

Developing Rights

Lesson plan 7: From moral to legal rights

Age group: 11 - 14

Aims:

To develop an understanding of the role of children as actors in historical events.

To develop an awareness of how the denial of basic rights led to the Soweto uprising in 1976 and changes in the future direction of South Africa.

What to do:

Preparation: It would be helpful to read the **background information on South Africa and Children's Charter** (below) . Photocopy enough of the **worksheet: Moral to legal rights statements** (below) to allow one set for each pair of pupils. Cut out these photocopied statements, placing each set (not in order) in an envelope. You will also need one sheet of paper for each pair of pupils, and paper glue or glue sticks.

You may wish to read out the background information about South Africa and Children's Charter to help prepare pupils for this activity. Explain that they are going to be learning about how children in South Africa were involved in a historic struggle to claim their right to an equal and non-racist education. What young people fought for as a moral right has now become incorporated into the new Constitution of South Africa as a legal right. Although this does not mean that everyone has benefited from this right yet (as is illustrated by statements from the children from Khayelitsha), the fact that this right is recognised by the government is an important first step.

Give an envelope and sheet of paper to each pair of pupils. Ask them to draw a horizontal straight line in pencil across the centre of the sheet. Ask pupils to read the statement cards and get them to arrange the statement cards in the correct sequence. When they are happy with the order of their cards, hand out glue sticks so they can be stuck down.

As a group, discuss the role that young people have played in claiming their right to an education. What can young people in the UK learn from the example of their counterparts in South Africa? Can pupils think of any other examples, either locally or globally, where young people have taken action to claim their rights?

Extension work:

Pupils can undertake research on other historical struggles that turned moral rights into legal rights, and produce a similar sequence of statements. Examples to research could include voting rights for women, or the abolition of slavery.

Curriculum links:

England	Scotland	Wales
<p>English:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Group discussion and interaction - different contributions; different views into account; sift, summarise and use the most important points. - Reading - extract meaning; analyse and discuss. <p>Citizenship/PSHE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effects of stereotyping, prejudice, bullying and discrimination; how to empathise with people different from themselves; to communicate confidently with peers and adults; consider social and moral dilemmas. 	<p>English:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Listening in groups; talking in groups; talking about experiences, feelings and opinions; reading for information. <p>Religious and Moral Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relationships and moral values. <p>PSD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social development. 	<p>English:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Group discussion and interaction - different contributions; different views into account ; sift, summarise and use the most important points. - Reading - extract meaning; analyse and discuss. <p>PSE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Value cultural diversity and equal opportunity and respect the dignity of all; be moved by injustice, exploitation and denial of human rights; communicate confidently one's feelings and views

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Supporting material: Country background information

South Africa

South Africa fact box		Comparable figures for the UK	
Capital:	Pretoria	Capital:	London
Languages:	11 official languages including Xhosa, Zulu, Afrikaans, and English	Languages:	English (official) also Welsh and Gaelic
Religions:	68% Christian. Traditional African religions and Islam also followed	Religions:	About 8.4 million active participants, of whom 71% are Christian; significant minorities are Muslim, Sikh, Hindu and Jewish
Area:	1,221,040 km ²	Area:	245,000km ²
Population:	48 million	Population:	60 million
Life expectancy at birth:	44 years	Life expectancy at birth:	79 years
Adult literacy rate:	82%	Adult literacy rate:	99%
Population with access to safe water:	87%	Population with access to safe water:	99%
Public expenditure on education (as % of GNP):	5.3%	Public expenditure on education (as % of GNP):	5.3%
GDP per capita:	US\$12,120	GDP per capita:	US\$32,690

About South Africa

South Africa lies at the southern tip of Africa. From 1948 until 1994 it was ruled by a government which imposed the system of apartheid, or 'separateness'. This political system was designed to create a white state which could exploit black people for their labour. Apartheid laws meant that non-white South Africans were denied basic rights (such as the right to move about freely) for many years.

As part of the apartheid system black children were educated to become a labour force. In 1953, Dr Verwoerd, Minister of Native Affairs declared, 'When I have control over native (black people's) education, I will reform it so that the natives will be taught from childhood that equality with Europeans (white people) is not for them.' Black people's schools were overcrowded and poorly equipped.

Protest grows

In 1976, the South African government made Afrikaans a compulsory language in schools. Black children protested about being taught in the language of their oppressors. They organised a protest which was crushed by the police. Hector Peterson, a boy of 13, was the first child to be killed, but hundreds more died in the protests.

For years to come thousands of black pupils stayed away from school in protest. Young people missed out on their education but played a key role in the fight for change in their country. In 1987, they held a conference about children and apartheid law. When the United Nations adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989 South African young people demanded their own charter of rights.

About the Children's Charter of South Africa

In 1992 children's workshops were held all over the country. Each workshop drew up a list of demands and selected ten representatives to attend a national Summit, which lasted five days. For the first time a children's charter of rights was written and approved.

In 1994, South Africa's first democratic elections were held. Black people were allowed to vote for the first time. The new government, under President Nelson Mandela, incorporated the Children's Charter into the new National Constitution. Today children's rights are part of the highest law. Primary school enrolment has increased to 87%, but in 2004 more than one million school-aged children still did not go to school.

The Children's Charter of South Africa

Children should be treated the same, no matter what their colour, race, sex, language or religion.

Children have a right to a name and nationality.

Children have a right to a loving and caring family, a proper home, clothing, and healthy food.

Children have a right to free, equal, non-racist, non-sexist education.

Children have a right to good health care and medical attention and should be protected from drugs, cigarettes, and alcohol.

Children have a right to be taught about sexuality, AIDS, human rights, child abuse, and how to protect themselves.

Children have a right to be protected from abuse, neglect, labour, and violence.

Children have a right not to be held in prisons or police cells.

Children have a right to have a say in all matters which affect them.

Children have a right to practise their own religion and culture.

Children have a right to be placed in safe and secure 'families' when they are orphaned, abandoned, refugees, or exiled.

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Worksheet: From moral to legal rights

Pupils are frustrated at the inequality of the education system. Schools for black Africans are run down and overcrowded.

The government says that children must be taught in Afrikaans, the language of the white government. They don't want to have to learn in a language which is not their own, and they organise a peaceful protest march in Soweto, the black township near Johannesburg.

The protest march of 10,000 school students is broken up by the police, who shoot several students. In the years after the march, thousands of black children stay away from school as a protest against the government.

The United Nations adopt the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Children in South Africa want their own Charter of Rights. A Children's Summit is organised where a Children's Charter of Rights is written.

Nelson Mandela is elected President and a new Constitution is written that includes the Children's Charter of Rights. This includes the right to a free, equal, non-racist, and non-sexist basic education.