories are presented in a range of genres including poetry and play script. Discuss the differences this creates to the impact of the story. Is there one of the prose stories that would be more effective if written as a play or poem? Encourage students to write an alternative version. Is there a story that could be presented in cartoon form?

Human rights content

Of the stories you've read, which one best illustrates the human right it is concerned with?

FIND OUT MORE

Further resources for teaching around human rights can be found at:

www.amnesty.org.uk/education