

- The Chinese crackdown on Tiananmen Square in 1989 is said to have been a turning point in international relations between China and the United States, an issue that continues to divide the countries to this day. Chinese leaders have never apologized for the massacre, calling it "correct" and "necessary" to maintain stability. Ask students to research more about this infamous event and to develop a time line outlining the chronology of events. Students may learn more about the declassified history of the Tiananmen Square Massacre at this web site: www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB16/
- The Beijing Women's Conference in 1995 established a comprehensive platform for action to promote gender equality. Beijing +5, a follow-up conference in 2000, surveyed the progress that had been made in implementing the 1995 platform and attempted to build on earlier efforts. Ask students to read the mission statement of the 1995 conference and to view the webcast of the Beijing +5 meeting. As a follow-up, groups of students representing various countries may convene a mock U.N. to discuss positive changes. Students may also develop group proposals suggesting further actions and plans that could be developed to promote women's rights around the world. The archived webcast of the Beijing +5 meeting may be found at this web site: www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/followup/session/webcast.htm
- Truth Commissions are meant to allow victims of human rights abuses to have the opportunity to speak about the indignities they've suffered. In South Africa, perpetrators were encouraged to give a full account of what they did in order to receive amnesty. Many people, mostly police and military personnel who carried out significant human rights violations, have confessed and received amnesty; however, many people are angry that South Africa's leaders have not made public their role in the systematic deprivation of rights of millions of people. Ask students to research the history of the leaders of the apartheid government, such as former president P.W. Botha and Home Affairs minister Mangosuthu Buthelezi, and to develop hypothetical speeches in which they acknowledge past wrongs. The class may determine if these leaders should be granted amnesty or not.
- Amartya Sen, 1998 Nobel Laureate in economics, has stated that social rights such as the rights to education and health care are central to ending poverty and ensuring a country's overall economic development. Ask students to research and debate Sen's theories. Should all countries, including the United States, ensure that all of its citizens have access to at least basic education and medical care? A World Health Organization interview with Sen may be found at this web site: www.who.int/infwha52/to_our_health/amartya.html

Suggested Internet Resources

Periodically, Internet Resources are updated on our web site at www.LibraryVideo.com

- www.un.org/Overview/rights.html
The United Nations offers the full text of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- www.icj-cij.org/
This page of the International Court of Justice provides links to both the regular I.C.J. site, and video streaming of public sittings of the court.
- www.hrw.org/
Human Rights Watch is a non-governmental organization dedicated to protecting the human rights of people around the world.

Suggested Print Resources

- Gaughen, Shasta, ed. *Women's Rights*. Greenhaven Press, San Diego, CA; 2003.
- Jacobs, Linda Altman. *Human Rights: Issues for a New Millennium*. Enslow Publishers, Berkeley Heights, NJ; 2002.
- Nazer, Mende. *Slave: My True Story*. Public Affairs, New York, NY; 2004.

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Jeffrey W. Litzke, M.Ed.
Curriculum Specialist, Schlessinger Media

TITLES IN THIS SERIES

- AFRICA: CHALLENGES IN THE 21ST CENTURY
- GENOCIDE
- GLOBAL ECONOMIC ISSUES
- GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES
- GLOBAL SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY ISSUES
- HUMAN RIGHTS
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Executive Producer: Andrew Schlessinger

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HUMAN RIGHTS

Grades 9 & up

This guide is a supplement designed for teachers to use when presenting programs in the series, *Global Issues for Students*.

While science and technology have improved the standard of living for many people in the past fifty years, the global community has not been able to find solutions to major issues such as genocide, persistent poverty and environmental degradation. While the current wave of globalization has brought people in closer contact than ever before, it has also heightened our awareness of the tremendous gap in standards of living between the developed and developing worlds. *Global Issues for Students* will help viewers understand the historical causes, enduring effects and possible solutions to complex world problems. Students will increase their awareness of global issues that directly impact their lives, and in learning about these issues from a more global perspective, will become more knowledgeable citizens in our increasingly interconnected world.



Program Summary

Human rights are considered the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world and involve a belief in the dignity and worth of all people. Nearly everyone agrees that all people have civil and political rights, but there is less agreement with regard to social and economic rights, and still less on how to enforce them.

On December 10, 1948, the U.N. adopted a Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which for the first time set out a comprehensive list of rights for everyone in the world. However, the U.N. Declaration is not a binding treaty, so many of the rights contained in it are not universally respected. As a result, governments around the world routinely discriminate against and often torture and imprison their citizens without trial, and billions of people do not have adequate living standards or enjoy favorable work conditions.

Each individual nation is ultimately responsible for protecting the human rights of its citizens. The International Court of Justice can make judgments in cases involving violations of human rights and nongovernmental organizations have been highly effective in promoting human rights, but both have limited enforcement powers. While some argue that military force should be used to prevent major violations, the issue is hotly debated between nations, many of whom stress that legal and diplomatic means are the only way to protect basic human rights.

Vocabulary

globalization — The increasing interconnectedness of the world economy and global culture, intensified recently by information technologies.

Declaration of Independence — A document issued on July 4, 1776, that declared that the American colonies were free and independent states.

World War II — The second major war of the 20th century that involved the Allied Powers, led by the United States, Russia, Great Britain and France, who fought the Axis Powers, which included Nazi Germany, Japan and Italy.

United Nations — An organization founded in 1945 that works to ensure world peace.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights — A 1948 document that lists the rights that all people in the world should have.

Beijing Women's Conference (1995) — The fourth in a series of global conferences on women's issues, which sparked a worldwide commitment by its attendees to empower women.

Sharia — A way of life, based on a strict interpretation of the Koran, which has been criticized as violating international human rights agreements.

caste system — A division of social class in India based on ancient Hindu teachings.

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Dalits — The over 160 million people in India who fall outside the country's traditional caste system and face severe discrimination, live in segregated areas and work in demeaning occupations.

Tiananmen Square — A location in Beijing, China where a major pro-democracy demonstration was held in 1989. Hundreds of demonstrators were killed and thousands were arrested by Chinese troops ordered to clear the square.

sweatshop — The term generally applied to a factory where people work long hours for little pay in unsafe conditions, and used most often in reference to the apparel or garment industry.

human trafficking — A modern form of slavery, in which people are sometimes sold, coerced or forced under threat of violence to work against their will, for little or no pay.

nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) — Groups that monitor and seek better enforcement of laws that governments and international organizations have agreed to in areas such as the environment, health and human rights.

Human Rights Watch — A nongovernmental organization, or NGO, dedicated to protecting the human rights of people around the world.

Amnesty International — A nongovernmental organization that works to try to ensure that all people enjoy the rights included in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Apartheid — The policy of forced racial segregation practiced by the government of South Africa until 1994.

Truth Commissions — National groups formed to address and resolve issues related to past human rights violations.

International Court of Justice — The United Nations' judicial arm that settles legal disputes between nations and gives advisory opinions related to matters such as human rights.

Pre-viewing Discussion

- What basic rights did Thomas Jefferson write about in the Declaration of Independence? To whom did these rights apply?
- The Universal Declaration was adopted in 1948. Ask students to create a list of human rights they believe should be universally respected in today's world.
- Which human rights are more important: political and civil rights such as the rights to free speech and assembly, or social and economic rights, such as the rights to education, health care and a decent standard of living? Can or should a distinction be made?

Focus Questions

1. What was the purpose of human rights movements in the 19th and 20th centuries?
2. In what ways are human rights violated today?
3. Who was instrumental in getting the Universal Declaration adopted?
4. What limitations does the Universal Declaration have?
5. In what ways do women suffer discrimination in various countries around the world?
6. What is Sharia? Why do some consider it to violate human rights agreements?
7. Why did America's response to 9/11 spark international concerns about possible human rights violations?
8. What happened in Tiananmen Square in June of 1989?
9. How are workers in sweatshops treated?
10. What is human trafficking?
11. How do non-governmental organizations or NGOs defend human rights?
12. What conditions limit political and legal efforts to protect human rights?

Follow-up Discussion

- Torture of criminal suspects with the aim of extracting confessions is a routine practice in many countries. Do students think there is ever a time when this kind of behavior is justified?
- Low-paid workers, often children, toil in sweatshops around the world. Ask students to discuss their opinions on how to best address the problem of worker exploitation. What is the best way to ensure that companies adhere to a code of labor standards?
- Who is ultimately responsible for ensuring that human rights are protected around the world? Does the United States have a responsibility or even a right to intervene in countries where violations are occurring?

Follow-up Activities

- The purpose of NGOs like Human Rights Watch is to monitor human rights conditions all over the world and conduct investigations to embarrass abusive governments and apply pressure for change. Ask groups of students to review the human rights reports that Human Rights Watch has developed on various countries, including the United States. As a follow-up, students may create a list of the worst human rights offenders and write letters to government leaders expressing their views.

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