



SESSION PLAN

ACTIVITY 1: ESSENTIAL RIGHTS

An activity designed for students aged 11-14.

INTRODUCTION

This activity supports students exploring human rights, placing emphasis on their opinion of the importance of different human rights, encouraging the students to further discuss and balance the relative importance of different human rights and introducing the concept of absolute rights and the Human Rights Act.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Recognise the importance of human rights in everyday life
- Evaluate the importance of different human rights.
- Explore the difficulty involving in balancing human rights against each other.



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RESOURCES

- Pieces of card (10-20 per small group)
- Human Rights Act (PPT or handouts)
- Sticky-tac (for presenting back)

STARTER

Divide the students into small groups, and hand out 10-20 pieces of card. Ask the students to write (or draw) on these cards the things that they think children need in order to be healthy and happy in today's world, and which should therefore be protected by law.

MAIN

Each group trades their cards with another group, and has to sort another group's cards into the following two categories:

Essentials - those things which are essential for survival or for guaranteeing a healthy and happy society; and

Wants - those things which are desirable, but not necessarily essential.

Ask the students to share their sorted cards and to explain their choices with the class.

DISCUSSION

Look at the Human Rights Act, and consider how the protections provided compare with the 'essentials' proposed by the students.

If they have missed anything out, why did they not include it? Is there anything they would add from their own lists to the Human Rights Act?

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DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY 1

Ask the groups if they had to move two cards from their 'essentials' column to their 'wants' column, which two would they pick and why?

DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY 2

Pick several of the rights from the 'essential' list and describe a practical scenario where they might conflict.

Ask the students in their groups to discuss what they would do and how they would balance these conflicting rights. Ask a representative from each group to explain the approach their group has taken to balance the rights. Some examples of conflicting rights are shown below.

Freedom of expression / Freedom of association v Freedom of thought, conscience and religion

A group of neo-Nazis are planning to stage a peaceful demonstration on the steps of a synagogue on the Jewish Sabbath. The Rabbi asks the police to stop this happening.

Right to private and family life v Freedom of expression

The Prime Minister's bag is stolen from his car. In the bag is documentary evidence that three senior MPs have used public money to pay for their children's private school fees. A newspaper editor wants to publish the documents as a front page story.

Or alternatively: A paparazzo uses a long-lens to take pictures of a celebrity couple and their new born baby through the window of their house. A tabloid newspaper wishes to publish the pictures.

Right to marry / Right to private and family life v Freedom of thought, conscience and religion

A divorcee and her fiancé want to get married in a Catholic church. The priest refuses to marry them because the bride has previously been married.