

TEACHER NOTES



This pack introduces students aged 11-14 to the power of writing letters for human rights. Key literacy skills are developed in combination with global learning and taking action to defend human rights.

This resource comprises two one-hour lessons which can either be taught as:

- one reading lesson with a writing homework;
- two lessons, taking students through key reading skills (lesson one) and key writing skills (lesson two).

The notes below do not describe the whole lesson but are intended for use in conjunction with the lesson plan giving additional detail where it may be useful.

Activity Sheets 4-6 are modifiable so that teachers can differentiate them according to the literacy level of their class. Teachers can also refer to the primary version of our literacy pack for more accessible resources for students.

LESSON 1 READING ABOUT RIGHTS

Starter activity

Pictures in PowerPoint slides 3, 4 and 3

Slide 3: This is a photograph of a boy being bullied.

Slide 4: This photo of a girl child soldier was taken in El Salvador during the civil war.

Slide 5: This image shows a forced eviction in Kenya. When this photo was taken, 400 Kenyan families were forcibly evicted from an informal settlement in the capital, Nairobi. They were left homeless and in need of food, water and adequate accommodation. Police, who were present during the eviction, used live ammunition and tear gas.

Discussing the vocabulary list

Some students may find it useful to refer to a class dictionary to define words such as 'dignity', or 'equality'. Others may find it more useful to have new vocabulary modelled to them in sentences. For example, 'Verbal bullying does not give young people the dignity they deserve'; 'We are all born equal, and we should all be treated with equality.'

The lesson plan and resources suggest that students create a vocabulary list that they add to over the lesson(s), which they can then use in their writing task.

Main activity

Introducing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948

After the Holocaust and the horrors of the Second World War, the newly formed United Nations came together to try to work out how to build peace. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was written. It was the first international document to state that all human beings have fundamental rights and freedoms, and it is still the most famous and important of all human rights documents in the world.

Activity Sheet 2 Bingo Card

Students can find a number of articles from the UDHR relevant to the illustrations, including the following:

- A Right to education 26
- B Right to rest and relaxation 24
Right to peaceful assembly 20
- C Right to life 3
Right to a family life 16
- D Right to freedom of belief 18
- E Right to housing 25
- F Right to travel 13
- G This is a drawing by a child soldier
Right to life 3
Right to a family life 16
Right to an education 26
Right to life and to live in freedom and safety 3
- H Right to freedom of expression 19
- I Right to protection by the law 6
Right to fair treatment by the law 7

Activity Sheet 3 Guided Annotation

This is designed to guide students' reading and annotation of the case study. It is not intended to elicit long answers but act as an aid to reading and understanding.

Discussing the case study

The case study – a named individual or group – will be a current and relevant case. Due to the 'live' and changing nature of it, the lesson plan is unable to provide detailed information needed to discuss the issues raised by each particular case in full. These cases are monitored and their details updated regularly on the website

www.amnesty.org.uk

Teachers may find that the information included in the case is emotive and that classes will need to discuss the issues. It's also important to ensure that all students understand the basic points about the situation, particularly if unfamiliar

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vocabulary is used. Useful prompts include:

- Can anyone describe what is happening?
- Which human rights are being denied or under threat?
- Who is responsible for this?
- How would it feel to have your rights denied in this way?
- Has anyone ever heard about this person or situation before?
- How does it feel to hear about this happening today?

Discussing film *Bullet*

Bullet is a short film illustrating the potential power of letters to save a life. Teachers may wish to have a class discussion about it. This can be done by providing blank spider diagrams with headings for students to use while watching the film. Useful prompts include:

- What do the colours and sounds used in the film suggest?
- What is the purpose of the film?
- Who is the intended audience?
- How does the film make you feel?

LESSON 2 WRITING ABOUT RIGHTS

Starter

PowerPoint Slide 10 Right Up Your Street illustration

The picture is a scene of everyday life that shows at least 30 different human rights scenarios. Teachers can use the image as it appears on the PowerPoint or can order A2 posters free by emailing est@amnesty.org.uk quoting Ref ED142 and your delivery address.

If using the PowerPoint slide: Students can identify rights by using their UDHR activity sheet. Or you can use teacher prompts, eg:

- What human rights are the children in the playground enjoying? (Article 24, the right to rest and leisure)
- What is happening outside the sweetshop? (Article 11, the right to be considered innocent until proven guilty)
- Look at the crowd of people in the middle with their signs (Article 23, the right to work and fair wages)

If using the poster: Distribute one per group and ask them to place stickers onto the rights they find on the illustration, writing the corresponding Article number on the sticker. Students could use different coloured stickers to indicate whether rights are being enjoyed or denied.

Main activity

PowerPoint slide 11

Khun Kawrio from Burma was supported by Amnesty International's letter writing campaign in 2010. He was part of a political group Kayan New Generation Youth (KNGY) which carries out human rights work. In 2008, the military government of Burma held a referendum for the adoption of a new constitution that the KNGY believed did not protect human rights. Khun Kawrio helped to organise a peaceful campaign encouraging people to vote against it. Activities included spray painting 'NO' on buildings and releasing balloons and paper boats. For this, he was arrested on 10 May 2008, tortured and sentenced by the military without trial, judge or defence to 37 years in prison.

Following extensive campaigning, including letter writing to the Burmese authorities by Amnesty International and other human rights NGOs, Khun Kawrio was released in July 2012 as part of a wider amnesty in which many Burmese prisoners of conscience were freed.

The task asking students to discuss ways letters may have helped him is designed to encourage students to imagine the different ways that writing letters on his behalf could have helped him. As an imaginative task there are no right or wrong answers. Through experience we know that letter writing can have many benefits including giving strength and support to a person in difficult, frightening and abusive circumstances, and offering hope and comfort to their family and friends. Receiving letters can also result in people being treated better as the authorities realise there is interest in the case, changes to the law and cessation of the human rights abuse.

Activity Sheets 4 and 5

Letter writing task

There are two types of letter task:

- writing a solidarity letter to the person or group suffering abuse;
- writing an appeal letter to the authorities on behalf of the person or group.

For simplicity, we suggest teachers do one type of letter with the whole class. Letters may be handwritten or typed (should teachers wish to add on an ICT lesson).

Differentiation note

To modify the task, students can write a solidarity or appeal postcard or design a creative solidarity card instead of writing a three paragraph letter.

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Vocabulary list

The lesson plan indicates where teachers should ask students to add new vocabulary to a list in their exercise books, which they can refer to and use during this writing task.

Literacy checklist

This is modifiable so teachers can differentiate according to need. The list encourages students to review and correct writing as they work and at the end of writing tasks – focusing on the word, sentence and whole text level. Teachers may wish to set up a competition where students use a literacy checklist to score their letters as pairs or in a group.

Discussion and reflection

As the case study may contain emotive and shocking content, we recommend that teachers take time to respond to the needs of their class and reflect upon what they have learned.

- Students can follow up the case they have supported at www.amnesty.org.uk/powerofpen
- Reassure students that if they hear nothing back (which is probable), each individual letter, added to hundreds of others, will make a difference.
- Amnesty Youth Groups often take this type of action. Students could consider joining a youth group or setting one up in their school. For more on how to start an Amnesty Youth Group, direct them to www.amnesty.org.uk/youth

ICT extension

Teachers may wish to add an ICT extension for students to word process letters. This can encourage the review of whole texts. Teachers may use the modifiable literacy checklist to direct students towards using Assessment for Learning during the writing-up stage. Word processed letters can be sent in the post or emailed to: est@amnesty.org.uk