

Human Rights

Instructor: Christine Aurelio

Students: Middle School

Objectives:

1. Students will create a working definition of human rights
2. Students will develop a list of rights they believe all humans have.
3. Students will be exposed to the variety of rights that the EU has determined are necessary.

Materials

1. Computers with reliable Internet access
2. Materials such as pens, pencils, etc. to take notes
3. A copy of the US Constitution

Procedures:

1. Discuss the concept of rights with students. Have them give examples of rights they think they have or should have. Develop a definition of rights together as a class.
2. Pair up students or put them in groups and have them create a list of the rights they feel all people should have.
3. Hand out copies of the Constitution—most eighth grade history textbooks have a copy in the back of the book. Have each group determine if all the rights they came up with are included in our Constitution. Each group should create a Venn diagram showing the rights listed in the Constitution versus those they determined.
4. Using the EU website [<http://europa.eu.int/citizens>], students can research the requirements in the area of human rights in order to become a member of the EU.
5. In their groups the students should list the various categories of rights that are determined by the EU. Students should then decide on a way to organize and compare these categories to the rights they found in the Constitution and those they came up with on their own.
6. The teacher will then lead a discussion on the differences they found on the concept of rights. Ask students to discuss whether their perception of rights was changed by either the Constitution or the EU website.

Evaluation:

Two research topics would work well to conclude this lesson. Students could research other documents from other countries and the rights that they afford to their people

(or do not). Another topic for research would be the rights or lack of rights that different groups within the US have had over time.