

Competing Visions of Human Rights: Questions for U.S. Policy

Third edition. December 2016.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

- Begins with the Enlightenment and early thinking about rights.
- Includes the Geneva Convention (1864), “the four freedoms,” the UN Declaration of Human Rights, decolonization, and the Vienna World Conference (1993).
- Concludes with an overview of current human rights challenges: responding to globalization, climate change, global population, criminal justice reform in the United States, LGBTQ rights, and counter-terrorism measures.

STUDENT TEXT

- Shows the evolution of the concept of human rights from the framing of the UN Declaration of Human Rights within the context of international politics and law.
- Explains how contrasting definitions and difficulties prioritizing among human rights influences debates about military action, international trade, and foreign aid.
- Overviews responsibilities of sovereign nations, the UN, NGOs, and international courts.
- Provides case studies about freedom of speech, the right to health, the rights of children, grappling with the aftermath of human rights violations, and international interventions.
- Presents the political and social dilemmas the United States faces in making Human Rights policy.

CENTRAL ROLE PLAY ACTIVITY

Question: What should the U.S. approach to human rights be?

Setting: A conference on U.S. Human Rights

SKILL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH LESSONS

A short description of each lesson can be found on the unit webpage [here](#).

Students will:

- **Evaluate** short case studies to assess human rights violations.
- **Prioritize** among values statements.
- **Analyze** primary sources such as protest songs, art, street art, and tapestries.
- **Compare and contrast** editorials, testimonies, and other excerpts of primary sources representing opposing views on the case studies in the student readings.
- **Collaborate** with a team to synthesize readings, lessons, and position profiles into class presentations.
- **Listen** actively and deliberate with peers on the complex viewpoints expressed.
- **Reflect** and write their own response about what U.S. human rights policy should be.

LINKS FOR FURTHER CURRICULUM EVALUATION

Videos - A free online [video collection](#) accompanies this unit, and the videos are incorporated throughout the Digital Editions.

Print Format - This unit [preview](#) includes the table of contents, a reading excerpt, and a sample lesson plan.

Digital Editions Format - Interested in what the Digital Editions format looks like? Check out our web-based curriculum [here](#).