



FIRST STEPS

How to start an Amnesty International youth group

'It is better to light a candle than curse the darkness'

Amnesty International is a movement of ordinary people from across the world standing up for humanity and human rights. Our purpose is to protect individuals wherever justice, fairness, freedom and truth are denied.

YOUTH GROUPS IN ACTION

Youth groups play an important role in campaigning for Amnesty International. There are about 600 groups in the UK. Most of them are based in schools or colleges and usually meet weekly over lunch breaks or after school. Many are run by a teacher, many are student-led but most are a bit of both. They run campaigns with a strong focus on taking action and raising awareness of human rights in school and the wider community. And they usually have a lot of fun in the process. Here is a taster of what youth groups get up to.

FUNDRAISING

Youth groups raise thousands of pounds each year through concerts, 'AmnesTea' parties, sponsored events and competitions. This is a vital way to help finance Amnesty's work.

ASSEMBLIES

Assemblies are a simple and effective way of getting people interested in youth groups, human rights and Amnesty's work.

DEMONSTRATIONS & STUNTS

Youth groups take to the streets or playgrounds in creative ways to get themselves noticed.

GETTING IN THE NEWS

Youth groups often hit the headlines for their campaigning, a great way to spread the word.

INFLUENCE PEOPLE IN POWER

Youth groups write to or meet people in power such as their local parliamentarians. They can raise human rights issues in Parliament or with other influential people.

EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS

Youth groups have their say in how Amnesty works by voting at our Annual General Meeting, and have the opportunity to be part of our Youth Advisory group.

LETTER-WRITING

Writing letters to people in positions of power is central to Amnesty's work and can have real impact.

GIVING HOPE

Writing directly to people affected by human rights abuses is a powerful way of giving hope and support.

'I want to thank all the people who sent cards. I feel like they stand beside me as they know the story of my husband.'

Rabiha al Qassah, whose husband Ramze Shihab Ahmed was jailed in Iraq after an unfair trial.

JOIN YOUR GROUP TO AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Don't forget to register your group with us. You will receive:

- a start-up pack full of useful resources for your first meeting
- monthly campaign mailings
- ideas for fund-raising
- invitations to events

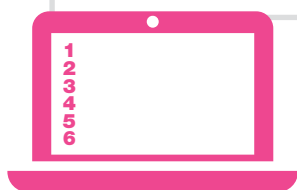
To register your group costs £21 for the whole year. You will find a form with this pack, or you can do it online

HOW TO...SET UP A YOUTH GROUP



1 GET SUPPORT

- **Get in touch** with Amnesty for your start-up pack of materials and the latest campaign mailing.
- **Get other people** such as friends or teachers to help you out in the 'starting up' phase.
- **If you are a teacher** make sure you have the head teacher's support. If you are a student ask a teacher for support.



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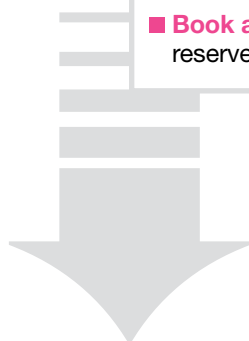
NEXT STEPS

- **Get campaigning.** Make sure you read your monthly mailings for the latest campaign actions and ideas for meetings.
- **Go to our website** for more advice on keeping up interest, creative campaigning, lobbying your MP, writing letters, getting into the media and much more.
- **Contact the Community Organising team** for support and advice.
- **Stay in touch.** Tell us what you're doing and send us photos. Your group could appear on our website or in one of our magazines.

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GET ORGANISED

- **Set a date for your first meeting.** Try to make sure it doesn't clash with other activities or clubs.
- **Book a suitable room** and, if possible, reserve it for the whole term.



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RUN MEETING

- **Be prepared:** give yourselves plenty of time to set up the room.
- **Be visual:** use visual aids eg Powerpoint or films.
- **Be interactive:** ask people to give their opinions.
- **Be positive:** make it clear that although Amnesty deals with serious issues it can be fun being part of an Amnesty Youth Group.

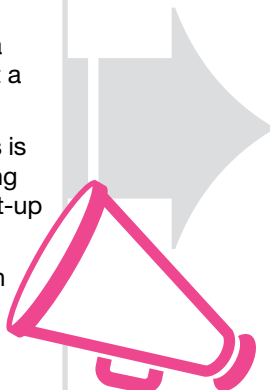


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GET MEMBERS

Here are three tried and tested ways of getting people to your first meeting:

- **Assemblies and form times:** give a short introduction to Amnesty or get a school speaker in.
- **Show the film *I Talk Out Loud*:** this is an inspiring nine-minute film featuring Eastlea youth group (it's in your start-up pack).
- **Lunchtime stalls:** choose a location where there will be lots of people passing by. Give away freebies and hand out flyers.



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GET PLANNING

- **Start preparing** for your first meeting. Set a clear agenda, work out how long to spend on each item and think about what materials you will need. Here's a sample agenda:
 - introduce yourselves and the plan for the meeting
 - a fun icebreaker
 - a short introduction to Amnesty and the latest campaigns
 - do a simple letter-writing action
- **Planning an event or activity** helps to get people involved. Your first group meeting is good time to brainstorm:
 - choose a current campaign as a theme for your event
 - run a brainstorm session in small groups to come up with ideas
 - as a whole group, decide which idea is best
 - make a list of what needs to be done and ask for volunteers for each task

