

Health and Human Rights Lesson Plan

Grade Level: 7-10 grades

Description: This lesson plan helps students explore the concept that health is a basic human right. Primary sources—Article 25 of the “U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights” and Article 1 of the “Declaration of Alma-Ata”—are used to help students define health and human rights, and to build a connection between the two. Students also play online games that highlight the countries and people whose stories are featured in the *Against the Odds* exhibition. The games and worksheets help students apply the concept of health as a basic human right in the context of the stories from the *Against the Odds* exhibition.

Learning Outcomes: Students will be able to:

- Analyze two historical documents and relate their content to real life situations.
- Use different graphic organizers to understand the relationship between health and human rights.
- Apply the concept of health as a basic human right in understanding past examples of health solutions.
- Identify at least one human rights issue that they are aware of and one action that they can take to address that issue.

Background Information:

- The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) on December 10, 1948. Article 25 of this declaration defines “a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being...” as a right for all.
- The International Conference on Primary Health Care was held in Alma-Ata, presently Kazakhstan, in September 1978. Representatives from 134 countries and 67 international organizations attended the conference. These attendees called for “urgent action by all governments, all health and development workers, and the world community to protect and promote the health of all the people of the world...” leading to the [Declaration of Alma-Ata](#). The declaration:
 1. affirms that health is a fundamental human right;
 2. defines that health is “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity...”; and
 3. links health directly to socioeconomic and political conditions affecting individuals and communities worldwide.

Time Needed: Two 45-minute class periods

Materials:

- Flip chart and/or transparencies
- Markers
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights ([full document](#) or [short document with excerpts](#))
- Declaration of Alma-Ata ([full document](#) or [short document with excerpts](#))
- [Teacher’s Notes on the Human Rights and Alma-Ata Declarations](#)
- [Health Graphic Organizer](#)
- [Health and Human Rights List](#)
- [Venn Diagram](#) (examples)
- [Teacher’s Venn Diagram](#)
- [Game 1](#) & [Game 2](#) worksheets
- Teacher’s Notes on [Games 1 and 2](#)
- Overhead projector and transparencies
- Access to computers and the Internet connection for a part of Lesson 2

Lesson 1 Procedures:

[Note: Refer to the [Teacher's Notes on the Human Rights and Alma-Ata Declarations](#) documents to help facilitate the class discussions in this lesson]

Engaging students

1. Divide students into groups of four and provide copies of the [Health Graphic Organizer](#) to each group.
2. Review the two tasks stated on the top of the worksheet then allow time for students to complete the worksheet in their groups.
3. Have selected groups share their responses and summarize them on a blank [Health Graphic Organizer](#) transparency on an overhead projector.

Exploring basic needs for health and well-being

4. Post the following definition of health on the overhead—"health...is a state of complete **physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.**" And provide a brief overview of [Declaration of Alma-Ata](#) (see Background Information above) to the class.
5. Tell students that they will now work on identifying the basic needs for health as stated in the Alma-Ata handout. Distribute copies of the [Health and Human Rights List](#) worksheet and the [full](#) or [short](#) version of the "Declaration of Alma-Ata" to students and have them list three examples of basic needs for staying healthy on the right side of the [Health and Human Rights List](#).
6. Have students share their examples with the class and guide the discussion so that students understand the concept of health as defined in the Declaration of Alma-Ata.

Exploring human rights relevant to health

7. Provide students with brief background information on the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) (see Background Information above).
8. Distribute copies of the [full](#) version of the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights." [Note: Consider available time and students' level in determining whether you will use the full or short version.]
9. Have students read the Human Rights Declaration handout and list three examples of human rights that are **relevant to health** on the left side of the [Health and Human Rights List](#).
10. Share selected student responses while helping students be specific about their examples—e.g., not just food but nutritious and affordable food.

Summarizing activity

11. Have students adjust their [Health and Human Rights List](#) worksheets based on the class discussions.
12. Collect completed Health and Human Rights List worksheets from students, which will be handed out at the beginning of the next lesson.

Lesson 2 Procedures:

[Note: Students will need access to the *Against the Odds* exhibition Web site for the latter portion of Lesson 2.]

Comparing human rights and basic health needs

1. Return students' [Health and Human Rights List](#) worksheets and have students review their lists of examples of rights and needs related to health.
2. Ask students if they see a pattern between the two lists. [Note: The examples of rights and needs overlap—e.g, housing, food, clothing, social services to provide the basic needs, etc.]

3. Place a [Venn diagram examples](#) transparency to review or introduce the three different types of diagrams and what each indicates.
4. Have students work in pairs to use a Venn diagram—circle A is titled “human right” and circle B “basic needs for health”—to organize the examples on the bottom part of their sheets.
5. Share selected responses and record them on a transparency. Ideally, the examples of basic needs for health overlap with health-related human rights in the middle. (See [Teacher’s Venn Diagram](#)).
6. Post the following fill-in-the-blank statement on the board: “**Health is a basic and fundamental** _____.” Have students refer to the Venn diagram and finish the sentence. Students should complete the sentence with “human right.”

Applying the concept [Note: Requires computers and the Internet connection]

7. Group students in pairs and have each pair be stationed at a computer opened to the *Against the Odds* Web site: http://apps.nlm.nih.gov/againsttheodds/online_activities
8. Distribute copies of the [Game 1](#) and/or [Game 2](#) worksheets and have students play and explore the contents of the two games and complete the worksheets. [Note: You may distribute one game sheet to each group if the time is limited.]

Summarizing activity

9. Share selected responses from student pairs and discuss examples of contemporary human rights issues that persist today. See facilitation notes on the [Teacher’s Notes on Games 1 and 2](#).
10. Collect the completed worksheets from students for evaluation.

Evaluation:

Lesson 1: The completed Human Rights and Health List can be used for evaluation as well as the level of student participation in classroom discussions.

Lesson 2: The Venn diagram and completed Game 1 and 2 worksheets can be used for evaluation.

National Education Standards

English Language Arts:

Reading for Perspective

- Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment.

Participating in Society

- Participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.

Applying Language Skills

- Use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

Health Education:

- Students comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention.
- Students describe the interrelationships of mental, emotional, social and physical health throughout adulthood.
- Students analyze how public health policies and government health regulations influence health promotion and disease prevention.
- Students evaluate the effects of media and other factors on personal, family, and community health.
- Students express information and opinions about health issues.



School Library Media:

- Students will be able to gather relevant information from appropriate resources.
- Students will be able to interpret information to generate new understanding and knowledge.
- Students will be able to communicate findings by producing materials in an appropriate format.

Science Education:

- Science in personal and social perspectives.
- Personal and community growth.

Social Studies:

Culture

- Analyze and explain the ways groups, societies, and cultures address human needs and concerns.

Individual development and identity

- Analyze group and institutional influences on people, events, and elements of culture in both historical and contemporary settings.

Power, Authority, and Governance

- Examine persistent issues involving the rights, roles, and status of the individual in relation to the general welfare

Global Connections

- Analyze or formulate policy statements demonstrating an understanding of concern, standards, issues, and conflicts related to universal human rights.
- Describe and evaluate the role of international and multinational organizations in the global arena.