

A Human Rights Timeline

Concept(s) Continuity and Change, Cause and Consequence

Prepared for Grade(s) 6

Province AB

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Time Period(s) 1900-present

Time allotment 3 classes x 60 min.

Brief Description of the Task

Students will use the Human Rights Commission website to research key court cases and laws that have shaped human rights in Canada from 1900 - 2000. They will select cases involving human rights violations and plot them along a timeline. Students will then compare their timeline with a timeline of human rights legislation, both global and federal, that spans the last half of the century. They will use these visual representations to better understand the interactions of change over time, and cause and consequence. They should also be encouraged to draw conclusions from these timelines regarding the impact of global events on Canadian societal values and legislation.

Required Knowledge & Skills

Students should be familiar with the rights and freedoms addressed in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the federal legislation that preceded the Charter, such as the Canadian Bill of Rights and the Canadian Human Rights Act.

Detailed Instructions

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1. Introduce students to this assignment by explaining the objectives of better understanding what change over time looks like by creating a visual timeline of the past century of human rights activity in Canada. As well, they will learn how to look for clues that point to the cause of a major historical change, and the consequences that follow. Explain to students that they will be researching legal cases that happened to ordinary people and that reflect the societal values of the time.

Activity 1 2. Using the Human Rights Commission website, students will explore key human rights cases over the past century, as well as government legislation noted as milestones in the human rights movement. They enter the site through four time portals of 25 years each, from 1900 to 2000. Each portal brings you to a map of Canada studded with colored flags • red, yellow and green. A red flag indicates legislation in which human rights suffer a set-back and a green flag indicates

movement forward. A yellow flag denotes legislation that results in a balance between the two.

By clicking on the flag numbers that are listed in the chart below each map, students will find a description of specific court cases and their outcomes, or information regarding a particular piece of government legislation. Note: In the last time portal (1975-2000) there is an absence of red flags. Students will be challenged to draw their own conclusions to explain this.

3. Direct students to browse through each portal, and become acquainted with the types of human rights issues that are addressed in the various court decisions and laws. Since Grade 6 students have had little experience with the study of global events in the last century, take the time now to hold a brief discussion about the defining world events for each time portal; e.g., World War I (portal 1), World War II (portal 2), the Cold War and the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights (portals 3 and 4).

4. Distribute the Retrieval Chart provided in Appendix A • you will need 6 copies in total for each student. Instruct students to use this retrieval chart to record key information from two red flag cases for each time portal.

Activity 2 5. Divide students into work groups of 3-4 to pool their information and to create a timeline of human rights violations spanning the 20th century. Provide guidance or direct instruction to students in setting up their timeline to include four time periods and in plotting their cases within each time period. Timelines can be created using strips of chart or shelf paper and various coloured markers. If your students have access to mind-mapping software, they could create their timelines in an electronic format. The Timeline Sample in Appendix B was created using the Inspiration program.

6. You may want to have each group briefly display their timeline and share any particular points of interest with the rest of the class. Review with students what they have observed about their timelines (many more red flag cases in the first two time periods, a significant drop in the third time period, and the total absence of such in the last period • some students may note that, across the time periods some issues are different, e.g., ethnicity, and some remain the same, e.g., race).

Activity 3 7. Provide students with a second timeline that represents global and federal legislation that moved human rights forward during the last half of the century. One version of this timeline is found in Appendix B: Timeline Sample, which is adapted from the Grade 6 textbook, *Voices in Democracy* (Pearson, 2008). In their work groups, have students compare the two timelines, looking for connections and drawing conclusions about the relationship between the pattern of change in their timeline and the specific pieces of legislation in the second timeline.

8. You may have each group then present their conclusions to the rest of the class, and follow up with guided discussion. Revisit the concepts addressed at the beginning of the lesson, this time with examples from the students' work. Review the ways that a visual representation, such as a timeline, helps in understanding change over time. Use questions similar to those in the Student Questionnaire

(below) to generate further discussion towards understanding. (E.g., social and/or political context of each time period, human rights issues that occurred across time periods and those issues that changed more quickly, clues to look for in finding a "turning point" in the timeline, and effect of the U.N. Universal Declaration on subsequent Canadian human rights laws that would eventually become entrenched in the Constitution.)

9. Provide students with the following written-response student questionnaire. For the assessment rubric (Appendix C), students receive an individual score for their retrieval charts and a group score for the timeline product. The written responses to the questionnaire can be used to determine student level of achievement in understanding the thinking concepts of Continuity and Change, and Cause and Consequences.

Student Questionnaire: Continuity and Change - How did a timeline and time periods help you to organize your understanding of human rights in Canada? - Why are some historical events called "turning points"? - Explain why changes in laws do not always mean progress. Cause and Consequences - What impact did the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights have on Canadian human rights laws? - Give an example of a time when the values of society would work against universal human rights.

Outcomes

6.1.3 Analyze how the democratic ideals of equity and fairness have influenced legislation in Canada over time. 6.S.2 Demonstrates skills of historical thinking – Organize information, using such tools as a database, spreadsheet or electronic webbing – Use examples of events to describe cause and effect and change over time Continuity and Change Students will recognize that: - chronology and periodization can help to organize our understanding - turning points help to locate changes - change does not necessarily mean progress Cause and Consequences Students will recognize that: - historical change involves a relationship between those who want to make changes and the social and political contexts of the time that work to limit these changes