

Introduction

United Nations Universal Children's Day was established in 1954 and is celebrated on November 20th each year to promote international togetherness, awareness among children worldwide, and improving children's welfare. November 20th is an important date as it is the date in 1959 when the UN General Assembly adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. It is also the date in 1989 when the UN General assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, or UNCRC, is the basis of all of UNICEF's work. It has 54 articles that cover all aspects of a child's life and set out the civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights that all children everywhere are entitled to. It also explains how adults and governments must work together to make sure all children can enjoy all their rights.

All the rights are linked and no right is more important than another. The right to relax and play (Article 31) and the right to freedom of expression (Article 13) have equal importance as the right to be safe from violence (Article 19) and the right to education (Article 28).

Many governments abuse or do not respect these rights so we face problems such as child - labour, modern slavery, hunger, or gender inequality, especially when it comes to education.

Activity 1

Cut out the quotes (page 3 of this material) and put them in a bag or a box. Then walk around the classroom and ask each student to draw a slip and read it aloud. You can use all nine quotes or just the ones you like. After this activity ask your students to guess today's topic and tell them about some facts from the introduction.

You can shortly discuss the quotes (put them up on the blackboard): which one they agree/disagree with, which one is their favourite, least favourite and so on, and inform them about the authors.



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Activity 2

Divide the class into small groups (up to 4-5 students). Ask them to list from 5 to 10 things they consider **their most important rights**.

Depending on your students' level and motivation, you can guide them through this activity – help with questions, everyday examples of rights abuse, etc. Help them with the vocabulary if needed.

Expected answers: the right to be alive, the right to have enough to eat and drink, the right to go to school, the right to live in peace, the right to be protected from any kind of violence, the right to enjoy your free time, the right to medical care...

Groups can compare their answers. Then elicit results and try to agree on a whole-class list of the rights and rules. You can write them on the blackboard. If you have a projector, you can show your students a **simplified version** (a summary) of **UNCRC** (the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child).

There is an even simpler version at this [link](#).

If you have time and means, you can print out one of these versions and give out one copy for each group so they can compare and discuss.



For younger students (years 4-5), at this [link](#) you will find the **colouring book** for teaching children's rights – you can give one page from the book to each student to colour it and then have a class exhibition.

Activity 3

Show your students a **short film whose aim is to teach school kids about children's rights** (duration: 3:05). Pre-teach the following vocabulary if needed: *to respect/use/abuse somebody's rights, to tease somebody, to treat fairly, to protect, government, convention*.

Write the words on the blackboard or on flashcards, read them aloud, let your students repeat them, wipe out a word and ask which one is missing, etc.

You will find the film at this [link](#).

Talking about rights is a good time to review **modal verbs**. You can print out a handout with the gapped sentences from the film (page 4 of this material). Your students can do this exercise either during the second viewing or as a post-viewing activity.

Answer key: 1 cannot; 2 can't; 3 being able to, not having to; 4 might; 5 might; 6 need to; 7 can't, can

If you have a stronger group of students, you can discuss which modals express possibility, prohibition, ability, obligation, no obligation, and so on.

Read the finished sentences aloud and assign **homework**: students can illustrate their favourite children's rights in the form of a comic or it can be their own original design.

Quotes

- 1 Let us remember: one book, one pen, one child, and one teacher can change the world. (Malala Yousafzai)
- 2 The secret of genius is to carry the spirit of the child into old age, which means never losing your enthusiasm. (Aldous Huxley)
- 3 An honest man is always a child. (Socrates)
- 4 In every real man a child is hidden that wants to play.
(Friedrich Nietzsche)
- 5 Children are educated by what the grown-up is and not by his talk. (Carl Jung)
- 6 The soul is healed by being with children. (Fyodor Dostoyevsky)
- 7 The greatest gifts you can give your children are the roots of responsibility and the wings of independence. (Denis Waitley)
- 8 Every child comes with the message that God is not yet discouraged of man. (Rabindranath Tagore)
- 9 The best way to make children good is to make them happy.
(Oscar Wilde)



Complete the sentences with the following modal verbs: *can, can't (2x), might (2x), need to, not having to, being able to*.

- 1 You _____ stop me!
- 2 You _____ do that. It's against my rights!
- 3 A full life means _____ be happy and healthy and _____ eat food with yucky stuff in it.
- 4 If you drink yucky water it _____ make you sick.
- 5 If you can't go to the doctor's you _____ die.
- 6 We _____ respect other people's beliefs.
- 7 So you _____ tease me if I believe a giant robot _____ get you?



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