



Denying
child rights
is wrong.
Put it right.

TWENTY ONE ASSEMBLIES FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS

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January: New Year's Resolution



Satoshi Kitamura's illustration of Articles 28 & 29 from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 28

All children and young people have a right to free primary education.

Article 31

All children and young people have a right to relax and play, and to join in a wide range of activities.

Key words

Responsibilities	Learning
Helping	Choice
Rights	Justice

Resources

- Paper hat from a cracker
- Party hooter

Illustrations

You will need, if possible, to display or project a large copy of the above picture (Satoshi Kitamura's illustration of Articles 28 and 29) and the photograph of Joseph (overleaf).

Pupil participation

A few pupils could take up positions alongside the photograph, carrying their school bags as if they are walking with Joseph.

Opening

Happy New Year to everybody!

[Children respond.]

Put your hand up if you have made a New Year's resolution?

[Ask some of the pupils who respond positively to tell you what their resolution was.]

Why do you think we make New Year's resolutions?

[Maybe some children will talk about the New Year meaning a fresh start.]

I'm going to tell you a story about a boy who goes to enormous efforts to make his New Year's resolution come true.

[hold up the photograph of Joseph]

Joseph's story

This is Joseph from Sudan in north-east Africa. He made a New Year's resolution and, although it is sometimes hard, he is sticking to it.

Joseph is walking to school. He walks along dusty, pot-holed tracks rather than tarmac pavements. First, he climbs a series of very steep and rutted tracks. Then he scrambles along a dangerously high path through a banana plantation. Only then can he even see his school in the distance, on top of a small hill, at the end of a deep red earth track. From the hill you can see the surrounding hills stretching away in the distance, with villages dotted amongst them. Children from these villages also have to make long, dangerous walks to get to this school.

The school he attends is made up of three small buildings. There are two single-storey classrooms and a two-room shack that is both an office for the teachers and a storage space for books and a few items of basic sports equipment. The classrooms are bare except for low wooden benches and desks and a large blackboard. It is in one of these classrooms that Joseph eagerly does his lessons every day.

Joseph gets up at sunrise to work on his vegetable patch before walking to school. He grows tomatoes and aubergines (or eggplant). Morning and evening, he has to fetch water for the patch from the stream at the bottom of a steep hill.

When he gets home from school, Joseph feeds his chickens. He rears them to sell eggs. Joseph's first brood of chickens was killed by an eagle, so he bought some more and made a chicken coop from sticks and leaves to protect them.

You might wonder why Joseph walks so far to school and has to raise chickens and vegetables. It's because he lives with his grandmother and younger sister and has to support them. With the money he gets from selling vegetables and eggs, he can buy schoolbooks and clothes for him and his younger sister. He can also give his grandmother money to buy things for the house, such as paraffin for the stove, salt and soap. Joseph has made a resolution that he will continue his walk to school because he knows that one day, with an education, he may get a job that pays enough to look after his grandmother and sister.

Joseph says, *"I don't have much time to play, but life without this school would mean no education and no skills for me. I am proud, because my friends and I are doing our best, trying to succeed in life. I would really like to learn to be a mechanic."*

Conclusion

What was Joseph's resolution?

[Look for answers about going to school every day and learning so he can get a good job.]

What do you think we, in this school, might learn from Joseph's resolution?

[That we show the same determination to make the best of our opportunity to get an education.]

Suppose Joseph couldn't go to school or didn't learn at school. What might happen to him?
[He might not get a job and then he couldn't support his grandmother and sister.]

And what might happen to any of you, if you don't take the opportunity to learn that this school gives you?
[Might not go to secondary school of choice, etc.]

In this school we believe that everyone has rights and responsibilities, don't we?
What rights and responsibilities does this story tell us about?
[The right to go to school and the responsibility to use the opportunities that going to school gives you. To learn and let others learn.]

Closing picture

Display or project a large copy of the cover picture (Satoshi Kitimura's illustration of Articles 28 and 29).
Then ask:

What can we see?
[From the answers draw out that even though a lot of what the children is doing is fun, they all look as if they are concentrating and trying really hard.]

I made a resolution at New Year that I would ... *[give example]*.
I hope you all made a resolution to try hard at school this year. I don't think it's too late to start now. Shall we all make a resolution to do our very best this year?

[Satoshi Kitimura's illustration is one of 14 beautiful pictures in *For Every Child*, available from UNICEF UK education resources. Please visit: www.unicef.org.uk/store]

Joseph walks to school. © UNICEF/06-0902/Mariella Furrer



Any time: Building Back Better



UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Henriette Sauvant's illustration of Article 3 from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Article 3

All organisations concerned with children should work towards what is best for each child.

Article 24

Children have the right to the best health care possible, safe water to drink, nutritious food, a clean and safe environment, and information to help them stay alive.

Article 28

All children have the right to free primary education.

Key words

Hope	Help	Justice
Responsibilities	Rights	Safety

Resources

- Microphone
- Five labels for hats or other clothing (see next section for details)
- Five bags or rucksacks
- Five cloths
- Five bottles of water
- Five notebooks and pens
- Five bandages (optional)
- Card with UNICEF logo
- Download pictures from www.unicef.org.uk, which has an archive of humanitarian events.

Illustrations

You will need, if possible, to display or project a large copy of the above picture (Henriette Sauvant's illustration of Right No. 3 in *For Every Child*) and any photographs of emergencies.

Pupil participation

One class

Four children, wearing hats or other clothing with labels, play UNICEF's roles for children in an emergency. Labels are: keeping children alive; reuniting families; protecting children; educating children. A fifth child plays a UNICEF spokesperson, whose job is to keep people informed of the threat to children [perhaps use UNICEF logo for this role]. The rest of the class play victims of an earthquake.

Opening

[The children playing the earthquake victims are sprawled over the stage at the beginning of the assembly. You could have some overturned chairs and scattered belongings on the stage to create a sense of the aftermath of a violent earthquake.]

[At one side of the stage is a desk with five children sitting around it, studying papers. The table has a card with the UNICEF logo on it. Four children wear a label listing one of UNICEF's actions (see 'Pupil participation' overleaf). The fifth child, wearing a label with a UNICEF logo, is a UNICEF spokesperson.]

[Teacher leading the assembly comes on stage with a microphone, acting as a television reporter. Speaks as if to camera]

Early this morning, an earthquake struck [add the name of a town]. This is a scene of great devastation and there appears to be many injured children.

[Indicate the children lying on the stage, some of whom now start groaning and trying to get up.]

It happened around 9am this morning, just as school was starting and people had gone to work. Many buildings have collapsed. There are fires burning and hundreds of people are buried in the rubble. Emergency services are rushing to the scene, including workers from the humanitarian charity UNICEF who were already working in the area, making life better for children. We can now go over live to the UNICEF office to find out how they are going to help.

[Look over towards the group at the desk.]

UNICEF spokesperson: **An earthquake has struck. We need to go immediately and see what we can do to help. The vehicles are already packed with emergency supplies. Do each of us know what we will do when we get there?**

UNICEF worker 1: **My job is to keep children alive.**

UNICEF worker 2: **My job is to bring families back together.**

UNICEF worker 3: **My job is to protect children.**

UNICEF worker 4: **My job is to help children back to school as quickly as possible.**

[The five children pick up their bags or rucksacks and walk round the stage until they reach where the victims are sprawled. They help the victims sit up, wipe their faces, give them water to drink, maybe put on bandages. Some of the victims start to help each other. The UNICEF team come together again at the centre of the stage and discuss what they are going to do next.]

UNICEF worker 1: **We must organise shelter for these children and their families. The first relief supplies of tents, tarpaulins, blankets, vaccines and disinfectant are on the way. We have to get the vaccination teams here immediately to immunise children against measles and polio, otherwise we could have an epidemic on our hands. We must make sure people have clean water to drink and that there are toilet facilities.**

UNICEF worker 2: **I have organised some of the adults to start making a list of all the children so we can help parents when they turn up looking for their children. In a couple of days, every child should be with a relative. We will start a centre for children who don't appear to have any family, but we will take pictures of them and post them up around the region to see if we can find any relatives to care for them.**

UNICEF worker 3: I will go and talk to the authorities and see what they are doing to protect children for the next few months. We will have to start training new health workers immediately. I will tell them that they should keep families together and help parents stay with their children, even if their means of income is lost. We don't want people taking children who are not theirs, or parents who are in shock letting them be taken by people they don't know.

UNICEF worker 4: Yes, we must find the teachers and others who are willing to work with children and help them recover from the trauma of this event. Also, I will look at the school buildings and see if any are usable, as we must start up schools again. Nothing helps children return to normal more than being at school with their friends. It also keeps children safe while their families are rebuilding their lives. I have asked UNICEF for hundreds of school-in-a-box* kits so we can give schools equipment.

UNICEF spokesperson: UNICEF has already made a worldwide appeal for money to help children caught up in the earthquake. Hopefully, we will get enough money to help all the children in the next few days *[add the name of your town]* and in the longer term to help rebuild children's lives. The other aid agencies are coming here now. I will organise a meeting with them so we can discuss and agree what each organisation will do to help these people get their lives back together again. Let's build back better so children can see an improvement in their lives.

* A school-in-a-box is a large aluminium box containing notebooks, pens, pencils, posters, a register and other education materials for at least 80 children and their teacher. In 2006, UNICEF delivered more than 15,500 school-in-a-boxes to emergency situations around the world.

Conclusion

Display or project a large copy of the cover picture (Henriette Sauvant's illustration of Article 3).

Then ask:

Why are we looking at this picture today?

[Henriette Sauvant's illustration is one of 14 beautiful pictures in *For Every Child*, available from UNICEF UK education resources. Please visit: www.unicef.org.uk/store]

Children wait for supplies after an earthquake struck their village in north-west Pakistan. © UNICEF/05-1773/Niclas Ryberg



January 15: Martin Luther King Day



UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Philippe Dumas's illustration of Article 42 from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Article 1

Everyone under the age of 18 has all the rights in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Article 2

The Convention on the Rights of the Child applies to everyone without exception. Governments should take all measures to ensure that children are protected against all forms of discrimination.

Key words

Choice	Equality	Justice
Freedom	Harmony	Respect
Tolerance	Rights	

Resources

- Some chairs

Illustrations

You will need, if possible, to display or project a large copy of the above picture (Philippe Dumas' illustration of For Every Child, Right No. 42) and a photograph of Martin Luther King.

Pupil participation

One class

Decide on a way in which you can divide a class so they fall into two groups – the relative size of the groups is unimportant. For the purpose of explaining the assembly, eye colour will be used. However, you can use any distinction that will enable the class to be divided; for example, shoe or sock colour.

Opening

Class [name of class], please would you all stand and come up here *[Class rise and come to stage]*

I want all of you who have blue eyes *[or the distinction you have chosen]* to stand on my right.
[Indicate to your right]

Now, will the rest of you, those who don't have blue eyes, stand on my left.
[Indicate to your left]

Now all those with blue eyes, please put your hands up if you think that everybody on my left should sit down. *[They vote.]* Okay, thank you. Now everyone with blue eyes can sit down.
[Look around the hall and take in reactions of all the pupils.]

What have I just done?
[Take responses.]

Was that fair?
[Take responses.]

Thank you Class [name of class], please can you all return to your seats *[Class leave the stage.]*

What I did was very unfair. Only those with blue eyes got to vote and they decided what happened to everybody who did not have blue eyes. Then I only allowed the children with blue eyes to sit down. Let me tell you why I did this.

The story of Martin Luther King, Jr.

If we were in the United States of America, we wouldn't be at school today. This is because January 15 is a national holiday in the United States. Today is Martin Luther King Day.
[Either hold up photograph of Martin Luther King, Jr., at this point, or point to the photograph on display]

Up until the 1960s, African Americans in some states of the United States could not vote in elections. There were separate sections for African Americans on public transport, parks, restaurants and even separate toilets. In some states, African-American children were denied an education or had to go to separate schools from their white friends. These schools were often poorly funded and equipped.

African Americans were usually in badly paid work and lived in the poorest areas. Some African American adults and children were killed, beaten up, threatened and wrongfully put in prison.

Martin Luther King was a Christian who was determined to make sure that all Americans had the same rights regardless of their race. When Rosa Parks, an African-American woman, was arrested after refusing to give up her seat on a bus to a white man in the city where he preached, King called on African Americans to protest by not travelling on buses in the city.

When the protest ended with a ban on separate seating for whites and African Americans, King organised other non-violent demonstrations against the unfair treatment of African Americans. When the authorities used force to end the protests, King gained even more support. In 1963, he led a huge march on Washington, D.C., the US capital. Here, in front of a crowd of 250,000 people, King made his famous speech "I have a dream" speech. Here is a short extract:

"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character."

In 1964 King received the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to end racial prejudice in the United States. The US Government brought in laws to ensure equal rights for all US citizens and to give everybody the chance to vote. Tragically, just a few years later, in 1968, Martin was murdered. About 300,000 people went to his funeral. It is because of Martin Luther King, and others like him, that people in the United States have equal rights today.

Conclusion

Why did Martin Luther King want to make changes in the United States?

[Look for answers around the themes of rights, justice, equality and fairness.]

Why do you think I only allowed the children with blue eyes to vote and to sit down?

[Hopefully children will respond that it was to show how unfair life can be when not everyone has their rights respected.]

What should I have done so that I was not being unfair to one group of children?

[Hopefully children will answer that everyone should have been allowed to vote and to sit down.]

Do we need to act like Martin Luther King in this school – and campaign for equality?

[Answers should be about the school's rights and responsibility ethos.]

Closing picture

Display or project a large copy of the cover picture (Philippe Dumas's illustration of Article 42). Then ask:

Why are we looking at this picture?

[From the answers draw out that all people should be treated equally. Everyone has the same rights.]

[Philippe Dumas's illustration is one of 14 beautiful pictures in *For Every Child*, available from UNICEF UK education resources. Please visit: www.unicef.org.uk/store]

Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929–68)
© Dick DeMarsico



January 27: Holocaust Memorial Day



UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Claudio Muñoz's illustration of Article 19 from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Article 2

Everyone under the age of 18 has all the rights in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Article 19, Articles 32–37

The government is responsible for protecting children from violence, abuse, neglect, poor treatment and exploitation.

Key words

Freedom	Harmony	Justice
Respect	Peace	Safety
Tolerance	Rights	

Resources

- Copy of *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*
- School satchels, hair curlers, handkerchiefs, schoolbooks, combs, diaries and some letters.

Illustrations

You will need, if possible, to display or project a large copy of the above picture (Claudio Muñoz's illustration of Article 19) and the photograph of Anne Frank (overleaf)

Pupil participation

Small group

At the point in the story when Anne Frank packs her satchel, a small group of children could come to the front, each carrying one of the things she took with her and pack them into a satchel.

Opening

Please put your hand up if you have heard of Anne Frank?

[If you think none of the children will have heard of her, then omit this question.]

[Hold up a copy of The Diary of a Young Girl by Anne Frank.]

Anne Frank's story

This book is called *The Diary of a Young Girl*. The diary was written between 1942 and 1944 by a young Jewish girl called Anne Frank in Amsterdam, capital of the Netherlands. Anne was given the diary for her 13th birthday, just before she and her family had to hide from the Nazis, who had invaded the Netherlands in 1940, during the Second World War.

Before Anne went into hiding, the Nazis had already taken away many basic rights from Jewish people in the Netherlands, just because of their religion. These are some of the rules Jews had to obey:

- All Jewish people had to sew a yellow star onto their coats and be sure it was visible at all times when they were on the streets.
- Jews were forbidden to ride in cars, on buses or trams or trains.
- Jews were not allowed to have bicycles.
- Jews could only do their shopping between the hours of 3 pm and 5 pm.
- Jews were forbidden to be out on the streets between the hours of 8 pm and 6 am.
- Jews were forbidden to go to the cinema, theatres or other places of entertainment. Nor were they allowed to use swimming pools, tennis courts or any other sports field.
- Jews were forbidden to sit in their gardens or those of their friends after 8 pm.
- Jews were forbidden to visit Christian friends in their homes.

In one of her first entries in the diary, Anne wrote, "*Paper has more patience than people.*" This was a saying Anne had heard, and since she felt that she didn't have a close friend she thought of her diary as her best friend and called it "Kitty".

A month later in July 1942, Anne Frank's family had to pack up and go into hiding very suddenly when her 16-year-old sister, Margot, received a letter telling her she had to report to the authorities in the morning. This meant she would be taken away to a work camp.

Anne was told to pack her school satchel with a few items that she wanted to take with her.

[Enter pupils each carrying one of the articles and placing them in a satchel].

She wrote in her diary, "Margot and I started packing our most important belongings into a satchel. The first thing I stuck in was this diary, and then curlers, handkerchiefs, school books, a comb and some old letters. Preoccupied by the thought of going into hiding, I stuck the craziest things in the satchel, but I'm not sorry. Memories mean more to me than dresses."

Anne and her family had to go into hiding, and her diary became even more important to her. It was a place where she could write down her deepest feelings about what was happening day by day, and also her thoughts and hopes for the future.

In August 1944, the Frank family were discovered in their hiding place and Anne and her family were sent to a concentration camp. Life there was full of horrors. Anne's mother died first, then her sister. Anne died of hunger and a disease called typhus just three weeks before British and American soldiers reached the camp and set the people free. Anne was nearly 16. In her short life, she had experienced many kinds of injustice but she never gave up hope.

In one of the last entries in her diary she wrote: *"It's utterly impossible for me to build my life on a foundation of chaos, suffering and death. I see the world being slowly transformed into a wilderness, I hear the approaching thunder that, one day, will destroy us too, I feel the suffering of millions. And yet, when I look up at the sky, I somehow feel that everything will change for the better, that this cruelty too will end, that peace and tranquillity will return once more. In the meantime, I must hold on to my ideals. Perhaps the day will come when I'll be able to realise them!"*

Conclusion

Display or project a large copy of the cover picture (Claudio Muñoz's illustration of Article 19) and the photograph of Anne Frank below.

Then ask:

Why are we looking at these pictures today?

Because today, January 27, is Holocaust Memorial Day. The Holocaust is the name given to the murder of over 6 million people by the Nazis during the Second World War. Of the 6 million, 1.5 million were under the age of 18 years. It is estimated that 1.2 million Jewish children were murdered, but tens of thousands of Roma (Gypsy) children and thousands of children with learning difficulties and disabilities were also killed.

Holocaust Memorial Day is a day on which we can remember all the victims, and make sure it does not happen again. It also commemorates the victims of more recent massacres of innocent people such as Bosnia, Rwanda, and Darfur.

[Either to close the assembly or as class work to follow up.]

1. What rights did Anne lose before she went into hiding and then when she was in hiding?

2. What do you think she meant when she said, *"memories mean more to me than dresses?"*

3. How do you think Anne managed to stay hopeful about the future?

[This could be linked to Anne's courage and her determination for the future. Early in 1944, Anne heard a radio broadcast by a member of the Dutch Government. He said that after the war he hoped to collect eyewitness accounts of the suffering of the Dutch people. As an example, he specifically mentioned letters and diaries. Impressed by the speech, Anne decided that when the war was over she would publish a book based on her diary and she began rewriting and editing her work.]

4. Pupils could think about what they would pack if they suddenly had to go into hiding. This could be done as a list, or they could make collages using the shape of a school bag and drawing, colouring and cutting out all the things they would put in the satchel.



[Claudio Muñoz's illustration is one of 14 beautiful pictures in *For Every Child*, available from UNICEF UK education resources. Please visit: www.unicef.org.uk/store]

Any time: Everyone's a hero



UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Claudio Muñoz's illustration of Article 19 from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Article 19

Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect.

Key words

Responsibility
Respect
Harmony

Fairness
Learning
Justice

Rights

Illustrations

You will need, if possible, to display or project a large copy of Claudio Muñoz's illustration of Article 19.

Pupil participation

This assembly features a set of nine multiple-choice questions. Pupils could come with ready-made voting boards with the letters A, B, C written on them, which they hold up in response to each question. It may be best not to ask all nine questions at once, instead discussing each answer immediately after its corresponding question.

Hint:

If you write each question and its three possible 'answers' on flipchart paper in advance of the assembly, pupils won't have to rely on listening skills and memory.

Opening

First of all, I want you all to give yourselves a round of applause. I've asked you to do that because I want us to congratulate all the heroes and heroines we have in this school.

Yes, we have many heroes and heroines at this school.

[Refer to the actions of a child or group of children that would make them 'heroes' or 'heroines'.]

The heroes and heroines I want to talk about today are all of you: you are heroes for the way you are tackling bullying in this school. Now I am sure we all know children who have been bullied, even if not at this school. Is that right?

What is bullying? Can someone describe it to me?

[You will probably get a whole range of answers to respond to.]

Okay. What is our policy on bullying at this school? How do we respond to bullying?

[Take responses.]

In this assembly I want to remind us all what we should do if anyone tries to bully us, whether it's in school, or outside school. To do this, we are going to have a quiz.

I am going to ask you nine questions and for each one there are three choices: A, B or C. You need to write down on your paper the number of the question and then the letter of the answer you think is right. Then we will talk about your answers.

Don't worry, this is not a test. It's just another way of talking about what we are doing to stamp out bullying in this school. Are you ready? *[Suggested correct answers are underlined]*

The hero quiz (questions derived from Kidscape's *What is bullying*, www.kidscape.org.uk)

Question 1

You are walking to school and a gang of bullies demand money or your trainers. What should you do?

- a. Fight them.
- b. Shout and try to run away.
- c. Give them what they want, and tell your teacher and parents.

Question 2

You are on the school playground and someone accidentally trips you up. What should you do?

- a. Hit the person hard.
- b. Give them a chance to apologise.
- c. Shout at them and tell the teacher they deliberately hurt you.

Question 3

You are in the school toilet when an older student punches you. You ask them to stop and that you will tell a teacher. The older student tells you not to do anything or "You'll get worse." What should you do?

- a. Wait until the bully leaves and then tell a teacher.
- b. Get into a fight with them.
- c. Accept what happened and don't tell.

Question 4

A gang of bullies corner you and start hitting you. What do you do?

- a. Do nothing. Just take it.
- b. Shout for attention and run away.
- c. Fight back.

Question 5

Someone in your class is always making rude comments about you and says them loud enough for you and others to hear. It really upsets you. What do you do?

- a. Get angry and punch the bully.
- b. Make nasty remarks back.
- c. Try not to react to the comments and tell the teacher.

Question 6

A group of your former “best” friends start to leave you out of their games. This hurts your feelings and makes you very upset. What should you do?

- a. Try to find a new group of friends.
- b. Telephone a member of the group to ask them why they are doing this. Tell your parents.
- c. Do both A and B.

Question 7

Your friend’s dad recently died and some kids are making hurtful comments to your friend. How do you act?

- a. Come to your friend’s defence and tell them to stop it.
- b. Leave your friend to sort out their own problems.
- c. Ignore it. It will stop eventually.

Question 8

You are getting your food in the lunch room and someone yells out a rude comment at you. It is the first time this has happened. How should you respond?

- a. Yell back.
- b. Ignore it for now but if it happens again tell a teacher.
- c. Knock their lunch tray over.

Question 9

You see someone being bullied. What should you do?

- a. Get help or try to stop the bully yourself – but only if you won’t get hurt.
- b. Ignore it, walk by and be thankful it isn’t you.
- c. Laugh at the bully’s victims in the hope that the bully won’t pick on you next time.

Concluding remarks

[When you have discussed all the answers and ensured that you have reinforced the key actions outlined in the school’s anti-bullying policy, you could point to Claudio Muñoz’s illustration of Article 19.]

Who can describe what this picture shows? Why are we looking at this picture today?

Whose hand is this?

[Point to the restraining hand in the picture. Pupils may say, “your hand” or the hand of an adult. Point out that it could be their hand, because the way to stop bullying is to stand up to it, tell someone and not let it pass unchallenged. The bully is not brave. The person who does not accept bullying is.]

[Claudio Muñoz’s illustration is one of 14 beautiful pictures in *For Every Child*, available from UNICEF UK education resources. Please visit: www.unicef.org.uk/store]



February 21: Mother Language Day



UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 2

Every child has the same rights regardless of their race, colour, sex, language, religion, politics, nationality, social class, place of birth or disability.

Article 30

Every child has the right to practice their own culture, language and religion.

Key words

Equal	Freedom
Global	Harmony
Justice	Respect
Right	Tolerance

Illustrations

You will need, if possible, to display or project a large copy of the above picture (Rachel Isadora's illustration of Article 2).

Pupil participation

A child to narrate Selwa's story. A group of children who speak other languages.

This assembly is an opportunity for all your pupils who speak another language to share it with others. Ask each one to start by saying "Good morning" in the other language to the assembly. You could also ask these pupils one at a time to hold up a large piece of paper with "Good morning" or "Hello" written in the other language. The rest of the children could then see if they can say the word or phrase. The child who can speak the other language could then help them out with the pronunciation. The children who speak another language could finish by each saying something about themselves: first in their own language, then in English.

Opening

Did you realise that all these children speak other languages? Some of them speak more than one other language. Please put up your hand if you speak more than one other language.

I know some of you *[indicating to the rest of the school]* have started to learn French. Is it easy? How many of you can say something in French?

[See if there are any volunteers to say anything.]

[Possibly comment]

That is very good. For some of children who were holding signs – French is their second, third, or even fourth language.

The reason I asked all these children to talk to us in their languages today is because today is International Mother Language Day. The language we first learn to speak from our family is called our “mother tongue”, and this is a day to celebrate people's right to practice their own language. This is Article 30 in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Put up your hand if you have visited another country where they speak another language?

When you were there were you able to understand what people were saying?

Could you do the shopping?

We are fortunate because so many people in the world speak English, but it is not so easy for those who come here and have to learn English. And there are many countries in the world where English isn't the first language, and people who move to those countries have to learn another language. Like Selwa had to. She is now 12 and lives in Spain. Let Selwa tell you her story.

[Child who is narrating Selwa's story steps forward.]

Selwa's story

Let me tell you about my family. Ten years ago, when I was just a baby, my parents emigrated from Morocco to Spain. My two brothers and my sister were born in Spain. My father is a doctor and my mother is a teacher. Well, that's what they did in Morocco. When my parents came to Spain, they couldn't find jobs because their qualifications weren't from Spanish universities. Also, the main language spoken in Morocco is Arabic, and in Spain they had to learn Spanish. My Papa worked in a hospital, but he was cleaning the floors. Papa managed to do further studies until he had qualifications that let him practice as a doctor again. Mama always says that it was a struggle but she is so glad because my Papa only ever wanted to be a doctor

After we had been here for a few years, Papa arranged for his mother to join us. His father had already died and Nana was on her own. Now we all live together in one apartment. I don't remember much about Morocco, so Spain is really home for me. My brothers and sister wouldn't even think about living anywhere else: this is all they've ever known. I know it's different for Mama and Papa. Papa has made lots of friends through his work and his Spanish is almost as good as mine. Mother's friends are mostly Moroccan and her Spanish is limited to doing the shopping and greeting neighbours. Nana only speaks Arabic. I think I've only ever heard her say “hello”, “thank you”, “goodbye”, “how much” and “too much” in Spanish. Nana says she's too old to learn anything new.

I'm proud of coming from Morocco and of being Spanish. Does that sound strange? I like things about both cultures. I love both languages – Mama and Nana talk to me in Arabic. It upsets me when teachers tell me not to speak Arabic at school, like it's a bad language or something. I have friends who are completely Spanish and friends who are a bit of a mix like me. They treat me the same. It tends to be children that don't know me, or ignorant adults who offend me. Sometimes they don't mean it. They say, “You're not Spanish are you, where are you from?” I want to say, “Actually I am Spanish, but I'm originally from Morocco.” I think if I was white, they wouldn't say these things. I've talked to my father about racism. He tells me that sometimes patients don't want to see him because he's black. That upsets me but it's their loss because he is the best doctor in his clinic.

Thank you [child's name] for being Selwa. And thank you everyone who shared their language with us. Who can tell me something they have learnt from this morning's assembly?

[Hopefully, that everyone has the right to use their mother tongue, and that we should respect other people's languages, culture, etc.]

Conclusion

Display or project a large copy of the cover picture (Rachel Isadora's illustration of Article 2).
Then ask:

Why are we looking at this picture today?

[Look for responses around respecting differences, understanding others, celebrating diversity.]

[Rachel Isadora's illustration is one of 14 beautiful pictures in *For Every Child*, available from UNICEF UK education resources. Please visit: www.unicef.org.uk/store]

A girl writes on the backboard at Umubano Primary School, Western Province, Rwanda. UNICEF provides educational supplies and supports teacher training at the child-friendly school.

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February 22: World Thinking Day



UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Ken Wilson-Max's illustration of Article 9 from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Article 15

All children have the right to meet with others and to join or set up associations, unless in doing so they violate the rights of others.

Article 24

Every child has the right to good quality health care.

Key words

Helping	Volunteering	Vaccination
Responsibility	Rights	

Image

You will need, if possible, to display or project a large copy of the above picture (Ken Wilson-Max's illustration of Article 9).

Resources

- Scouts and Guides badges and/or uniforms
- A large piece of paper on which is written "Vision for Scouting: As a global movement, making a real contribution to creating a better world".

Pupil participation

The story is a dramatisation that can be either read or acted. It needs a cast of at least 12, as it takes place at a busy market in Angola.

Characters

- Isa and Carlos. Both are 12–14 years old. They are carrying some leaflets.
- Woman 1 – shopping in the market with her baby on her back and plastic bowl on her head.
- Woman 2 – a stall holder.
- Woman 3 – a shopper, she has a baby on her back.
- Women 4 and 5 – shoppers.
- Man – a man in the market.
- Others – stall holders and shoppers in the market.

Props

- Market goods such as vegetables, clothes, toys, toiletries and so on.
- Dolls to represent babies.
- Leaflets with the title, *What everyone needs to know about polio and how to prevent it.*

Costumes

- Isa and Carlos should wear Guide and Scout uniforms/badges, and carry the leaflets.
- Woman 1 has a baby/doll tucked in the back of her brightly coloured wrap.
- Woman 2 is wearing a bright coloured wrap and is sitting under a large umbrella for shade.
- Shoppers carry plastic bowls on their heads, or carry wicker baskets.
- Boys wear loose fitting T-shirts over their trousers.

Opening

Do any of you go to Guides or Scouts, or Beavers?

[Hopefully you will have at least five or six.]

Today/February 22 is World Thinking Day. It is a special day when Scouts and Guides all around the world think of each other. And there are millions of Scouts and Guides spread across more than 150 countries.

Today, we are going to watch a play about what Scouts and Guides do in Angola, southern Africa. But first I am going to ask you a question: who knows what a vaccination is?

A vaccination protects us against a dangerous disease by giving us a very small amount of the disease, so our bodies develop the strength to beat the full disease. You will probably all have been given vaccinations against measles, polio, tuberculosis (or TB) and several others too.

The UNICEF office in Angola know that one of the best and cheapest ways of protecting children, and giving them a better chance of growing up healthy, is to vaccinate them against polio. Polio is a serious illness, which can leave affected children with physical problems for life, or even kill them.

And do you know who UNICEF Angola have helping them? Guides and Scouts: UNICEF needed as many people as they could get to help them tell people about the vaccination campaign and how the polio vaccine will help their babies.

This is a story about Isa and Carlos, who volunteered to help spread the message about preventing polio.

Scene: Sao Paulo Market in Luanda, capital of Angola

The stage is full of people, some sitting on the ground in front of their 'stalls', others moving around between them, looking at and buying goods. Enter Isa and Carlos. They look around the busy scene and whisper to each other. Isa approaches a woman who has her young daughter tied on her back and is balancing a blue plastic bowl on her head, to be filled with goods from the market.

Isa

Hi, my name's Isa. I'm a Guide. Have you heard about polio? Do you know that this weekend all Angolan children under the age of 5 are being vaccinated for free against polio?



Woman 1

[Rather puzzled, the woman looks at her] Who did you say you are?

Isa

My name's Isa. I'm a Guide and I want to tell you how to make sure your baby grows up to be healthy.

The woman takes the large bowl off her head and sits down on the ground and readjusts her daughter onto her lap. A few women gather to listen as Isa kneels beside Woman 1 and begins to explain.

Isa

Polio is a disease that can disable your child. But if she gets two drops of vaccine into her mouth this weekend and again in July and August, she'll be protected against polio for life.

Woman 1

Oh, I don't want my baby to be disabled. How much are the drops?

Isa

They are free! We're doing vaccinations all weekend at people's houses. Be sure you're at home tomorrow morning with your child, and the vaccinators will come and give your baby the drops to protect her against polio.

Woman 1

You're sure it's free? There's not much free in this world.

Isa

Absolutely free. Just stay at home tomorrow morning until the vaccinators come, alright? I promise you the vaccines are free. Here, take one of these leaflets.

Woman 1

Well, okay. I'll wait for them tomorrow. Thanks for the information.

[She stands and wraps her daughter back on to her back.]

Now, I have to buy some food for my family.

[Isa goes back to her friend Carlos, who has been watching her talk to the woman.]

See, it's easy. Usually, after we've left, the women talk amongst themselves and the word passes quickly, especially here in the market.

Carlos

Yes, I see. It's just like the training we had at Scouts. Let me talk with this lady here.

Carlos squats down beside Woman 2 who is protected from the sun by an umbrella.

Carlos

Hi, my name's Carlos. I'm a Scout. Have you heard about polio? Polio is a disease that can disable your child. But, if she gets two drops this weekend and again in July and August, she'll be protected against polio for life. And it's free.

Woman 2

[She listens patiently and attentively and when he's finished she smiles and pats him on the cheek.]
You're a good boy. But you don't need to tell me – my child was vaccinated this morning before I came to the market. Now, go and tell the other women – maybe they don't know.

Carlos smiles, gets up and goes to join up with Isa, who is meeting some resistance from Woman 3.

Woman 3

No, no, no! No vaccines! I give my baby traditional medicine – that's enough!

[Isa, still smiling and determined not to give up]
But, Mae – he needs the vaccines to stop him from getting polio ... it will make him strong.
Again, a small crowd of women has gathered around Isa. Laughing and smiling, they join in to support Isa.

Woman 4

My baby got the drops this morning.

Woman 5

Listen to us – we're trying to help your baby!

Man

The Girl Scout is right – the vaccines are what will work.

Carlos, who has been listening joins in. He touches the woman on the elbow. She looks at him sternly.

[Carlos, looking into the woman's eyes]
Mae. Maybe you could give your son the traditional medicine and the vaccination drops ... they don't cost anything.

Everyone looks at Carlos. He keeps looking straight into the woman's eyes. She continues to look at him, then after a few moments, looks around at the others who are silently waiting for her reaction.

Woman 3

[Woman 3 smiles and says proudly]
I've just decided to make sure my baby gets both the traditional medicine and the drops.
Then, he'll be even stronger!

She turns and starts to make her way through the crowd, her dignity intact.

Isa and Carlos give out their leaflets to anyone who will take them.

[A pupil holds up a large piece of paper on which is written "Vision for Scouting: As a global movement, making a real contribution to creating a better world"]

End

Concluding remarks

So that's an example of how Guides and Scouts are helping communities in Angola.

Can anyone here tell us about something Guides or Scouts have done to help our community?

[You might like to ask pupils to suggest something the school could do.]

[Ken Wilson-Max's illustration is one of 14 beautiful pictures in *For Every Child*, available from UNICEF UK education resources. Please visit: www.unicef.org.uk/store]

March 4: World Book Day



UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Satoshi Kitamura's illustration of Articles 28 and 29 from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Article 28

All children and young people have a right to free primary education. Children should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level they can.

Key words

Responsibility
Freedom
Safety

Learning
Choice
Justice

Rights
Refugee
Equality

Resources

Photographs showing children in schools around the world.

(You may wish to refer to *A School Like Mine*, published by Dorling Kindersley in association with UNICEF. This book is a celebration of schools around the world, as seen through the eyes of schoolchildren. To order a copy, please visit www.unicef.org.uk/dk07).

Illustrations

You will need, if possible, to display or project a large copy of the above picture (Satoshi Kitamura's illustration of Articles 28 and 29).

Pupil participation

Pupils from across the age-range recommend a favourite book. This could be accompanied by a picture they have drawn – either of the cover or of an incident from the book.

Opening

March 4 is World Book Day. It is a day when people celebrate books and reading – reading for pleasure as well as reading for information. In this country, we may take books for granted. We buy them in shops or borrow them from the library. Our schools and our homes have books. I am sure we all have our favourite book.

[You could talk about your own favourite book for a couple of minutes.]

Today, some pupils are going to tell you about their favourite books.

[Children take it in turn to talk about their favourite books.]

But while we may take books for granted, there are millions of children who literally cannot get their hands on a book to read; for whom even a school textbook is a luxury. When we hear about the hardships suffered by children in other parts of the world, do we think about what effect this is having on their schooling? Today, I am going to tell you about children whose education has been badly affected by the conflict in their countries.

Mina's story

Mina lives in Afghanistan. Afghanistan is a country where it has not been easy to get an education for nearly 20 years, mainly because of war. For 20 years, hardly any teachers have been trained and very few textbooks printed.

For the first 10 years of Mina's life, a group called the Taliban controlled Afghanistan. The Taliban believed that girls didn't need to be educated and they didn't allow women to have jobs. Only boys were allowed to go to school. However, Mina's parents wanted her to be educated and, although it was dangerous, Mina attended a secret school in her teacher's home.

In 2002 the Taliban lost power and all children, including girls, were encouraged to return to school. The problem was how could schools open when many were in ruins and there were no textbooks, no pencils, no pens, no exercise books. As the organisation responsible for improving the lives of children worldwide, UNICEF worked to help as many children as possible get back to school.

Now Mina is able to go to school. She was the first pupil to turn up at school and collect her bag, books and pens, which had all been provided by UNICEF. Mina says, *"I am pleased to be able to go to school. Now I am studying properly, and this is a great time for me and for my friends. I secretly went to school at the teacher's house because I knew that learning was important for me, and for my future. But coming to a real school is the best thing. Above all, I am really excited that I will be able to take books home to read."*

For children in refugee camps, the struggle to get a decent education is even harder. Refugee camps are places that begin as temporary campsites, when people have been forced to leave their home – maybe because of war or a natural disaster like an earthquake or flood. These people have had to leave their homes quickly, and they come with very little. Sometimes it can take quite a long time for aid agencies, like UNICEF, to get everything into the camps that the refugees need.

Many thousands of people might live in one refugee camp, and they need essential supplies like water and shelter to be able to go on living their lives, until they can return home. Sadly, sometimes people have to live in refugee camps for years because they cannot go home. For these children, education is incredibly important, as it may be the only way they can make their way in an uncertain world

Conclusion

How do you think the children and teachers in our school would manage if we had no books, paper, pens and pencils? And, of course, there would be no computers or internet.

[You will likely get some interesting, revealing comments. To counter any negative remarks, you might want to use the following conclusion.]

There is a saying, “The child cannot wait.” This means that childhood is so short, and there is so much a child needs to be able to grow up healthy and ready to be an adult, their lives cannot be put on hold until the situation gets better – their needs must be met now.

What needs do children have that are so important for their growth and development?

[This is an opportunity to see if your pupils are relating what they have learnt about wants and needs in relation to their own lives, and to the lives of children like Mina and Chekhadine.]

Did you notice the photographs I’ve been showing you during this assembly? What did you notice about all of them?

[They are all of children at school.]

What do the classrooms look like?

Do you need a fabulous classroom to be able to learn well?

Remember, our school provides teaching and a place to learn, and it is your responsibility to make the most of it.

Today is World Book Day and across the world millions of children, families, schools and libraries are struggling to get books. Our school has a good library. We can buy books at the shops or borrow them from a library – it is easy for us to take books for granted. Next time you find it difficult to decide what book you want to read, from all the choice that is available, think of the millions of children who may lack the opportunity to read even a single book.

[If your school is interested in donating books for other countries, please contact Book Aid International: www.bookaid.org]

[Satoshi Kitamura’s illustration is one of 14 beautiful pictures in For Every Child, available from UNICEF UK Education resources. Please visit: www.unicef.org.uk/store]

A girl writes on the blackboard at a UNICEF-supported school in Afghanistan © UNICEF/HQ07-1106/Shehzad Noorani



21 March

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination



UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Rachel Isadora's illustration of Article 2 from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Article 2

The Convention applies to every child, regardless of race, colour, sex, language, place of birth, religion, politics, disability, and status.

Article 12

All children and young people have the right to give their opinion and for adults to listen and take them seriously.

Article 30

All children and young people have the right to practice their own culture, language and religion.

Key words

Choice	Fairness	Respect
Equality	Freedom	Right
Justice	Harmony	Tolerance

Pictures

You will need, if possible, to display or project a large copy of the above picture (Rachel Isadora's illustration of Article 2).

Pupil participation

Four children to act in a play.

Characters

Vesna – a Roma woman. Vesna is neatly dressed and wearing a brightly coloured scarf over her head.
Shop manager – not Roma. Boy or girl, smartly dressed.

Anita – not Roma. Dressed like Vesna, apart from the brightly coloured scarf.
Government official – not Roma.

Props

A shop – jars, produce, till and so on
A coffee shop – tables, chairs, cups, and so on

Opening

Hands up everyone who thinks they are important!

[Hopefully lots of hands will go up.]

[Look around at everyone who has their hands up.]

Would you say that the person next to you is important?

[Depending on the children, you may get unanimous nods, or some children may look a little sceptical.]

What do all children have in common?

[You may receive an enormous number of answers here. Eventually get to the point that all children have rights.]

Let's look at rights a little more closely by watching this play.

The play

The shop manager takes up their position behind the counter. Enter Vesna.

Vesna *[Stops to read an advert in the shop window]:*

Shop assistant wanted ... Hmm, I need a job. I'll go in. Maybe they will give the job to me.

Vesna opens the door to the shop and goes in. The manager looks up as she enters and sneers.

Vesna: Hello. I've come about the job.

Manager: Oh. What is your name?

Vesna: Vesna

Manager: Vesna, that's a Roma name isn't it? Well, Vesna, I have to wait for more people apply. Why don't you come back tomorrow?

Vesna: Oh, alright. She leaves.

[Outside the shop she says to herself]

You would think s/he would be happy to interview me now. Never mind, I will come again tomorrow.

Next day. Vesna returns to the shop.

Vesna: Good morning. Do you remember me? I came about the job yesterday, and you told me to come back. I would still like the job.

Manager: Oh, oh. *[Looks embarrassed]*

I'm sorry, I'm still waiting for more applicants so I can interview everyone at once. Can you come back in a few days?

Vesna: Yes, yes I can. Certainly. Thank you. Goodbye.

Vesna leaves the shop.

A few days later, she returns to the shop.

Vesna: Good morning. Do you remember me? Vesna? I am interested in the job as shop assistant. You told me to come back in a few days.

Manager: Oh, yes, I remember. Well, sorry, I have decided to take on someone else.

Vesna: Oh. But you didn't even interview me for the job.

Manager: Well, I thought it would be a long journey for you.

Vesna: But you don't know where I live.

Manager: Well, I'm sorry. Would you please leave?

[Vesna leaves. Outside she says to herself]

I don't think this is fair. There doesn't seem to be a new assistant and I asked three times to be considered for the job. I am going to talk to my friend Anita.

[Vesna and Anita sitting in a coffee shop.]

Vesna: Anita, I am so pleased to see you. I have been trying to get a job as a shop assistant. The manager kept telling me to come back for an interview and then he said someone else had the job but there is no-one else working there. I think it is because I am Roma. Would you help me? Will you go to the shop and ask for a job?

Anita: Of course I will. It's very unfair the way Roma people can't get jobs.

Anita walks to the shop and opens the door.

Anita: Good morning. I heard that you need an shop assistant.

Manager: Oh yes, I certainly do. Would you like the job? Can you start tomorrow?

Anita: Yes, I can. Thank you. I will see you tomorrow.

Anita walks back to meet Vesna in the coffee shop.

Anita: You are right Vesna. The manager offered me the job straight away. What can we do to stop this discrimination?

Vesna: I know what I am going to do. I am going to report the manager to the Government officials who work against racial discrimination.

A few days later, a Government official enters the shop.

Government official: Good morning. Are you the manager of this shop?

Manager: Yes, yes I am. Can I help you?

Official: I think you can. I am following up on a complaint made against you by Vesna Burowski. I think you refused her a job recently.

Manager: Well, yes. I felt that Vesna would find it difficult to work here, because of the distance she would have to travel to work each day. It's difficult to run a shop if staff are always late. I prefer to appoint someone local.

Official : I am afraid that is not good enough. The girl you have given the job to lives in the same street as Vesna. I think you didn't give Vesna the job just because she is a Roma, and that is not allowed. You are going to have to go to court for racial discrimination.

Manager: But, but ...

The Government official escorts the Manager out of the shop.

Later, Vesna and Anita are sitting in the coffee shop again.

Anita: How are you Vesna? I haven't seen you for some time? How did things go with the discrimination case against that shop manager?

Vesna: It went well. The shop manager had to give me some money because of his discrimination against me. I still haven't been able to find a job though.

[End]

Conclusion

There is discrimination against different groups of people in every country, including this one. The Convention on the Rights of the Child says that every child, regardless of race, religion or culture has all the rights in the Convention. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights says the same thing: that everyone is born free and should be treated in the same way. Everyone is equal, despite differences in language, sex, colour, belief and nationality, and has the right to live in freedom and safety. Sadly, in some countries, people are very poor, imprisoned, hurt or even killed just because of who they are.

March 21/today is the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. This day was created by the United Nations nearly 50 years ago (1960) because of events in South Africa, which at that time had a government run by white people that discriminated against black people. One way they discriminated against them was by making the black schoolchildren do all their lessons in a language called *Afrikaans*, a language spoken only in South Africa. Schoolchildren wanted their lessons in English, so they could communicate with far more people and get better jobs. Eventually all the schoolchildren in a place called Soweto had a demonstration and marched through the streets. The first child to be killed was a 13-year-old boy called Hector. Hundreds more children were shot and arrested for speaking out against discrimination.

Fortunately, a very famous man called Nelson Mandela led the struggle for change in South Africa and now everyone in South Africa, whether black or white, has equal rights.

Prejudice and discrimination are allowed to continue because people ignore their existence or else support these views. It takes courage to stand up for the rights of everyone, and speak out against prejudice and discrimination. But if everyone does, then they can be defeated.

We need to act on the words of the American author, William Faulkner, who said:

*"Never be afraid to raise your voice ...
against injustice and lying and greed.
If people all over the world ... would do this,
it would change the earth."*

Will you try to speak out against prejudice and discrimination?

Good. The world will be a better place each time you do that.

Display or project a large copy of the cover picture (Rachel Isadora's illustration of Article 2). Then ask:

Why are we looking at this picture?

[From the answers, draw out that all people should be treated equally. Everyone has the same rights.]

Follow-up work

1. Find out about Amnesty International: an organisation that helps people who have been unfairly treated because of their beliefs.
2. Consider the things/opinions and beliefs which are valued in school. Talk about them and display them in a prominent position.
3. In what ways could it be made easier for people to have freedom of expression? In your community? Around the world?
4. Could you support a local cause and make the cause better known by sharing their opinions and needs? How?
5. Visit the Citizenship Foundation Website for more information and activities on human rights: www.citfou.org.uk or telephone 020 7367 0500.

[Rachel Isadora's illustration is one of 14 beautiful pictures in *For Every Child*, available from UNICEF UK education resources. Please visit: www.unicef.org.uk/store]



March 21

Spring equinox and Earth Day



UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Babette Cole's illustration of Article 6 from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Article 12

You have the right to give your opinion and for adults to listen and take you seriously.

Article 24

You have the right to the best health care possible, safe water to drink, nutritious food, a clean and safe environment, and information to help you stay alive.

Articles 29

Education should teach children and young people to protect the environment.

Key words

Global
Respect

Helping
Harmony

Responsibility
Rights

Resources

- A bunch of flowers or foliage, so you can give each child a flower or branch.
- A basket full of litter.
- A world globe (to highlight the northern/southern hemisphere and the equator).

Illustrations

You will need, if possible, to display or project a large copy of the above picture (Babette Cole's illustration of Article 6).

Pupil participation

A girl will need to read the speech by Severn Cullis-Suzukis.

Opening

Today is a very special day. It is the first day of spring, and Earth Day. Earth Day is celebrated on the equinox to mark the moment that spring begins in the northern hemisphere and autumn in the southern hemisphere. At this moment, night and day are equal length anywhere on Earth. Someone standing on the equator at noon will not cast a shadow. Earth Day is intended to inspire awareness of and appreciation for the Earth's environment. It was created to remind us of our shared responsibility to protect the planet.

At the moment of the equinox, the Peace Bell is rung at the United Nations headquarters in New York. In place of a bell, today we are going to celebrate the occasion with what we can find on the Earth.

[Call up children from the audience and ask them what they would rather have: a flower or branch, or a piece of litter out of the basket. When no one wants the litter, ask them why not.]

Well, I am glad no one wants the litter. There is so much rubbish in the world. We have to dispose of our litter carefully so that we don't ruin the environment.

We all have a responsibility to look after our environment.

Today, I am going to tell you about some children who are trying hard to help their communities and our planet.

First, we are going to hear about some pupils in Brazil. They have made an important improvement to their neighbourhood by cleaning up the stream that runs through the heart of it. Everyone who lived beside the stream used to throw their rubbish into the water, including scraps of food. The result was that it smelt and made people ill. The stream also got blocked and flooded every time there was heavy rain.

The young people cleaned up the stream. They quickly realised that clearing the stream was one thing, but keeping it clear was another. For people almost immediately threw things into it again. They realised that if their health and environment was to improve, then they would have to change the behaviour of people in the neighbourhood.

The young people decided they would have to educate the people who lived near the stream about why it was important to keep the water clear. They used different methods for different age groups. With children, they used puppets; with adolescents, they used dance and drama. They went from house to house to talk to adults. It was difficult because not everyone would listen. Not many people admitted to throwing rubbish in the stream. They said, "We don't throw our rubbish in the stream, but our neighbours do." Some people couldn't even see why they should stop.

In April 2000, something happened that made the community stop and think. When the heavy rains came, the stream did not flood because of the young people's work. The young people told the community that it was because the stream wasn't blocked with rubbish and so the water could run away. Now the neighbourhood could see for themselves the importance of what the children had achieved.

The mayor congratulated all the young people involved and asked them to march through the streets with banners. Now, the pupils are working on educating people about the importance of hygiene and environmental health.

[The pupil chosen to read the speech should step forward now.]

Earth Day is a reminder that we all have a responsibility to look after the environment that we live in, and that we all need to think of the effect that our actions have on the world in which we live. Severn Cullis-Suzukis, a 10-year-old girl from Canada, made the following speech:

"I am only a child, yet I know that if all the money spent on war was spent in ending poverty and finding environmental answers, what a wonderful place this world would be. In school you teach us not to fight with others, to work things out, to respect others, to clean up our mess, not to hurt other creatures, to share and not be greedy. Then why do you go out and do the things you tell us not to do? You grown-ups say you love us, but I challenge you to make your actions reflect your words."

Severn's speech was made at the first Earth Summit in 1992, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. What she said made some people cry and, when she had finished, people stood and clapped her for a long time. At the time, Severn thought that powerful people who could make a difference had really heard what she said. But 10 years later she wondered what had been accomplished and declared:

"Real environmental change depends on us. We can't wait for our leaders. We have to focus on what our responsibilities are and how we can make the change happen."

Conclusion

What could we do to celebrate Earth Day?

[This is also the time for talking about a school environmental project. Pupil suggestions might include: picking up litter, recycling rubbish, planting flowers and trees, conserving water, organising a community "clear-up". People could walk more, drive their cars less, grow some of their own food, or perhaps join some group that is helping to preserve our planet.]

Display or project a large copy of the cover picture (Babette Cole's illustration of Article 6). Then ask:

Why are we looking at this picture today?

As well as showing plants, it also has little people – who grow as they jump from plant to plant – making the link between growing plants and growing young people.

[Babette Cole's illustration is one of 14 beautiful pictures in *For Every Child*, available from UNICEF UK education resources. Please visit: www.unicef.org.uk/store]

Somalian women and children fill containers from a contaminated water supply. Persistent drought in the region has meant that there are no other local sources of water.



22 March: World Water Day



UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Henriette Savant's illustration of Article 3 from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Article 24

You have the right to the best health care possible, safe water to drink, nutritious food, a clean and safe environment, and information to help you stay alive.

Key words

Equality Help Justice
Responsibility Rights

Resources

A number of plastic buckets.

Illustrations/images

Pictures showing water collection and use, around the world. Include a picture of Ryan, whose story you are going to tell, from his website. (Share the link to www.ryanswell.ca with your pupils.)

Pupil participation

Pupils could mime parts of this story. It needs an older boy to play Ryan. He sits at one side of the stage. On the other side, a class could play children in the Ugandan village. Each child has an empty bucket.

Opening

Uggggggggghhhhh!

[You enter the assembly carrying a bucket of water. You might spill a little and pant with the effort.]

Ahhhhhhhhhhh, that's better!

[Put down your bucket of water. Stand up straight and rub your back and hands.]

That's a relief. Do you know how far I've carried that bucket of water?

[The pupils may just say that you got it from the kitchen]

Yes, that's right, from the kitchen. But if I lived in a country where people do not have a good water supply, I could have carried that water for more than 2 miles. Do you know that we all need a recommended 20 litres of water per person per day for washing, drinking, and cooking. Imagine having to carry 20 litres for each person you live with for more than 2 miles.

And do you know who is often responsible for collecting the water? Girls. Like this one here.

[Show the photograph of the girl carrying the water bucket.]

[The children sitting at the side of the stage, stand up, pick up their buckets and do a circuit of the stage/hall, staggering as though the buckets were very heavy. At the end, they give their bucket to an adult and sit down again at the side of the stage.]

Why do people go to so much effort to get water?

[Look for some of the following answers: we need water to ... drink ... cook ... wash ourselves ... wash our clothes ... water the garden ... swim ... flush the toilet and so on.]

March 22/today is World Water Day and I'm going to tell about a boy called Ryan Hreljac.

[The boy playing Ryan stands up and comes and sits cross-legged in front of you, as if at school.]

Ryan lives in Canada. When he was just 6 years old, at his primary school near Ottawa, the capital of Canada, he heard about the millions of children in Africa who do not have clean water to drink.

Ryan learnt about the shortage of water and the problems this caused. He was told that about £40 would provide a well for a small community in Uganda, a country in East Africa. And Ryan decided he must do something to help.

What do you think he did?

[Take a range of answers.]

Ryan decided that he had to do something to make it easier for people to get water, and that he would raise £40 to buy a well.

He talked about it to his parents and they suggested he could earn the money by doing extra jobs around the house.

[Ryan jumps up and role plays doing these jobs.]

Ryan vacuumed, washed windows and dishes, and did lots of other chores. With great determination, he saved all the money that he earned. It took him just four months to raise the £40 he needed.

[Ryan mimes taking the money to Watercan, then going back and raising more money.]

Ryan's mother took Ryan and his money to a Canadian aid agency called Watercan, and they were delighted with his gift. Ryan asked them how his money would be used. They explained to Ryan that £40 would buy a hand pump. They also told Ryan that it cost about £1,500 to drill a well. Ryan listened. When he got home, he decided he must raise more money! One well just wasn't enough when there were so many people without water.

Ryan asked other people to help him. He collected donations at school and from family and friends. He continued doing odd jobs and eventually he managed to raise £500. Watercan added £1,000 so that a well could be drilled.

Ryan asked if his well could be dug near a school. The place chosen was the village of Angolo, in northern Uganda. Angolo's nearest water was more than 3 miles away. There had been several years of drought and any available water was dirty. As a result, one in five children in Angolo died before the age of 5.

[At this point, the class of children sitting at the side of the stage stand up and form a line across the stage. Then, every fifth child drops as if dead. Ryan stands and watches them, he looks horrified. The "dead" children remain motionless where they have fallen and could stay there for the rest of the assembly, if they are able to stay still that long! The other children return to the side of the stage.]

When Ryan visited Watercan he was introduced to Shirbu, the man in charge of digging Watercan's wells in Uganda. Shirbu explained that the well would be dug by hand. It could be dug much quicker

using mobile drilling equipment, but the equipment cost more than £15,000.

After hearing this, you might be able to guess what Ryan decided ... yes, he set himself the challenge of raising even more money!

It was at this point that an Ottawa newspaper wrote about Ryan's determination to raise money for the well. A local TV station also picked up the story. At school, his teacher put a watering can in the classroom for donations and Ryan sold bottled water to help raise more funds.

Ryan's class wrote letters to children in Angola and Ryan began to wish he could visit Angola. A neighbour was so impressed by Ryan's dedication to helping the village get clean water that he donated some air miles to Ryan. Other people followed suit and soon there were enough air miles for Ryan and his family to take the trip to Angola. Ryan saw what a difference having fresh, clean water in the village had made to the people there.

[Ryan could mime flying to Uganda, ending up by the class of children sitting at the side of the stage and they could welcome him. Possibly they could show him their new well. The "dead" lying on the stage are a reminder of the thousands of children who die every day from diseases caused by dirty water.]

Conclusion

This true story shows us how a single person can make a difference if they are really determined. Ryan now has his own charity, called Ryan's Well Foundation, and so far it has built more than 460 wells in 16 countries, bringing water to nearly 600,000 people. *[This figure was taken from the Ryan's Well website. Visit the website if you want the latest figures.]*

When he was 11 years old, he was asked to work on children's initiatives with the World Health Organization (WHO). Today, Ryan is a UNICEF Global Youth Leader and an expert speaker on water, health and poverty. Ryan's determination means that many children around the world will have a better life because their right to clean water is met.

Does anyone here have a strong determination to do something, either for themselves or others?

[Henriette Sauvant's illustration is one of 14 beautiful pictures in *For Every Child*, available from UNICEF UK education resources. Please visit: www.unicef.org.uk/store]



7 April

World Health Day



UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

P.J. Lynch's illustration of Article 24 from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Article 24

All children and young people have the right to the best health care possible, safe water to drink, nutritious food, a clean and safe environment, and information to help them stay alive, healthy and safe.

Key words

Choice
Justice
Rights

Equality
Learning
Health

Responsibility
Environment

Resources

- Paper or card to make placards.

Pupil participation

You will need eight pupils to hold up placards and to read out a statement written on the back. Each placard will have a letter on the front, when the placards are held up in the right order they should read 'MY HEALTH'. For example, the first child will hold up the placard with 'M' on the front and read out the statement on the reverse.

Opening

Who doesn't feel very well today?

[Ask those who respond why they are feeling unwell.]

Who is responsible for keeping us healthy?

[You might get an interesting range of answers. Look for: my parents; the doctor; me.]

This assembly is about keeping healthy. You all have the right to the best possible health, but what does that mean?

Today, we are going to remind ourselves of all the things we need to stay healthy.

[In turn, the children holding placards come to the front of the stage and read out their statement about health. Once each child has read their statement, they step back and stand in a line holding up their placard to show the letter on the front. When the last child has read out his/her statement, the placards should read 'MY HEALTH'.]

Statement one

Enough sleep

We need at least eight hours sleep a night. While we are asleep, our bodies are building and growing, and repairing any damage that may have happened during the day .

Statement two

Nutritious food

What we eat is the fuel our bodies need to grow . If we want to be healthy , our bodies need the right food. We should try to eat five pieces of fruit and vegetables a day .

Statement three

Water

Two-thirds of our body weight is water . We should try to drink at least 1 litre of water a day to keep our bodies well hydrated.

Statement four

Good hygiene

Germs breed in dirt, so it is important that we keep our bodies clean. It is particularly important to keep our hands clean. We pick up germs on our hands all the time and if we put our fingers in our mouths, or when we pick up food, we put the germs into our bodies.

Statement five

Exercise

Our bodies need to be exercised every day , so our muscles and ligaments are stretched and our bones, lungs and heart grow and stay strong and healthy .

Statement six

A clean environment

In the same way that we need to keep our bodies clean, our environment needs to be clean too. We can make sure we keep our environment clean by not dropping litter , keeping the classroom and our bedrooms tidy.

Statement seven

Health care

All children have a right to health care. In this country , this is usually provided free and starts before we are born. Vaccinations against diseases like measles, whooping cough, polio and TB are free and will keep us healthy.

Statement eight

Keeping safe

It is up to adults to keep us safe, but it is also up to us to be sensible and not put ourselves in danger . We shouldn't make friends with adults that our parents/carers don't know, and we shouldn't play in dangerous places such as busy roads, on a railway line or near deep water .

Each year, more than 11 million children die from the effects of disease and inadequate nutrition. Globally, more than one in five children die before they reach their fifth birthday.

Conclusion

An important organisation, the World Health Organisation, was created by the United Nations on 7 April 1948. The World Health Organisation is also known as the W-H-O. The WHO tells countries what they can do to ensure better health for their people. For example, it was the WHO that advised that children should drink six to eight glasses of water each day – three to four of them while at school.

Health is defined by the WHO as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease. It is also up to you, your families, the school, health authorities and the Government to ensure that you grow up with the best possible health.

[P.J. Lynch's illustration is one of 14 beautiful pictures in *For Every Child*, available from UNICEF UK education resources. Please visit: www.unicef.org.uk/store]

Children wash their faces at a communal water tap in the district of Tongsa, Bhutan.
© UNICEF/HQ96-0360/Frank Charton



Anytime: Fair trade



UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

The FAIRTRADE Mark

Article 2

The Convention applies to every child, regardless of race, colour, sex, language, place of birth, religion, politics, disability, and status.

Article 24

All children and young people have the right to the best health care possible, safe water to drink, nutritious food, a clean and safe environment, and information to help them stay alive, healthy and safe.

Key words

Choice	Harmony	Justice
Fairness	Rights	Respect

Resources

- A bunch of five bananas
- A few other groceries displayed on a table to represent a shop
- Shopping bag for the customer
- Old threadbare clothing for one child

Five banners with captions as follows:

- Banner 1 (shopkeeper): (front) 40p; (reverse) To sell Fairtrade bananas, I still get 40p
- Banner 2 (farmer): (front) 12p; (reverse) To farm Fairtrade bananas, I get 15p
- Banner 3 (exporter): (front) 35p; (reverse) To export Fairtrade bananas, I only get 22p
- Banner 4 (importer): (front) 10p; (reverse) To import Fairtrade bananas, I still get 10p
- Banner 5 (child): (front) 3p; (reverse) To grow Fairtrade bananas, I get 15p

Illustrations/images

You will need, if possible, to display or project a large copy of the picture (FAIRTRADE mark).

Pupil participation

Six children to play the shopkeeper, customer, child, importer, exporter and farmer.

Opening

[The shopkeeper is standing behind the table of goods]

Today, we are going to see a short play and we will talk about it afterwards.

[Customer enters the scene with a shopping bag]

Customer

I would like a bunch of bananas please.

Shopkeeper

[handing the customer the bunch of bananas]

That will be £1 please.

Customer

Thank you. *[Hands over money and walks out of shop]*

[Shopkeeper holds up banner 1 that reads 40p]

[Outside the shop, the customer is met by a child.]

Child

Excuse me! Sorry to disturb you. My family grew the bananas that you are carrying.

Would you mind telling me what you paid for them?

Customer

£1. That's 20p a banana. Bananas are the most popular fruit in the UK, so your family must be rich.

Child:

Oh, if only! The truth is my family only gets 3p for that bunch of bananas.

Customer:

3p! Where does the other 97p go?

Child

Well look!

[Points to the banner behind the shopkeeper]

For a start, the shopkeeper gets 40p. Then some goes to the farmer who owns the land my family grow bananas on ...

[Points to the farmer who holds up banner reading 12p]

... and some goes to the people who package the bananas and send them to countries like the UK ...

[Points to exporter who holds up banner reading 35p]

... and the rest goes to the people who pick them up when they arrive, separate them into bunches, and deliver them to the shops so you can buy them.

[Points to importer, who holds up banner reading 10p]

Every day, me and my family tend to the banana trees. We plant them, weed them, water them, pick the fruit, and pack them into boxes for collection. And for that, we get 3p.

[Holds up banner reading 3p]

My parents cannot afford to send us to school, or to buy us the shoes and books we need. My little brother is ill and the medicine he needs is really expensive.

Customer

Well. This really doesn't seem very fair. What can we do about it?

Child

If everyone bought fairly traded bananas then we'd get more money for our work. We would get a fair wage. Look!

[Each person turns round their banner, and reads out what is written on the reverse]:

Shopkeeper

To sell Fairtrade bananas, I still get 40p.

Importer:

To import Fairtrade bananas, I still get 10p.

Exporter:

To export Fairtrade bananas, I only get 22p.

Farmer:
To farm Fairtrade bananas, I get 15p.

Child:

To grow Fairtrade bananas, I get 15p.

Customer:

But isn't it more expensive to buy Fairtrade bananas?

Child:

Yes, it is a bit more expensive but you are helping to ensure that the people who grow the bananas get a fair wage and are better able to look after their family. That's only fair, isn't it?

A girl carries bananas in Mine Bay Islands, Trobriand Islands. © UNICEF/HQ04-1286/Giacomo Pirozzi



NB Prices and profits are only approximate to illustrate the unfair distribution of income from the sale of bananas. For more information go to: www.fairtrade.org.uk

Conclusion

After the play, ask the assembly the following questions:

- At the beginning of the play, who was making the most money from bananas?
- Who made the second largest amount of money?
- Do you think this is fair?
- Do you think that we should buy Fairtrade bananas?
- Why?
- How can you tell whether they are Fairtrade?
- Do you think this is a matter of rights and responsibilities? Whose?

[There could be wide range of responses looking at the responsibilities of people in the UK to pay a fair price so children in other countries are able to realise their rights to education, health, nutritious food, and so on.]

5 June: World Environment Day



John Burningham's illustration of Article 13 from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 12

Children have a right to say what they think should happen when decisions are being made that affect them – that is, children's voices should be heard.

Article 13

Children have the right to get and share information.

Article 29

Education should include the development of respect for the natural environment.

Key words

Helping	Rights	Respect
Learning	Listening	Voice
Responsibility	Safety	

Resources

- Sunhats and/or towels and/or buckets and spades for 10+ children
- A beach ball
- A tray and four plastic glasses
- A rug on a raised area at the back of the stage to represent the hotel
- A cymbal

Illustrations

You will need, if possible, to display or project a large copy of the above picture (John Burningham's illustration of Right No. 13)

Pupil participation

10+ children playing Ann and her family plus other holidaymakers on the beach and a waiter. Children should go barefoot, roll up trousers and so on.

All the children watching the assembly can represent 'the sea'. You could rehearse a Mexican wave and a 'whooshing' noise to be made when indicated by the narrator.

Opening

What is happening in this picture?

[Elicit that the boy is trying to tell his father that something important is happening, but his father isn't listening.]

Today we are going to see a short play about a little girl who tried to tell the grown ups around her when something important was happening.

Ann was 8 years old and her brother Jack was 5 when they went on holiday with their parents. There could have been a very sad ending to their story if it had not been for something Ann had learned at school.

For Christmas 2004, Ann and her brother Jack went on holiday to Thailand. They stayed in a lovely hotel right by the sea. On Christmas Day they opened their presents on the beach. It was perfect.

On Boxing Day, they went to the beach again and settled down near the gently lapping sea.

[Ann, Jack and their parents enter, followed by more children, acting as families and parents, all dressed in sun hats, some with towels under their arms. They mime laying towels out for sunbathing, making sandcastles, throwing a beach ball, paddling and so on.]

The sun was beating down and the palm trees were swaying in the breeze. Ann and Jack started making sandcastles. A waiter from the hotel brought them some ice cold drinks.

[Waiter brings drinks. At this point the narrator stops talking and the children start talking, shouting and laughing for 30 seconds until ...]

Suddenly, everyone on the beach went quiet and looked out at the sea.

[Everyone on the beach stands up and starts looking out to sea, shading their eyes.]

Or where the sea used to be. The beach was now enormous and the sea could hardly be seen. The beach was full of fish and crabs that had been left behind on the sea bed. People stopped and looked at the flapping fish and scuttling crabs.

Holidaymaker 1

Hey! Look at this fish. Shall we take it into the hotel for dinner?!

Ann was as puzzled as the others until she remembered a documentary she had seen.

Ann

Tsunami! Tsunami! We have to get off the beach. It's a tsunami! Mum! Mum! Come back. We've got to get off the beach!

Narrator

Ann's mother and father looked at each other and at their frantic daughter. Her father spoke to another man nearby and they laughed. Ann snatched up her brother Jack and started to carry him up the beach. He struggled in her arms. *[Actors act out what the narrator describes]*

Ann

We have to get away. We don't have much time.

Narrator

By this time people could see, far off, that the sea was rising up.

Ann

The wave will kill us! Please, let's all go now.

Narrator

Everyone was so confused. What was happening on their perfect holiday beach? But now, not so far away, they could see the sea getting bigger and bigger.

Suddenly panic broke out. People turned and ran up the beach. Everyone ran to the highest place, the top floor of the hotel. They were only just in time.

[People start to run towards the rug on the raised area at the back of the stage the mat.]

[Indicate for the children in the audience to perform a Mexican wave with a huge 'whooshing' sound. The narrator could bang a cymbal to indicate for them to stop]

The giant wave crashed against the hotel, swept past and then back again, carrying trees, beach chairs, rocks and boats. Everyone started to go back downstairs.

Ann

Wait! There may be another wave. We have to wait. It may be bigger than the first.

Narrator

This time people listened to her. Some even asked her questions. Half an hour later a bigger wave struck. For the next two hours more waves came, all bigger than the first. This beach, where Ann gave the warning, was one of the few places hit by the tsunami where no-one was killed.

Conclusion

The adults nearly didn't listen to Ann, because she was only eight years old.

Yet, she knew something nobody else did.

Do you think there's a lesson we could all learn from this true story? What is it?

Today is World Environment Day. This day reminds us of the bigger picture, the world environment. The tsunami was a natural disaster caused by an earthquake. No-one could have prevented the underwater earthquake. But as we have seen, it helps if you know what to do in an emergency.

We all have a responsibility to learn more about how to protect our environment and ourselves, so that we and our families can be safe.

Follow-up work

This story, called *The Christmas Angel* appears in the book *Higher Ground*, published by Chrysalis Children's Books. For the full story and classroom activities, visit:

www.unicef.org.uk/tz/resources/resource

(The Christmas Angel story)

www.unicef.org.uk/tz/resources/resource

(activities to go with the tsunami stories)

You can find out more about World Environment Day from:

www.un.org/depts/dhl/environment

12 June: World Day Against Child Labour



UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 28

All children and young people have a right to a primary education.

Article 31

All children and young people have a right to relax and play.

Article 32

Governments should protect children and young people from work that is dangerous or might harm their health or their education.

Key words

Choice	Justice	Safety
Fairness	Learning	
Freedom	Rights	

Resources

- Threadbare and dirty clothes for two boys
- A ragged dress for one girl
- A long dress or sari for one girl
- A thin branch
- Two flat baskets - one containing leaves, one containing small stones.

Illustrations/images

You will need, if possible, to display or project large copies of the photos of each of the children as they speak: Magendra, Babu, Lakshimi and Durga.

Pupil participation

Two girls and two boys to play the parts of the child labourers.

Opening

Can you imagine what it would be like to work for 12 hours a day instead of coming to school? To be so tired that you haven't the energy to play? To work for a boss that you are never likely to escape?

Worldwide, there are over 246 million children age 5–17 who have to work. I don't just mean doing a part time job like babysitting, working in a shop, or a paper round. I mean work that would be hard even for an adult to do. Around 171 million children have to do work that is so dangerous it could seriously damage their health. Most of them have no chance of going to school, even in the evening, so are unlikely to ever be able to improve their lives.

Here are some of their stories.

The child labourers' stories

[The children playing the labourers take up a position on stage and take it in turns to tell their stories. As each speaks, a photo of the person they are representing is projected behind them]



Magendra

I'm Magendra. I live in India. I don't really know how old I am because I've never been to school and neither have my parents. I have a job carrying rocks up a hill. At the top, they are thrown into a huge fire called a lime kiln. Eventually they're turned into cement for buildings.

Every day, I carry rocks up to the top of the lime kiln. I go up and down the ladder hundreds of times each day. I don't have any days off. My hands and feet are cut and dry from the rocks and my throat is sore from the smoke.

I have to do this work. My dad is the watchman for the lime kiln. My mum is sick and can't work.

Dad borrowed some money from his boss and promised that I would work for him for free until we have paid back the money. I don't know when that will be. Until then I can't leave, I have no choice but to keep on carrying these rocks.



Babu

I'm Babu. I work with my family on the farm. I don't get paid as my work helps to repay the money my parents borrowed from the village chief.

I work for 12 hours a day, seven days a week looking after the chief's cows. Sometimes I have to walk miles to find good grass for them to eat. I also have to plough the land, weed it and harvest the crops.

My work is worth about £3.50 a month but I never get any money. I have worked for this man

for three years, but the money my family owes him is still not paid off. We have to pay back more than we borrowed so I feel like I will be working here for the rest of my life.

My only hope is the evening school in our village. Between seven and nine each evening, children and adults who want to learn but have to work during the day can go to the school. Sometimes I think I might run away to the city and get a better job but I am frightened about what the headman would do to my parents if I didn't work to pay the money back.

Lakshmi

My name is Lakshmi. I am 10 ten years old. My job is making cigarettes. For as long as I can remember I have made cigarettes every day of the week, including weekends. I work from nine in the morning until six at night. I have to make 1,000 cigarettes a day to earn about £3.50 a month.

The place where I work is dark and smoky from the cooking fire in the corner of the room. There is only one dim electric light. Sometimes I can hardly see and my eyes hurt from the smoke. There are six of us making cigarettes. The youngest is Buji, who's six. She's been working with us for two years. She makes the tobacco leaves soft by scraping them with a pair of scissors. I roll the soft leaves into tubes and then stuff them with loose tobacco. We all sit cross-legged on the floor while we work. Our backs ache after a few hours. The only break is when we go home for an hour to have lunch. When I am at home I have to help my mother by fetching water and sweeping the house.

I make the cigarettes at my boss's house. She has five children who all go to school. I wish I could go too, but my parents owe a lot of money and I have to work until we have paid it off. I don't know when that will be.

Durga

Hi, my name is Durga. I used to work as a housemaid and nanny for a rich family. Today I'm happy because I have escaped from them.

My parents both died when I was young. I went to live with my uncle but he sold me to a family to work as a housemaid and nanny. I did my best. I worked hard from before sunrise until long after dark. I cleaned the house, did the shopping, collected the water and helped the cook prepare food. I looked after the baby and two other small children all day as well. Sometimes the children were very naughty and I had to keep them out of danger.

I don't know why, but the oldest daughter of the house took a real dislike to me. She used to slap me and shout at me. One day she poured petrol over me and set it alight. I rushed to the sink and splashed water over myself so luckily I wasn't too badly burned. They gave me cream for my burns and then locked me in my room.

I was determined to escape and I called out of my window. I was really lucky. A journalist was walking past. After hearing my story, he went to the family and threatened to write about them in the newspaper if they did not let me go. He brought me to this centre for children who have missed out on education. Now I live here and go to school with the other children. I hope to be a teacher one day.



Conclusion

Why do these children have to work?

What do you think should be done so these children don't have to work anymore?

None of you should have jobs yet. There are very strict rules in the UK that say you have to be at least 13 years old to have a part-time job. Do any of you have brothers or sisters that have jobs before or after school? What do they say about their jobs?

12 June is World Day Against Child Labour. It's a day to remind us of the 246 million children who have to work. We can help by learning about their lives and supporting organisations like UNICEF that work all around the world to help all children go to school and makes sure that if they have to work for a few hours a day they are not doing work that will hurt them.

20 June: World Refugee Day



UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Ken Wilson-Max's illustration of Article 9 from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Article 7

Children have the right to acquire a nationality and, as far as possible, the right to know and be cared for by their parents.

Article 22

Children who are refugees have the right to special protection and help. Refugee children are entitled to all the rights in the Convention wherever they are.

Article 38

Children in war zones should receive special protection.

Key words

Freedom	Respect	Tolerance
Fairness	Rights	
Justice	Safety	

Resources

Four signs reading as follows:

1. Violence
2. Separation
3. Dangerous journey
4. Torture

Illustrations

You will need, if possible, to display or project a large copy of the above picture (Ken Wilson-Max's illustration of Article 9).

Pupil participation

- Four pupils to hold up the signs and read the definitions of refugees.
- Two girls and two boys to play the refugees.

Opening

A refugee is a person who has run away from some danger or problem in their own country. People do not want to be refugees, it is often the only choice they have. Today, we are going to look at what makes someone a refugee. Currently, there are 9 million children and young people who are refugees around the world. Have you heard people talking about refugees coming to this country or about people living in refugee camps in other countries?

Here are some signs to describe what refugees may have experienced before coming to this country.

[Pupils bring in the four signs, one by one, spreading themselves across the stage.]

These signs tell us a little bit about refugees.

[As each 'refugee' enters, they stand beside the appropriate sign and tell their story after the sign holder briefly describes what they have been through].

Sign 1 holder:

[Holds up sign reading 'Violence']

A person can become a refugee after being forced to leave their homes by soldiers or gunmen. Their family members may have been threatened or killed.

Sarandra:

[Stands beside sign 1]

My name is Sarandra. I was 14 years old when my family and I had to leave our country, Kosovo. There was fighting there and my family was attacked because we belonged to a minority ethnic group. Men came to our street in the middle of the night with guns and there was shooting, even bombs. This happened for many nights and we would hide in the cellar of my uncle's house, with lots of other people like us.

We heard that soldiers were going to people's houses and giving them one hour to get out. One night they came for us. We took what we could carry and left. We stayed with some relatives, until one day my father was arrested by the police. He escaped three days later and came back to us but he looked like a different person. He looked so ill and his face was grey. We packed up and moved again but feared the soldiers would find us. One day my parents decided we would leave the country. With thousands of other people like us, we started to walk. We only had what we could carry.

Eventually, we crossed the border into Macedonia. We had to stay in a refugee camp – it was crowded. We had to queue for hours for everything. We saw a list of countries that had agreed to take in refugees from our country. One of the countries was the UK and we applied. We were accepted and now we have been here for years. I love the UK because I have school, friends and peace but I feel I lost my childhood. My parents have never looked as happy as they look in a photograph taken before the troubles began.

Sign 2 holder:

[Holds up sign reading 'Separation']

A child can become a refugee if their parents send them away from the danger in their own country to a safer country. But this means they have to manage in a strange country on their own.

Virginia:

[Stands beside sign 2]

My name is Virginia. I live in a refugee camp with my sister Elizabeth. We are from Burundi. There was

fighting in Burundi between the two main groups of people – the Hutus and the Tutsis. Our family are Hutus. We had to leave our home and become refugees after Tutsi soldiers threatened to kill our dad. Mum and Dad said we must go with our neighbour to Tanzania, one of the countries next to Burundi. We left home very quickly with only some food and the clothes we were wearing. It was a really long journey. We were scared almost all of the time, especially when we saw people who had been killed.

When we arrived at the refugee camp in Tanzania, we were given one room in a small hut. We were looked after by UNICEF, who gave us a plastic sheet, a bucket, two cooking pots and a 10-litre water can for fetching water. We also each got a bowl a plate and a spoon, a blanket and some soap. Every week we are given food to cook.

People come and talk to us and try to help us feel happier. One day when we are ready, we will go to a primary school in the camp. But what we really want is to go home and be with Mum and Dad again. We have not heard from them for over a year

Sign 3 holder:

[Holds up sign reading 'Dangerous journey']

Some people pay a lot of money or face life-threatening journeys to become refugees because they face even greater danger in their own country.

Christopher:

[Stands beside sign 3]

There is so much fighting in my country, Sudan. I was so desperate to leave that I would have risked almost anything to find safety and the chance of a better future. I had said in public that I disagreed with the violence and I was told that soldiers were after me.

If there is a fire in your house, you will jump; you don't think about how high the building is. The risk is big, but you take it to save your life. I paid £2,000 to get on a boat to escape.

A girl stands inside her school at the Djabal refugee camp, Ouaddai, south-east Chad. The majority of the camp's 14,000 residents are Sudanese and have fled here to escape the conflict in Darfur, Sudan. UNICEF provides the camp with education, therapeutic feeding, water and sanitation services.
© UNICEF/07-0246/Giacomo Pirozzi



I was smuggled onto a cargo ship and was at sea for two months with seven other people. I didn't see the light of the sun for so long. We lived on water and very small food rations provided by the people who had smuggled us onto the boat. I thought I was going to France, but I ended up in Cyprus. I was lucky though, at least I arrived safely in Cyprus. I have heard that thousands of people who pay to escape on boats, die *en route*.

I have asked to be allowed to stay here in Cyprus. I make some money selling African crafts to tourists. It isn't much but at least nobody will come after me here and try to hurt me. I am learning Greek and hope to go to evening school.

Sign 4 holder:

[Holds up sign reading 'Torture']

People who disagree with their country's government may leave their countries and become refugees. They may have already been jailed and tortured for their beliefs or risk being captured if they stay. If they flee, they may have to leave family members behind.

Ibrahim

[Stands beside sign 4]

I came to England with my wife Zeynep two years ago. I was a member of a political group that was against our country's government. They put me in prison for two years and I was beaten and tortured. Even after I was let out of prison, the police were always after me. If anything against the government happened, I would be taken in and questioned. They beat me up to try to make me confess. Even my eldest son, who is 12, was stopped by the police.

Zeynep and I decided we had to leave but we could not afford tickets for both us and our children. We left our four children with my mother. We thought we would be able to bring them to the UK soon. But once we got here, we found out that we have to be here for at least four years before we can apply for them to join us. Even though the UK has signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child that says families have a right to be together, the UK has said that it will not allow other family members to enter until we have been through all the procedures, which takes years.

We phone the children once a month and we all cry. My mother is getting old and the children are getting older and harder for her to look after. We need to bring them here so we can look after them and be a family again.

Conclusion

As you can see, every refugee has a different story.

Which story did you find caught your attention most?

Why?

20 June is World Refugee Day. What do you think we could do to help refugees?

Closing picture:

Display or project a large copy of the cover picture (Ken Wilson Max's illustration of Article 9 from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child). Then ask:

Look at this picture. Why do you think we have chosen it for this assembly?

Follow-up work

Discuss Ibrahim's story and the fact that the UK does not automatically allow families to be together in the UK.

For more information about refugees, please visit:

www.unhcr.org

www.refugeecouncil.org.uk

9 August: International Day of the World's Indigenous People



Philippe Dumas's illustration of Article 42 from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 2

The Convention on the Rights of the Child applies to everyone under the age of 18 years and children should be protected against all forms of discrimination.

Article 30

If you come from a minority group, you have the right to enjoy your own culture, your own religion and your own language.

Key words

Choice	Respect	Cultural difference
Equality	Rights	Justice
Freedom	Safety	Tolerance

Resources

Items typical of the Amazon rainforest, such as:

- Woven baskets (optional)
- Plantains, bananas, cassava (optional)
- Colourful feathers from birds such as parrots, macaws and toucans (optional)

Illustrations

You will need, if possible, to display or project a large copy of the above picture (Philippe Dumas's illustration of Article 42) and the photographs of Kiko and her village (overleaf)

Pupil participation

Audience involvement



Kiko, age 14, in his village in the Amazonian rainforest in Brazil.

Opening

Put your hand up if you think you are different?

[Look around. Has everyone raised their hands?]

[Ask one or two children whose hands are up]

Why are you different?

[Now ask one or two children whose hands aren't up]

Can you think of anything that is a bit different about you?

[Tease something out of them.]

Every one of us is different in some way. These differences make the world interesting and wonderful. How boring the world would be if everything and everybody were the same.

Today, I am going to pretend to be a boy called Kiko so he can tell you about his life in Brazil. He lives a very different life to ours but he has the same rights as us.

[Show photograph of Kiko]

Kiko's story

Hello, my name is Kiko. I am 14 years old and I live in the Amazon rainforest in Brazil. I am a Yanomami Native American and we are trying to keep our traditional way of life. We don't have electricity, telephones, televisions or washing machines. We make everything ourselves from the forest.

For example, we build our own homes. My family lives with all the other families of our village in a large round house, called a *shabono*, made from leaves and wood.

[show photograph of house]

Our family has its own area inside the *shabono* where we eat and sleep. The house surrounds a large open space where we dance and sing and have feasts.

Most days I get up early and go swimming and hunt fish in the nearby river . I also hunt turtles, monkeys, pigs and birds. I bring the food back for my mother to clean and cook. We only kill what we need to eat. Sometimes I collect fruit from the clearing in the forest where all the families grow corn and sweet potato, banana and plantain.

I like to make jewellery out of beads and string. I make the beads out of the stones from fruit, but sometimes the sisters at the Catholic Mission give me beads they bring from town.

One thing in my life is different from that of my parents. We have a teacher living with us now . He has put up a blackboard in part of the *shabono*, and in the afternoon he teaches us Portuguese, which is the main language of Brazil. Anyone can join in and lots of the adults come to the lessons.

We are learning to read and write our own language and Portuguese, and do maths. We are doing this so we can deal with the outside world when we have to. We have learnt that 200 years ago there were many different Native American tribes in South America but the Europeans took over more and more of the forest. Most of the other Native American tribes lost their traditional way of life long ago. Now most of them are the poorest people in Brazil and they live in the slums of the big cities, trying to survive. We know this could happen to us because there are lots of bad people who would chase us out of the forest. We are going to have to be modern so we can protect our way of life.



Two shabonos in the Amazon rainforest © Vanderbilt University

I will be married soon. Then I will be responsible for my wife and her parents, so I need to be a good hunter and carer. I know my wife will probably be one of the girls in the *shabono*.
[Show photograph of girl in hammock]

Just like I have been taught to hunt and fish and which fruits to take from the trees, she is learning about housekeeping, cooking and child care by her mother. We will be the guardians of our people and our way of life.

The land we live on was given especially to the Yanomami people by the Brazilian Government, but there are miners in the forest who poison the water in the rivers and streams we drink from with mercury that they use in gold mining. And there are soldiers, who don't care for us at all. Outside of our tribe, the only friends we have in the forest are our teacher and the nuns in the Catholic Mission. The nuns help us to be healthy, and UNICEF helps with the teacher who has come to live with us.

We are trying to live our lives in the forest like our forefathers did, taking only what we need. Our teacher tells us that two-thirds of the world's animals live with us in the forests. The forest also has many wonderful plants, some of which are used to make powerful medicine that saves lives. The forests have been here for millions of years, but they are being cut down and it is getting harder to keep to our traditional way of life. I fear for my future. Our way of life is guaranteed by governments, but in the end they do nothing to help us. We have the same rights as everyone else and it is important that you know that we exist, or otherwise we will end up in the slums of the cities with the other Native American people.

Conclusion

On 9 August we celebrate International Day of the World's Indigenous People. Indigenous (or native people's) rights are protected but agreements and laws are not always enough, as Kiko's story shows. What can we do to help Kiko and other vulnerable people?

Closing picture

Display or project a large copy of the cover picture (Philippe Dumas's illustration of Article 42).

Then ask:

What message does this give us?

[Hopefully you will get suggestions of being tolerant towards each other and respecting and appreciating differences.]

[Philippe Dumas's illustration is one of 14 beautiful pictures in *For Every Child*, available from UNICEF UK education resources. Please visit: www.unicef.org.uk/store]



Yanomami girl © Robert Caputo, National Geographic

5 October: World Teachers' Day



Satoshi Kitamura's illustration of Articles 28 and 29 from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 3

All organisations concerned with children should work towards what is best for each child.

Article 28

All children have a right to education.

Key words

Freedom	Responsibility
Equality	Learning
Rights	Tolerance

Resources

- Large curtain or rug
- Costumes of dress and trousers with headscarf for girls (optional)
- Costumes for soldiers (optional: toy guns)

Stage should be bare, except in the centre where the "secret school" is. The secret school should be hidden from the audience. Use a large curtain or rug for the school "entrance". Pupils need to be able to pass through the entrance.

Pictures

You will need, if possible, to display or project a large copy of the above picture (Satoshi Kitamura's illustration of Articles 28 and 29)

Pupil participation

+15 children

At least a dozen children (mostly girls) are needed to play schoolchildren. A girl is also needed to play the teacher and two pupils to play soldiers.

Opening

For dramatic effect, it may be a good idea to simply announce that there is going to be a short play. Set the stage as described above before the pupils enter for assembly.

Now, we are going to see a short play.

Directions

At the centre of the stage hangs a large curtain or rug. It is important that it is not clear what goes on behind the curtain or rug until all the children are in.

Soldiers patrol backwards and forwards on the bare stage.

Schoolchildren enter in ones and twos from both sides of the stage, occasionally looking behind them. The children have their schoolbooks hidden in shopping baskets or under their clothes. They need to be wary of the soldiers although not hiding from them. In ones and twos, the children manoeuvre their way across the stage and slip behind the rug or curtain.

There could be an incident where some girls are stopped by the soldiers, who ask questions like "Where are you going?" "What are you carrying?" The girls need to reply as innocently as possible, saying "We are going to the market." and "We are carrying fruit and vegetables."

When all the children are behind the rug or curtain, the soldiers move to the sides of the stage facing the audience. The rug or curtain is pulled away to reveal all the children sitting close together on the floor. The children's shoes are piled up close to where the rug was. They are looking at their schoolbooks and the teacher is teaching them in a whisper.

There could be an incident where the children want to laugh and they have to clasp their hands over their mouths so they don't make a noise. The soldiers remain facing the audience. When the children have had some lessons, they take it in turns to put on their shoes and slip away from the school. Again, they have to walk carefully past the soldiers.

The soldiers leave when all the schoolchildren have left the stage. Once the stage is empty, read out the following story.

The story behind the play

The play is based on the true life story of Habiba Khilwat, a teacher in Afghanistan. In the 1990s, the Taliban Government of Afghanistan banned girls from going to school. Women teachers and girl pupils were prevented from attending school and mostly forbidden to leave their homes unless they went with a male member of their family. Habiba was one of the teachers who the Government told to go home and not teach.

But Habiba missed teaching her class and decided that she would open a secret school in her home. She knew she was putting herself and her family in danger, but her parents gave her their blessing.

Habiba visited the parents of her former pupils and invited them to send their children, especially their girls, to her home. The children's parents knew that they must tell no-one and ensure their children's journey to school was kept secret.

Habibba's home is near the city of Kabul, capital of Afghanistan. There is a gravel yard with a chicken coop at the side of the house. There is a rug hanging over the doorway, where a dog stands and barks furiously when anyone approaches.

If you visited when the school was a secret, you would find a pile of children's shoes just inside the doorway, hidden from the eyes of passers-by. In Afghanistan as in many countries, it is polite to remove your shoes when entering a house. Behind the rug hanging over the doorway, children would sit quietly, crossed legged, on mats that covered the concrete floor. Habiba taught in a whisper and the children would smile but they dared not laugh in case they were heard. The children could not call out answers to questions as in a normal classroom. The children loved being there but everything about the school was a secret. They came to school in ones and twos, looking all around to make sure they were not followed or seen going into Habiba's house.

Every day at school spelled danger for Habiba, her pupils and their parents. Everyone lived in fear of the Taliban Government discovering their secret school because they knew Habiba could be sent to prison and everybody would face punishment. Fortunately, the Taliban never discovered the secret and now the Taliban regime is not in power and the children can go to school freely.

With UNICEF's help, children continue to be educated in Habiba's house. The children come in shifts to work with their teacher who risked her life because she believed that boys and girls should have a chance to learn.

Conclusion

After reading out Habiba's story, ask the assembly the following questions:

1. *What do you think was happening in this play?*
2. *Why do you think the teacher wanted to carry on teaching even though it was dangerous for her?*
3. *Why did the pupils want to go even though it was dangerous for them and their families?*
4. *Would you risk going to school if you knew you would be punished if you were caught?*
5. *What kind of teacher makes you want to come to school?*

The United Nations established 5 October as World Teachers' Day.

6. *Why do you think there is a day especially for teachers?*
7. *What does this day have to do with our play?*
8. *What do you think we should do on this day?*

Closing picture

Display or project a large copy of the cover picture (Sartoshi Kitamura's illustration of Articles 28 and 29). Then ask:

9. *Why are we looking at this picture today?*

[Sartoshi Kitamura's illustration is one of 14 beautiful pictures in *For Every Child*, available from UNICEF UK education resources. Please visit: www.unicef.org.uk/store]



A girl reads from her textbook in a Year 2 class at a girls' school in Jalalabad, eastern Afghanistan. Behind her is a chalkboard and rows of pupils' shoes.

© UNICEF/HQ00-0952/Roger LeMoyné

20 November: Universal Children's Day



UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Rachel Isadora's illustration of Article 2 from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Article 1

Everyone under the age of 18 has all the rights in the Convention.

Article 2

The Convention applies to every child, regardless of race, colour, sex, language, place of birth, religion, politics, disability, and status.

Article 42

Governments should make the Convention known to parents and children.

Key words

Rights	Responsibility
Equality	Poverty
Justice	Universal

Resources

Party hats (optional)
Party clothes (optional)
Party trumpets and streamers (optional)

The stage could be decorated for a party and the assembly leader and participating class could set a party mood by dressing up and blowing party trumpets.

Pictures

You will need, if possible, to display or project a large copy of the above picture (Rachel Isadora's illustration of Article 2).

Pupil participation

One class

Before the assembly, the class needs to prepare:

1. Presentations of the rights that they think are important and that have made a difference to them at school and at home.

The children could write in larger letters each right on a separate piece of card. For instance "good health" or "protection from harm".

2. Presentations of some of the figures below concerning the many millions of children who are denied their basic rights.

Some of the statistics may be upsetting and as such may be unsuitable for a whole school assembly. If this is the case, choose the facts that you consider less bleak.

You may wish to make the figures more visual. For instance, a child holding up a cardboard cut-out of a soldier with "250,000" written across his chest, or a photograph of the school with the number "120 million" written across it

Opening

Show picture For Every Child - no. 2 (Rachel Isadora)

Now ask the following questions:

1. What do you see in this picture?

2. Is it a happy or a sad picture? Hands up those who think it is happy? Thank you. Please put your hands down. Now, hands up those who think it is a sad picture. The happy hands win!

3. Does anyone know why I am showing you this picture today?

Today is Universal Children's Day, and we should celebrate, like the children in the picture, and think about children all around the world.

What do all children have in common?

You may receive an enormous number of answers here. Eventually get to the point that all children have rights.

All children everywhere have the same rights. Today, some of Class *[insert class name or number]* are going to share with you which of the rights they think are important.

Directions

Each child holds up a card displaying a right. Each child states the right on their card.

Thank you. I hope you will agree that these rights are important.

Unfortunately, not all children have these rights. Some of Class *[insert class name or number]* are going to tell us how children are missing out on their rights:

Each child says one of the following facts, perhaps made visually more interesting or more imaginable. For instance, relating the numbers to the number of children in the school or the number of children in the UK [11 million].

- Over 250,000 children are child soldiers.
- Every year, nearly 500,000 children go blind because of Vitamin A deficiency, which can be prevented by providing pills that cost only a few pence.
- More than 1 million children are in prison – often they have not committed a crime.

- Each year, more than 10 million children become refugees – driven from their homes by conflict.
- Every year, 6 million children under the age of 5 die from easily preventable causes. That's 16,000 children every day.
- More than 50 million children do not officially exist because their birth was not registered.
- More than 120 million children are missing out on primary school.
- More than 140 million children are orphans. About 15 million children have lost one or both parents to AIDS.
- More than 240 million children work, many of them in dangerous conditions. More than 70 million children under the age of 10 are working.
- About 270 million children do not have any local health care – no nurse, doctor or hospital.
- More than 300 million children have never listened to the radio, watched television, read a newspaper or used a telephone.
- More than 400 million children do not have clean water to drink.
- More than 500 million children do not have access to hygienic toilet facilities.

Conclusion

After the class read out the statistics of children missing out on their basic rights, ask the following questions :

1. What right do you think is most important for children everywhere?
2. What right would you most hate to lose?
3. What can we do to see that all the children in this school enjoy their rights?
4. What can we do to help some of the children we have heard about get their rights?
[This may mean raising money or raising awareness of how children are denied their basic rights through school exhibitions, wall displays, drama, dance and music.]

3 December: International Day of Disabled Persons



UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Peter Weever's illustration of Article 23 from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Article 6

Every child has the right to life. Governments shall ensure to the maximum extent that children survive and develop.

Article 12

Children have the right to say what they think should happen, when adults are making decisions that affect them, and have their decisions taken into account.

Article 23

Children who have any kind of disability should have special care and support, so that they can lead full and independent lives.

Article 24

All children and young people have the right to the best health care possible, safe water to drink, nutritious food, a clean and safe environment, and information to help them stay alive, healthy and safe.

Article 42

The Government should make the Convention known to parents and children.

Key words

Freedom
Equality
Rights

Justice
Learning
Responsibility

Care
Respect

Pictures

You will need, if possible, to display or project a large copy of the above picture (Peter Weever's illustration of Article 23)

Pupil participation

6 children

A child should tell the story, which has been adapted to be a first-person account. Five children could read the poem and the statements at the end.

Opening

We often celebrate special days in our assemblies.

[Mention one or two you have celebrated recently]

Today is another special day. I wonder if you can guess what it is.

[Give the stage over to the child who is the story teller.]

Now, we are going to see a short play.

The story

I was 13 years old when I first heard about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and I wanted to know more. I learnt that children had rights to education, health care, clean water and so many other things that help you grow up to become the best person you can be. I believe that all children should know and understand the rights given to them in the Convention and ever since I learnt about them I have tried to make sure that other children know about them too.

It was Article 12 that really excited me. There were so many things that my friends and other young people in my country, Mexico, are bothered about. Up to now, I felt I couldn't do anything about them, but once I understood Article 12, which says "You have the right to give your opinion, and for adults to listen and take it seriously" I began talking to adults about not just my concerns, but those of lots of other young people, and they began to join in with me.

Soon adults began to listen to us and, much to everybody's amazement, important people began to ask our opinions on matters that concerned us. The Mexican Government asked us our views about family life, school, our communities, and what we thought of the country. To find out the opinions of lots of children, it was decided that Mexican children should vote for the opinions that mattered most to them.

The first Children's Consultation of Mexican children was held in Mexico City. More than 4 million Mexican children submitted their opinions. This was the first time that politicians actually wanted to know what children thought in Mexico.

I am often interviewed for television, radio and newspapers and magazines, and this is what I always say:

"Adults really need to listen to young people of all ages, shapes, sizes and colours. We all have different opinions that are relevant to who we are and what we want out of life. The fact that I have cerebral palsy and have to use a wheelchair doesn't make any difference to my needs or my rights – they are the same for every child. My disability is not an obstacle to me; it is part of who I am. I think, in a strange way, that it actually inspires others. They see that I don't consider it a problem and they realise that they can also reach their goals."

"There are thousands of children in Mexico who are exercising their right to give an opinion and using that opinion to bring about change, I am just one of them."

Conclusion

Thank you. So, what was that story about?

[Your pupils will probably think it is about the importance of Article 12 and telling others about the CRC.]

So what do you think today's special day is?

[Take answers. Then show the illustration by Peter Weevers overleaf]

What does this picture have to do with today's story?

[Gradually work toward the fact that 3 December is the International Day of Disabled Persons.]

Why do you think there is a special day for disabled people?

[Pupils may well realise that disabled people have a hard time getting around and receiving the help they need.]

The day is to remind everyone that everyone has all the rights in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the UN Declaration on Human Rights. In addition, disabled people have a right to special care that will enable them to live a full a life as possible.

[You could use the statements below to reinforce the fact that disabled children want to be included but may need extra help so they can take part.]

[Pupils come on stage to read a poem and one of the statements below.]

A poem

Shaking limbs, no control
Children staring, often pointing
Parents looking away.
Watching the game, no one asks me.
You talk to John but never to me.
I like to play please ask me,
I like to cheer, don't stare at me.
Inside I am like you,
Remember I have feelings too!
Selwa Ibrahim, age 13

Statement 1

A wheelchair-bound teenager wrote a letter to a newspaper. This is an extract from the letter:
"There are no youth clubs where I can enter with my wheelchair. It's the same with most leisure activities."

Statement 2

Another teenager said to a school visitor:
"After school and in the holidays, I just stay at home at night ... it's too difficult to go anywhere ... and finding a friend is difficult."

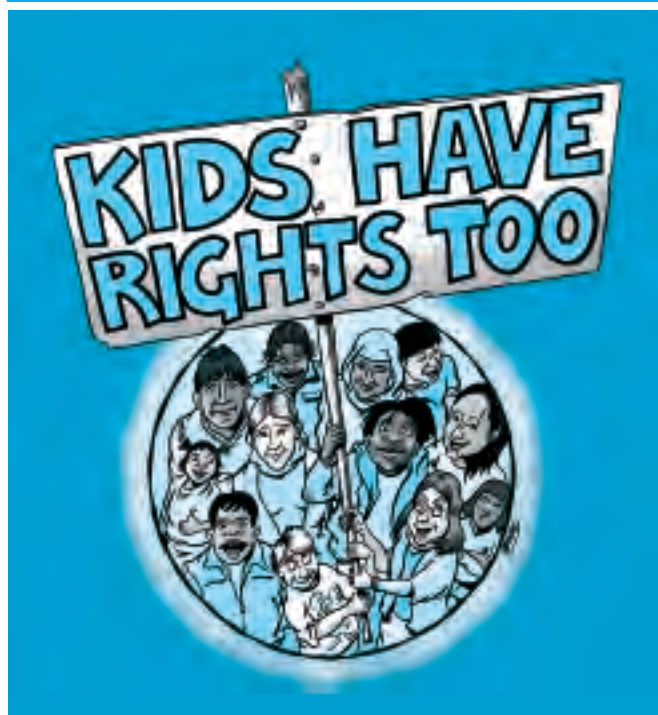
Statement 3

A nine-year-old boy told his teacher:
"I'd like to play football but the others don't let me play with them. They say I'll hurt myself ... but it's them that are hurting me."

Statement 4

A 10-year-old girl said:
"The owner of the shop thought he was helping me when he let me go first, but I want to be treated like everyone else."

10 December: Human Rights Day



UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 2

The Convention applies to every child, regardless of race, colour, sex, language, place of birth, religion, politics, disability, and status.

Article 12

Children have the right to say what they think should happen, when adults are making decisions that affect them, and have their decisions taken into account.

Article 19

Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for, and are protected from violence, abuse and neglect by anyone who is caring for them.

Article 28

All children have the right to free primary education. Governments should support children to achieve the highest level of education they can.

Key words

Equality	Rights
Justice	Responsibilities
Respect	Universal

Resources

Cinderella storybook

In 2005, Portway Junior School, Hampshire, pioneered the use of the story of Cinderella as a way of helping children talk about rights and responsibilities. This assembly is a short version of the story and you will probably find a better way of telling it.

Pupil participation

One pupil to read the poem

Opening

[Hold up storybook]

I want to tell you a story that I am sure you have already heard – the story of Cinderella. But this time I am going to stop at points in the story, and you can tell me what rights and responsibilities we should consider.

If you are all sitting comfortably, I'll begin.

Once upon a time there was a happy family: a mummy, a daddy and their daughter Cinderella. Sadly, mummy fell ill and died. Daddy and Cinderella continued to live together, keeping each other company and helping each other.

But after some years, Daddy decided to marry a widow with two daughters of her own. Cinderella tried to get on with her new stepmother and her two new sisters, but very quickly they started to treat her like a servant. Her Daddy was away a lot and she found it difficult to talk to him.

Pause

What rights and responsibilities issues does Cinderella's story raise?

Look for:

- 1. Right of children to be consulted in issues that concern them (Article 12)*
- 2. Right of children to be cared for by their parents (Article 7)*
- 3. Right of children to be with their parents unless they are badly treated (Article 9)*
- 4. Both parents share responsibility for bringing up and supporting their children (Article 18).*

Continue

Soon Cinderella found that she didn't have time to go to school any more, because she was so busy cooking and cleaning for her stepmother and stepsisters. They were treating her more and more cruelly. Cinderella no longer slept in her nice bedroom but on a mattress in the kitchen. She didn't eat with the family any more, but ate scraps in the kitchen. When Cinderella objected to the way she was being treated, she was locked in a dark, damp cellar for hours.

Pause

What rights and responsibilities do you think Cinderella is missing?

Look for:

- 1. Right to go to school (Article 28)*
- 2. Right to a decent standard of living (Article 27)*
- 3. Right to protection from abuse and neglect (Article 9)*
- 4. Right to protection from exploitative work (Article 32).*

Continue

One day an invitation came for all the women in the house to attend a royal ball where the prince was going to choose a bride. Everyone was very excited, including Cinderella. She was far prettier than her sisters, although she didn't have any fine clothes. Later, her stepmother and stepsisters told her that she couldn't go to the ball. Instead, Cinderella had to work very hard doing the dresses, hair and make-up for her stepmother and stepsisters. On the night of the ball, Cinderella was left alone to clean the kitchen.

Pause

What rights and responsibilities is Cinderella missing now?

Look for:

- 1. Right to play (Article 31).*

Unfortunately, we don't have time to finish the story today . Fortunately, as we know, the story of Cinderella has a happy ending – she marries the prince.

Sadly, not all children and adults have happy lives.

I have told this story today because it is Human Rights Day . As a school, we support human rights and children's rights.

Does anyone know the names of the two United Nations documents that state the rights of all children and adults?

Look for:

- 1. UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*
- 2. UN Declaration of Human Rights.*

Why are human rights important?

Why do you think there is an international day to remember Human Rights?

Conclusion

An 11-year-old boy wrote the following poem about the Human Rights Act, which is the law that makes sure we get our human rights:

Pupil stands up and reads the poem aloud

Human Rights

I am not very old
But I think I understand
How the Human Rights Act
Would work throughout the land.

Freedom within the law
To work and think and pray.
To speak out against injustice
Which many suffer from each day .

I am still a child
But I think I know what's right,
Like standing up for friends
When a bully wants to fight.

We must all work together
To create a better place.
So that all people, everywhere
Can have a living space.

Life is very precious.
We all have much to give.
We must care for one another
And must live and let live.

Alan Barry (age 11)