



**Politics
and
Society**

Topic 6

**Human rights and
responsibilities in
Europe and the
wider world**

Possible Learning Activities

Getting Started: It is important to have studied topic 5 before engaging with topic 6.

6.1 rights in the wider world

Students may need to revise key concepts related to the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child** before engaging in this topic.

- Invite students to work together in small groups to establish exactly what is meant by each of the 4 UNCRC articles named in LO 6.1 and come up with a list of key words/phrases/definitions relating to each one. (This can be amended as students progress through the topic)
- Use **jigsaw methodology** to facilitate students examination of the 4 articles in some depth

Divide the class into four groups and assign an article to each group (article, 6, 14, 19, 31). In their groups, they must become experts on their article and be able to explain and give examples of situations where this right is respected and examples of violations of this right, both in their own context and the wider world.

- For homework, ask student to write a short piece, explaining why these 4 articles are considered the most fundamental rights for children.
- Focusing on Ireland, ask each group to find **evidence** that suggests **progress** in relation to the implementation of this right and evidence to suggest **lack of progress**.
- Set students to work in pairs to investigate the situation of children in specific situations, such as children living in direct provision in Ireland, children who are homeless, or children involved in child labour and answer these questions –
 - a. What research evidence suggests children's rights are being abused or denied in respect of the 4 articles named in LO 6.1?
 - b. What progress has been made and what are the challenges to implementing these rights?

If looking at direct provision the following activity might be considered

- Investigate another country and then use a venn diagram to compare the impact of direct provision in Ireland on children's rights with that of children living in detention centres for asylum seekers in another country.

Note: The ability to draw comparisons will be important for HL students particularly.

Useful resources

Summary overview and some key concepts related to the UNCRC can be found at these links: itsyourright.ie, The Council of Europe, childrensirights.ie

Jigsaw methodology - *Building key skills through Politics and Society*

[Article 6: State of the World's Children Report, 2016](#)

[Article 14: Children's Rights International Network website](#)

[Article 19: Children's Right's International Network](#)

[Article 31: Children's Right's International Network](#)

[The Children's Rights Alliance annual report card to government, 2016](#)
[Report of the Ombudsman for Children, 2015](#)
[Central Statistics website](#)
[Young people in Ireland and the global youth development index](#)
[United Nations Human Development Index](#)
[UNICEF country by country information](#)
See also data suggested under topic 2 and topic 5

[Lives in Limbo](#), Irish Times website (includes video interview with young people living in direct provision)
[The Outsiders: Children living in direct provision in Ireland](#), classroom activities based on a RTE Doc on One radio documentary called 'The Outsiders'
[Facts on child labour](#)
[Facts on child slavery](#)
[Stories of child slavery](#)
[Education resource on child labour](#)
[Information about children in immigration detention centres in Australia](#)
[Report on children living in detention centres in Canada](#) (see summary pp 5-9 and the children's testimonies)
[Newspaper article on the above report](#)
[Country reports on detention centres](#) (See the 'minors and other vulnerable categories' section of your chosen country report)

- Use the links to resources in the right-hand column to support students' learning about the **European Convention on Human Rights**, the role of the **European Court of Human Rights** in ensuring the implementation of the ECHR, **steps involved in taking a case** to the European Court and some examples of cases brought by Irish citizens (e.g. Mrs Airey, 1979, David Norris, 1988, Louise O'Keefe, 2013).
- For homework, ask students to research landmark judgements made at the European Court which have influenced Irish law (the article opposite might be useful as a stimulus)
- In examining specific rulings, students might use a graphic organiser to map out -
 - What was the main right that the case was built around?
 - What were the arguments?
 - What was the evidence?
 - Would you have been in agreement with the judgement?
 - Why/why not?
 - What was the effect of this case on Irish law?
- Invite students to examine a report on human rights, analysing how the report provides evidence in relation to children's rights, the type and quality of the evidence and the conclusions drawn.

This exercise can also provide students with the opportunity to practice skills of skimming and scanning to find relevant facts, findings and conclusions.

When students share their findings they will be able to draw comparisons between different countries and contexts. (*Important for higher level student*)

6.2 arguments about rights in the wider world

- Using the articles opposite or similar, set up reading triads. Each group has the task of summarising the key ideas in one article, using a template.
- Then move students to form new groups of 3 so that they can each share the ideas they have encountered through their readings and group work during the first phase of the activity.
- Facilitate an **academic controversy** activity where students research and debate two opposing points of view about human rights in the wider world context.

[Know your Rights – European Convention on Human Rights](#)
[European Convention on Human Rights – Rights and Freedom in Practice – Teaching Resources](#) - includes a flowchart outlining how cases come to the European Court of Human Rights and what happens thereafter (pages 7-9); a simplified version of the ECHR (pages 10-11); and, simplified case studies and accompanying questions (pages 24-28).

[European Court of Human Rights, 'The correct way to lodge an application'](#), 4 min video

[The Guardian: The European court of human rights' judgments that transformed British law](#)

[ECHR – Ireland Press Country Profile](#) (record of applications, cases and judgements up to January 2016)

Sample human rights reports:
[UNICEF State of the World's Children report 2013 – children with disabilities](#)
[Barriers to the Realisation of Children's Rights in Ireland](#) by Dr Ursula Kilkelly, UCC

[The Children's Rights Alliance annual report card to government, 2016](#)
[Report of the Ombudsman for Children, 2015](#)

[UNHCR report *Worldwide displacement hits all-time high as war and persecution increase*](#)

[The educational and mental health needs of Syrian refugee children](#), 2015, Migration Policy Institute.

Sample articles:
[Are Human Rights Western?](#) Professor Robert Fine, Warwick University
[The case against human rights](#), Professor Eric Posner, University of Chicago Law School argues that human rights law has failed and that a new approach is needed, in this newspaper article
[The Relative Universality of Human Rights](#), Professor Jack Donnelly

Thinking about Thinkers

Consider how Samuel Huntington's *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* might relate to discussion on 'universal' human rights. To what extent could one argue that talk about universal rights is another example of the imposition of western culture and civilization?

Compare this to Edward Said's views on culture and discuss how his views might relate to this topic.

Academic controversy methodology - *Building key skills through Politics and Society*

Students can use youtube to find short videos explaining universalism versus cultural relativism

6.3 international cooperation and human rights

- Set up a **flipped classroom** whereby students must research at home - What is the **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights**? What does it mean for States who have signed up to this? To what extent are these rights legally binding? (Remind students of the concept of progressive realization)

Then in class look at how the process in Ireland has worked for monitoring and reporting on this treaty.

If using the video opposite, provide a graphic organiser so that students can trace the steps.

- Watch Dr Oliver De Schutter's lecture on International Human Rights
- Discuss as a whole class why international cooperation is needed to support countries in implementing human rights? Brainstorm examples of such international cooperation in promoting human rights?
- Discuss the recent rise of nationalism in European politics (and beyond, e.g. Trump campaign) and how this might impact on international cooperation for human rights and global solidarity.
- For homework – Search the Irish Aid website to find out if/how the Irish government is supporting human rights around the world. In what other ways can the Irish government influence and promote human rights in the wider world?

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights website has excellent education resources

[International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#)

[The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#)

[Saoirse Brady explains the process of monitoring and reporting on the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights In Ireland \(Use clip from 2.27 mins to 24.35 mins\)](#)

[Report on Ireland and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights](#)

[In this youtube video Dr De Schutter gives an overview of the main human rights treaties \(begin at 15.10mins\)](#)

[Irish Aid website](#)

- Introduce the **UN Declaration on the Right to Development** by watching the short video entitled 'Development is a human right'.

[Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, 'Development is a human right', video \(4.35 mins\)](#)

When watching it, ask student to record how 'development' is defined and note any facts that they find interesting or shocking. Then discuss these.

[UN Declaration on the Right to Development poster](#)

- Cut up the 10 articles from the UN Declaration on the Right to Development and give one article to each pair or group of three. Ask each pair/group to discuss the key ideas in their article and put this article into their own words using just one or 2 sentences. Use postits to display them on the wall for all to read.
- Examine the **United Nations Global Goals for Sustainable Development (2015-2030)**, signed up to by 193 countries, including Ireland, and aimed at fighting injustice and poverty and dealing with the challenge of climate change.
- Ask students to compare the articles in the Declaration on the Right to Development with the 17 Global Goals for Sustainable Development using a graphic organiser.
- Divide the class into small groups. Allocate each group a Global Goal to examine in detail, including looking at targets with an economic, social or cultural focus. Share the findings.
- Discuss the strengths and limitations of agreement to the Global Goals in terms of the voluntary nature of engagement with the follow-up and review processes.

[Fact file on the Right to Development](#)

[The UN Global Goals for Sustainable Development](#)

United Nations (2015,) [Transforming our world: The 2030 agenda for sustainable development](#) - the full text of the 17 Global Goals, including targets

Suggested assessment activities

Examples of ongoing assessment related to Topic 6

Compare and contrast the lives of children in different parts of the world in relation to one of the rights as set out in the UNCRC under article, 6, 14, 19, or 31.

Imagine you are working with the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and will be meeting with the Irish government to inform them on areas of progress and areas that need improvement. Prepare your message for them and present it either orally or in writing.

Focusing on article 22 of the UNDRRC take a trip around your community on foot and photograph the play, leisure and cultural facilities that are available for young people.

In taking photos think about:

1. What kind of places are available for young people to play? Are they clean and safe?
2. Is there a cost involved in participating in play and leisure activities in your area?
3. Are there facilities for children with disabilities to play?

Caption your photos and present them using Powerpoint or other visual means.

Invite students to imagine that they work with the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and are involved in the next periodic review of Ireland's implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Pick one area from the following:

- *work*
- *fair and just conditions of work*
- *social security*
- *adequate food*
- *clothing and housing*
- *health*
- *education*

Research and present extracts from speeches made by contemporary political leaders which support or reject Huntington's view that "*We know who we are only when we know who we are not and often only when we know whom we are against*".

What am I looking for? Sample criteria for success

- Ability to gather evidence from relevant sources
- Ability to compare and contrast how the issue relates to different contexts
- Ability to present a coherent and logical argument
- Ability to come to a personal conclusion backed up by evidence and examples

- As above

- Ability to communicate the key ideas contained in article 22 UNDRRC creatively
- Ability to apply learning to student's own local context
- Creativity and ability to recognise the effects of images and words

- Ability to gather evidence from relevant sources
- Ability to use qualitative and quantitative data to draw conclusions
- Ability to ask probing and relevant questions related to the evidence
- Ability to apply the learning and concepts of Politics and Society to one's own context

Set up a walking debate using statements such as

- Human rights only work in western countries
- Poor countries cannot be expected to comply with all the human rights listed in the treaties
- Human rights instruments and human rights law has failed to protect human rights around the world
- Human rights only work for those who can shout loudest and know about their rights
- Human rights instruments and human rights law has failed to protect human rights around the world
- Human rights only work for those who can shout loudest and know about their rights
- Young people in Ireland are denied the right to play and leisure due to too much study and exam pressure
- There is a lack of choice in relation to multi-denominational and non-denominational education in Ireland that breeches the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion (article 14)

Students must be able to state whether they agree or disagree and justify their opinion with a piece of evidence.