

Acts of injustice done  
    between the setting and the rising sun  
In history lie like bones,  
    each one.

-- W. H. Auden, "*The Ascent of F6*"

### What do you think these lines mean?

### Read the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and reflect upon the following points:

1. What do you think are the first steps to be taken to guarantee freedom, justice and peace in the world? How can human rights be implemented?
2. Why should the text be read in schools?
3. Can you think of any barbarous acts that have outraged the conscience of mankind?
4. The document highlights the importance of teaching and education to promote human rights. In your opinion, what should a teacher do to guarantee this?
5. Read the articles attentively. Which one(s) do you hold most at heart? Which one(s) is/are you sceptical or not so sure about? Do you think you respect all the articles? What about your friends and family? Provide examples when possible. (e.g. lots of adults tend not to approve of the fact that there are people who vote for a different political party from theirs; or that a person works in a different field from what they deem appropriate, etc.)
6. In which countries can instances of slavery still be found? What kind of slavery is it?
7. Have you ever read of incidents when "marriage" was not entered with the free and full consent of the spouse? If not, look it up in the Internet and find an article about it. You can visit [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk), <http://www.guardianweekly.co.uk/>, <http://www.timesonline.co.uk>, <http://www.independent.co.uk>, <http://www.nytimes.com>, <http://www.usatoday.com>, <http://www.washingtonpost.com>
8. Read Article 23. Are there in Italy instances of it not being observed?
9. Of the Articles you read, are there any which are not being respected in our country?

On 10 December 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the full text of which appears in the following pages. Following this historic act, the Assembly called upon all Member countries to publicize the text of the Declaration and "to cause it to be disseminated, displayed, read and expounded principally in schools and other educational institutions, without distinction based on the political status of countries or territories.

#### PREAMBLE

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

**Now, Therefore THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY proclaims THIS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS** as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

**Article 1.** All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

**Article 2.** Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

**Article 3.** Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

**Article 4.** No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

**Article 5.** No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

**Article 6.** Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

**Article 7.** All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

**Article 9.** No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

**Article 13.** (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state. (2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

**Article 16.** (1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution. (2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses. (3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

**Article 18.** Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

**Article 23.** (1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment. (2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work. (3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.

**Article 25.** (1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control. (2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

**Article 26.** (1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit. (2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

If you wish to read all the thirty articles that constitute the text of the Declaration of Human Rights, visit: <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>

Read the following quotations and choose the one you like the most and state why. Then try to explain in your own words (if possible try to give examples to clarify your point) the quotations in blue. Write your own quotation so that we can add it to the ones listed below. Then find an image (painting, photo, sketch, etc.) that you associate with human rights and print it out so that you can show it in class. We will create a poster with your quotations and images. Finally, think of a song that would suit the topic we are investigating and find the lyrics on the Internet.

### Human Rights Quotes

"Spread love everywhere you go: first of all in your own house. Give love to your children, to your wife or husband, to a next door neighbor... Let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier. Be the living expression of God's kindness; kindness in your face, kindness in your eyes, kindness in your smile, kindness in your warm greeting." Mother Theresa

"If you judge people, you have no time to love them." Mother Theresa

"First they came for the Jews and I did not speak out - because I was not a Jew. Then they came for the communist and I did not speak out - because I was not a communist. Then they came for the trade unionists and I did not speak out - because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for me - and there was no one left to speak out for me." Pastor Niemöler (victim of the Nazis)

"The only thing necessary for the persistence of evil is for enough good people to do nothing." Amnesty saying, unknown origin

"True peace is not merely the absence of tension, it is the presence of justice" Martin Luther King Jr.

"The hope of a secure and livable world lies with disciplined nonconformists who are dedicated to justice, peace and brotherhood." Martin Luther King, Jr.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world - indeed it is the only thing that ever does" Margaret Meade

"Please use your freedom to promote ours." Aung San Suu Kyi, Burmese Democracy Leader and Nobel Peace Laureate

"You must not lose faith in humanity. Humanity is an ocean; if a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty." Mohandas Gandhi

"It's really a wonder that I haven't dropped all my ideals, because they seem so absurd and impossible to carry out. Yet I keep them, because in spite of everything I still believe that people are really good at heart." Anne Frank

"I would rather die on my feet than live on my knees." Charles Houston

"Nations will rise and fall, but equality remains the ideal. The universal aim is to achieve respect for the entire human race, not just for the dominant few." Carlos P. Romulo

"I am only one,  
But still I am one.  
I cannot do everything,  
But still I can do something;  
And because I cannot do everything  
I will not refuse to do the something that I can do." Edward Everett

"All human beings, whatever their cultural or historical background, suffer when they are intimidated, imprisoned or tortured . . . We must, therefore, insist on a global consensus, not only on the need to respect human rights worldwide, but also on the definition of these rights . . . for it is the inherent nature of all human beings to yearn for freedom, equality and dignity, and they have an equal right to achieve that." The Dalai Lama

"We protect only what we love, we love only what we know, we know only what we are taught." Author Unknown

"I know not with what weapons World War III will be fought, but World War IV will be fought with sticks and stones."  
Albert Einstein

"If civilization is to survive, we must cultivate the science of human relationships - the ability of all peoples, of all kinds, to live together, in the same world at peace." Franklin D. Roosevelt

"If I can stop one heart from breaking, I shall not live in vain. If I can ease one life the aching, or cool one pain, or help one fainting robin unto his nest again, I shall not live in vain." Emily Dickinson