

Unit IV

Grades 9-12 Unit Lesson Plan

UNIT IV: U.S. HISTORY

Key Question: What can we learn about human rights from U.S. History?

Unit Goal(s): Students compare a human rights-related era or event in U.S. history to a similar current era or issue and develop a response.

Time: Approximately 20 hours depending on activities selected

Materials: See individual activities

Setting: Grades 9-12

Student Learning Goals

Students will understand the following human rights principles, language and values:

Cultural rights	Moral Rights & Responsibility
Economic justice	Responsibility
Inalienable	Sovereignty
Indivisibility	Universality
Interdependence	

Students will apply the following human rights standards:

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

Minnesota Human Rights Act (MHRA)

Students will demonstrate the following human rights skills and practices:¹

- Understand the origin of racial segregation.²
- Apply research skills through an in-depth investigation of a historical topic.³
- Understand the scope and limits of rights, the relationship among them, and how they are secured.⁴
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the principles upon which the U.S. government is based.⁵
- Analyze the relationship and interactions between the U.S. and other nations and evaluate the role of the U.S. in world affairs.⁶

¹ All footnotes are specific MN Educational Standards, which correspond to the unit's human rights skills and practices.

² Social Studies: U.S.Hist 9-12/I.J.- Reshaping the Nation and the Emergence of Modern America 1877-1916 AD

³ Social Studies: Hist Skills 9-12/IV.A.- Historical Inquiry

⁴ Social Studies: Gov't & Citizshp 9-12/VII.A.- Civic Values, Skills, Rights, and Responsibilities

⁵ Social Studies: Gov't & Citizshp 9-12/VII.B.- Beliefs and Principles of the United States Government

⁶ Social Studies: Gov't & Citizshp 9-12/VII.D.- Governmental Processes and Institutions

- Apply a variety of strategies to expand vocabulary.⁷
- Locate and use information in reference materials.⁸
- Demonstrate understanding and effective communication through listening and speaking.⁹
- Critically analyze information found in electronic and print media, and use a variety of these sources to learn about a topic and represent ideas.¹⁰

Note: Many other skills can be fostered and educational standards can be met using this material, depending on the area of study and action plan undertaken by the students. See the Resource Section of this kit for a more extensive list of the Minnesota Education Standards.

Overall Impact

When first thinking about your lesson plan, it is recommended that you keep in mind its intended impact on four levels: (a) student, (b) school, (c) family, and (d) community. Below are some examples of possible impacts that might occur at each of these levels. Identify possible impacts with your students, and discuss how you might collect information to decide on whether or not they have taken place.

Student Impact	School Impact	Family Impact	Community Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to describe perceived acts of justice or injustice done to various groups of people or individuals • Ability to apply human rights instruments (e.g., UDHR and the MHRA) to instances of social injustice and explain their implications • Ability to compare and contrast historical and current instances of social injustice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased interest in world history classes, using the human rights lens • Widespread use of human rights lens to analyze history of other nations in other classes • Creation of a school-wide event to look critically at U.S. history using a human rights lens • Increased awareness of community and world issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in discussions with family members about historical issues • Increase in discussions with family members about school-based projects • Use of human rights instruments and appropriate agencies to help address social injustice issues that affect the family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased mention of human rights issues in media by students participating in relevant events • Increased mention of human rights instruments in relation to social injustice • Decrease in community-related acts of injustice

⁷ Language Arts: Rdg & Lit 11-12/I.B., D.- 11-12/I.B. Vocabulary Expansion

⁸ Language Arts: Writing 9-10/II.A.-B, 9-10/II.D Research

⁹ Language Arts: Spk/List 9-10/III.A.,B.- A. Speaking and Listening

¹⁰ Language Arts: Spk/List 9-10/III.A.,B. - B. Media Literacy

Introduction: The teacher may wish to do an introductory activity to generate interest in U.S. history and determine students’ prior knowledge. One or both of the following two activities may be used to introduce the unit of study:

1. Students identify what they know about U.S. history by putting events on a timeline. The timeline activity should initially be done individually and then students in groups of three or four should compare their timelines with each other to confirm their accuracy. Each group of students is asked to correctly identify four events in U.S. history that will be posted on a large class timeline, which is displayed and maintained around the room for the duration of this unit of study.
2. Students become members of the “bias detection squad.” The teacher supplies textbooks or other information sources that are outdated and contain omissions, or have blatantly biased information about historical events, or stereotypical characterizations of various ethnic groups. Students “detect” the omissions, biased information, or stereotypical characterizations and record them in their reflection journals. During the course of this unit, students correct the omissions, biases, or stereotypes by finding and recording more truthful, objective information.

Activity A: Observe/Identify the Human Rights Issue

Key Question: What is at the heart of this human rights issue?

Activity Goal(s): Deepen understanding of a particular issue and/or era and relate them to articles in human rights documents.

Time: 4 hours – 4 sessions

Materials: Textbooks or other research materials, reflection journal, copies of the UDHR and MHRA, Handout 1: Events and Eras in U.S. History

Setting: Grades 9-12

Step 1: Select an event or era in history for study.

Students select the event or era for study from a teacher-supplied list based on MN 9-12 academic history standards. The list is included in Handout 1: Events and Eras in U.S. History.

Step 2: Read the related text/background information.

The student may use either a textbook, internet research or collected information supplied by the teacher. This is simply baseline information to get the student grounded in the event or era. Next, the student will conduct research and go into greater depth in terms of knowledge about the event or era.

Step 3: Start a reflection journal documenting perceived acts of justice or injustice done to various groups of people or individuals during this event or era.

The reflection journal can be presented in a notebook, a folder, or on a laptop computer. It should be portable and its contents easily shared with others. The first entry in the reflection journal should be organized in a T-chart. Students draw a line down the middle of the page and list what they believe to be acts of justice or injustice to one side of the line and the corresponding situations from the historical event or era that are examples of the act of justice/injustice on the other side.

Step 4: Read the articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the Minnesota Human Rights Act (MHRA) and match them to the identified justices/injustices.

Students may also identify new acts of justice/injustice in the historical event or era they are studying based on reading the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the Minnesota Human Rights Act (MHRA). They record the articles from the UDHR and topics from the MHRA that correspond to the issues they have identified by naming them in their reflection journal T-chart.

Possible Evaluation/Assessment Indicators:

- The student will identify an era or event in U.S. history and relate it to appropriate human rights issues and documents.
- The student will describe a historical event, and present any omissions, biased information, or stereotypical characterizations.

Activity B: Describe and Share Human Rights Stories

Key Question: How have our ancestors worked to promote and protect this human right? Who within our schools, families, and communities promotes and protects this human right?

Activity Goal(s): Deepen understanding of human rights issues in history and create a common story about a chosen research topic.

Time: 6 1/2 hours – 7 sessions

Materials: Note cards, clip file, scrapbook, reflection journal, current newspapers and magazines, reference materials, [Handout 2: Survey Response Matrix](#).

Setting: Grades 9-12

Step 1: Conduct an in-depth study of the event or era and continue to identify human rights issues.

Students may conduct their own research or the teacher may wish to supply additional information about the events or eras selected for study by the students. Some questions that they may choose to explore are:

- Why was the Minnesota Human Rights Act created?
- What prompted certain amendments to the U.S. Constitution that affect(ed) people's rights?
- How have people organized to respond to certain injustices in the United States? Were the injustices resolved? Are people still working on these issues today? (For example, slavery, voting rights, women's rights, worker's rights.)

Step 2: Summarize information from the in-depth study using a mind map or web.

Students keep notecards, clip files, a journal, or a scrapbook to document information as they gather it. Students should continue to identify issues in their reflection journal and name the corresponding article(s) from the UDHR. Students use a mind map or web to organize and summarize the information they've gathered into a manageable form that they can integrate into the group activity that follows. For instructions on mind mapping, see the following website:
<http://www.peterussell.com/MindMaps/HowTo.html>

Step 3: Select significant issues from the event or era and identify those that are named in the UDHR articles.

See Activity A, Step 4.

Step 4: Form groups and create a “common” story of the event or era by comparing mind maps or webs.

Students may self-select or the teacher may assign them to groups of three or four. However, the members of the group must all be studying the same event or era. Students in each group compare mind maps or webs and create one common story on which all students in the group can agree. Each student should keep a list of the events or pieces of information that s/he believes are “true” or significant about the event or era, but that other students in the group do not agree to add to the common story.

Step 5: Tell the common stories to the class. Students should explain at least one human rights issue.

If students have created a class timeline of U.S. history as an introductory activity, each group should locate their event or era on the class timeline and add the significant information from their event or era to the timeline when they tell their common story.

Step 6: Select a similar current event or era to research and compare it to the historical event or era using a Venn diagram.

For instructions on the creation of Venn diagrams, go to www.venndiagram.com. Have students use current newspapers and newsmagazines to find and research a current issue that has similar injustices as their historical event or era. Teachers might want to prepare background reading materials from reference books, pages, websites, and articles on topic areas.

Step 7: Survey some community viewpoints of the current issue and compile them into a survey response matrix.

Each student in the group creates one question to ask people about how they view justices or injustices in the current issue or the historical event or era. Each student asks four different people their one question and reports the answers for compilation in their group's survey response matrix (see [Handout 2: Survey Response Matrix](#)). Also, have students identify groups that are currently involved in the issue and what actions they are taking.

Possible Evaluation/Assessment Indicator:

- The student will thoroughly investigate an event or era in U.S. history related to a specific human rights issue, and relate it clearly to a similar issue in current events.

Activity C: Generate Human Rights Responses and Make Predictions about Their Impact on the Community

Key Question: What could we do? What will happen if we do that?

Activity Goal(s): Develop a plan of action that addresses a human rights issue related to U.S. History

Time: 4 hours – 4 sessions

Materials: Paper and pencils

Setting: Grades 9-12

Step 1: Compare the UDHR, MHRA and the U.S. Bill of Rights.

Students research their chosen topic in reference to all three documents and create comparison diagrams to show similarities and differences between the ways in which the UDHR, MHRA and U.S. Bill of Rights approach the topic.

Step 2: Compare the survey response matrix to the Venn diagram of the UDHR, MHRA, and U.S. Bill of Rights and identify the significant justices/injustices.

Students work in their groups to compare their survey response matrix to the Venn diagram of the UDHR, MHRA and the U.S. Bill of Rights. As a group, they select the most significant justices/injustices that they believe are being repeated in the current issue.

Step 3: Make predictions about the possible outcomes of the current issue based on the outcomes of the historical event or era.

Step 4: Brainstorm possible actions to take that would help to change the current injustice or support the current act of justice as well as possible outcomes of those actions.

Possible Evaluation/Assessment Indicators:

- The student will generate a human rights response that addresses an issue related to U.S. history.
- The student will compare and contrast at least two of the following instruments: UDHR, MHRA, and the U.S. Bill of Rights.

Activity D: Select a Human Rights Response and Take Action

Key Question: What is the best response or position?

Activity Goal(s): Select and receive feedback on action plans

Time: 1 hour — 2 sessions

Materials: Paper and pens/computer, Handout 3: Action Plan Worksheet

Setting: Grades 9-12

Step 1: Select two actions and create a flow chart for each to share with another group for feedback.

A sample action plan worksheet is included in the handouts at the end of this unit.

Step 2: Select the best action based on the feedback and develop an action plan.

See Handout 3: Action Plan Worksheet. The action plan should include step-by-step activities and timelines.

Step 3: Put the human rights response into action.

Possible Evaluation/Assessment Indicator:

- The student will select an appropriate human rights response and put it into action.

Activity E: Interview Community Members and Collect Information about the Impact of Your Human Rights Action

Key Question(s): What happened when we took action? Whose lives did we impact?

Activity Goal(s): Record actions and responses for documentation in reflection journal

Time: Variable, depending on plan of action — approximately 1 hour of teacher instruction

Materials: Reflection journal, documentation worksheet

Setting: Grades 9-12

Step 1: Determine what information to record, and how to record it, in order to document the actions and their outcomes.

- a) Students record actions and responses in their individual reflection journals.
- b) Include information such as the successes, problems, outside feedback, adaptations to the action plan necessary during implementation, and ideas for changes to the action plan if the students were to do the project over.
- c) Students should document how close the actual outcomes or responses were to the students' predicted responses or outcomes. Sample documentation worksheets and ideas are listed in the Toolbox section of the manual.

Possible Evaluation/Assessment Indicators:

- The student will effectively record actions and responses for further documentation.

Activity F: Reflect and Draw Conclusions on What You Have Learned about Promoting and Protecting Human Rights

Key Question(s): What did we learn? Was the intent of the action the actual impact?

Activity Goal(s): Summarize activity and share it with another group

Time: 2 hours — 2 sessions

Materials: Reflection journals, photos, magazines, newspapers, paper and pens/computer

Setting: Grades 9-12

Step 1: Determine how the action and its outcomes can best be summarized.

Students may decide to compile and summarize the information from their individual reflection journals into a matrix, web, or Venn diagram, or students can create a collage of their findings with pictures they took, or pictures from magazines and newspapers.

Step 2: Present a draft of the conclusion to another group for feedback.

Students share their matrix, web, or Venn diagram with another group to process the activity and what it meant to them. This is also an opportunity to discuss how best to present the information about their activity in the final step.

Possible Evaluation/Assessment Indicator:

- The student will reflect clearly on the success of their human rights action.

Activity G: Communicate and Demonstrate Your Human Rights Learning

Key Question: How can we share what we learned with our schools, families, and communities?

Task: Create a class newsletter and participate in a closure activity

Time: Variable, depending on activity

Materials: Variable, depending on activity

Setting: Grades 9-12

Step 1: Design ways to demonstrate their learning in a school-wide and/or community event.

Students may wish to create artwork including drawings, music, dance, or theater pieces as in-depth, synthesized ways to share what they learned. Their reflection journals, survey response matrices, Venn diagrams, and mind maps or webs can also be a visual display of the historical and current issues they are exploring. Another way to publicize the students' learning is to contact local media to cover the event.

Possible Evaluation/Assessment Indicator:

- The student will communicate effectively what was learned about U.S. history and human rights.

Possible Evaluation/Assessment Indicators

It is important to examine the impact of human rights actions on families, school, and community. However, assessing these impacts is more subjective than assessing impact on the individual level. In order to address this, discuss measures that indicate impact in the areas of families, school, and community **PRIOR TO BEGINNING THIS UNIT**. Refer to the possible impacts on four levels: (a) student, (b) school, (c) family, and (d) community (p.99). Create a checklist that can be referred to over the course of the unit to gauge impact using these impacts, or the more specific student-focused indicators found at the end of each activity:

The student will:

- Identify an era or event in U.S. history and relate it to appropriate human rights issues and documents.
- Describe a historical event, and present any omissions, biased information, or stereotypical characterizations.
- Investigate an event or era in U.S. history related to a specific human rights issue, and relate it clearly to a similar issue in current events.
- Generate a human rights response that addresses an issue related to U.S. history.
- Compare and contrast at least two of the following instruments: UDHR, MHRA, and the U.S. Bill of Rights.
- Select an appropriate human rights response and put it into action.
- Effectively record actions and responses for further documentation.
- Reflect clearly on the success of their human rights action.
- Communicate effectively what they learned about U.S. history and human rights.