

Classroom Activities – US High School (w/ CT Core Standards)

Activity: What Are Human Rights?

Grade Level: High School (9–12)

Duration: 3 class periods (50 minutes each)

Standards

- **CIV.9–12.4:** Analyze how constitutional principles influence the rights and responsibilities of citizens.
- **CIV.9–12.14:** Evaluate multiple perspectives on the role of government in human rights protection.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2:** Determine central ideas of primary or secondary sources.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1:** Initiate and participate in a range of collaborative discussions.

Day 1 – Introduction to Human Rights

Warm-Up (5–10 min)

- Ask students to respond in writing to the prompt:
“What does it mean to have a right? What rights should every person have?”
- Brief teacher-led discussion to share initial thoughts.

Direct Instruction (15 min)

- Introduce the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).
- Explain its purpose, history (post-WWII), and the role of the United Nations.

Guided Reading (15–20 min)

- In pairs or small groups, students read selected UDHR articles (e.g., 1–2, 3, 5, 18, 19, 21, 25).
- Each group paraphrases their assigned articles and discusses what they mean in everyday life.

Closing Discussion (5 min)

- What surprised you?
- What rights do you think are most or least respected in the world today?

Day 2 – Human Rights in Real Life

Warm-Up (5 min)

- Ask students to write down a recent news story or personal experience that relates to a human right.

Small Group Work (20–25 min)

Each group is assigned a case study or scenario involving a human rights issue (examples: child labor, freedom of speech, gender discrimination, refugee rights).

Students answer:

- Which human rights are involved?
- Are these rights being respected or violated?
- What could be done to protect these rights?

Group Presentations (15–20 min)

- Groups present their case summaries and findings.

Exit Ticket

- One human right you would be willing to stand up for, and why.

Day 3 – Human Rights in Our Community

Warm-Up (5–10 min)

- Brainstorm ways human rights apply locally—in schools, neighborhoods, or online.

Class Discussion (10 min)

- Where do we see human rights protected or threatened in our daily lives?

Activity (25 min)

Students create a visual or written response (mini-poster, infographic, short op-ed, or social media campaign draft) that answers:

- What are human rights?
- Why do they matter?
- How can young people promote them?

Gallery Walk or Brief Sharing (10–15 min)

- Students present their work to classmates in a casual walk-around format or quick share-outs.

Optional Homework

- Write a one-paragraph response reflecting on what you learned and what human right matters most to you and why.

Assessment

- Participation in discussion.
- Completion of case study responses.
- Quality and thoughtfulness of final product (poster or written piece).
- Individual reflection.