

Topic: Origins and importance of human rights in the UK today

Level: C1

Time: Approximately 90 minutes

Aims

- To develop students' ability to listen for gist and detail.
- To develop students' vocabulary related to human rights, including identifying positive and negative connotations.
- To give practice in identifying word stress.
- To give practice in discussing and personalising concepts related to human rights.

Introduction

This lesson is based on two short video clips from the UK Parliament website about the origins and the importance of human rights in the UK today. It provides students with listening practice and vocabulary development related to human rights.

The videos can be accessed from:

<http://www.parliament.uk/education/teaching-resources-lesson-plans/human-rights-debating-activity/human-rights-origin/>

<http://www.parliament.uk/education/newsletter/central-lobby-current-newsletter/simon-hughes-rights-important/>

Complete transcripts are available at the end of this lesson plan.

Preparation and materials

Print one copy of the human rights quotes. Cut up, and stick to the classroom walls (gallery-style). Copy one handout per student. The video transcripts can be found at the end of this lesson plan.

Procedure

Warmer – Quotations (10 mins)

- Put up the short human rights quotes around the classroom. Ask students to read and discuss the quotes and to work out what the theme of today's lesson is.
Answer: human rights
- Put learners into small groups to make their own definition of 'human rights'. Elicit feedback as a group (2 mins). Then get whole class feedback and try to reach a consensus.

Task 1 – Video 1: Where do human rights come from? (15 mins)

- Tell students they are going to watch a video of Simon Hughes MP describing where human rights in the UK come from and how Parliament works to uphold them. Elicit the meaning of uphold.

<http://www.parliament.uk/education/about-your-parliament/current-affairs-and-political-debates/human-rights/>

Play the video and tell the students to do task 2 then check their answers in pairs.

Answers: *common law, international treaties, habeus corpus and the European convention on human rights.*

Task 2 – Vocabulary (5 mins)

Ask the students to match the phrases and definitions, before you elicit feedback as a group.

Answers:

Common law - c

Habeus corpus - e

Magna Carta - b

European convention on human rights - d

International treaty – a

Task 3 – Dictation (15 mins)

- Ask the students to look at the transcript (Task 3) and try to predict what words go in each gap. Then play the film again; the students complete as they watch.

Answers for task 4:

1. *law*

2. *cause*

3. *passing*

4. *adopt*

5. *treaties*

6. *signed*

7. *uphold*

8. *important*

- After the video, encourage whole-class discussion; ask questions such as:
 - *Did you learn anything new from the film?*
 - *Can you think of any laws which apply internationally?*
 - *Does the UK have many of the same laws as your own country? etc.*

Task 4 – Concepts (15 mins)

- Give out handout 2 and ask students to identify positive and negative concepts associated with human rights (some of these concepts came up in the quotes in the warmer and some are relevant to video 2).

Answers for task 4a

+

*freedom
protection
humanity
security
respect
justice
dignity
equality*

-

*discrimination
humiliation
intolerance
abuse
exploitation
injustice
imprisonment*

- Put students in pairs. Ask them to do (b) by first counting the number of syllables and working out the correct word stress pattern for each word. You may have to give a few examples of this before starting and demonstrate tapping out the number of syllables.

Answers for task 4b

O o
freedom
justice

o O
respect
abuse

O o o
dignity

o O o
injustice
protection

o O o o
humanity
security
equality
imprisonment
intolerance

o o O o
exploitation

o o o O o
discrimination
humiliation

Task 5 – Topics covered in the film (5 mins)

- Show the video clip and ask students to identify which of the concepts from Task 4 Simon Hughes MP alludes to:

<http://www.parliament.uk/education/newsletter/central-lobby-current-newsletter/simon-hughes-rights-important/>

Answers: equality, exploitation, abuse, protection and dignity

Task 6 – Opinions expressed in the film (10 mins)

- Second viewing – focus on detail. Students identify which of the statements are true or false according to Simon Hughes MP. Students can work individually before checking their answers in pairs. Invite comments about each statement during whole group feedback.

Answers for task 6

- F. Everyone is born with equal rights (not automatic)*
- T. The state's role is to ensure that people have equal rights.*
- F. Many states exploit and abuse their people (no mention of other states)*
- T. The law and international treaties are the only way to protect people.*
- T. Human rights enable people to live life to the full.*

Discussion (15 mins)

Put the students in groups of four or five, and get them to discuss the same statements (from task 6), giving their own views on whether they agree or disagree, and why.

Extension activities / Homework

If students wish to find out about The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, there is a simplified version at:

http://www.hrea.org/index.php?base_id=104&language_id=1&erc_doc_id=5211&category_id=24&category_type=3&group=

Transcripts**Video 1: Where do human rights come from? (01:16 mins)**

Well, human rights in the UK come from various places. They come from the common law, from tradition. There's something called habeus corpus, the right to insist that you're not held for no good cause - that you can be released from being imprisoned, unless the law justifies you being imprisoned.

They come from Parliament passing laws which guarantee them, either because we have our own human rights or because we adopt something like the European Convention on Human Rights into British law, which we do. Or they come from international treaties between us and other sovereign states or that are signed internationally. Together they form the human rights that we have in this country and that other people have in other countries.

At the end of the day, Parliament can do a lot to change what rights are given to individuals, but there are certain rights which the courts in a free country will uphold as being rights that go beyond anything written down in law. And in a way they're the most important rights of all.

<http://www.parliament.uk/education/about-your-parliament/current-affairs-and-political-debates/human-rights/>

Video 2: Why are human rights important? (01:04 mins)

Everybody is born equal – that's a statement of the obvious in one sense in that they are physically given life, but the rights they have are not automatic, they have to be guaranteed and the state that people are born into is the place in the first instance which makes sure that either they have the same opportunities as other people – they're not exploited by the state, they're not abused by the state, they're not abused by other people. It's the one way of giving people in practice the ability to be protected and supported, which without a legal system, without international agreements, they wouldn't have. It gives dignity to people, it gives equal dignity to people and it gives the opportunity to live your life to the full according to the most broadly agreed consensus about these things, which is being discussed around the world.

<http://www.parliament.uk/education/newsletter/central-lobby-current-newsletter/simon-hughes-rights-important/>