

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV

Born to Russian peasants in 1931, Mikhail Gorbachev quickly ascended the ladder of power in the Soviet Union. In his youth, Gorbachev joined the Komsomol or “Youth Communist League” and drove a combine harvester at a state-run farm in his hometown. Local party officials recognized his promise and sent him to law school at Moscow State University. At university, Gorbachev was an active Communist Party member and, by 1970, first secretary of the regional party committee. Only ten years later, Gorbachev had become the youngest full member of the Politburo, then the highest executive committee in the Soviet Union.

In 1985, after two general secretaries of the Politburo died within a year of each other, the Party was looking for younger leadership. On March 11, 1985, the Politburo elected Mikhail Gorbachev general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. After his election, Gorbachev set about installing bold reforms. Domestically, he pushed the Soviet bureaucracy to be more efficient, to increase worker production and to rapidly modernize. When his reforms yielded few results, Gorbachev instituted more far-reaching reforms, including glasnost, or “openness,” to encourage free expression and information, and perestroika or “restructuring,” which encouraged democratic processes and free-market ideas to take hold in Soviet economic and political life. He also worked for warmer relations and new trade partners abroad.

In 1987, he and U.S. President Ronald Reagan signed an agreement calling for both sides to destroy all their intermediate-range nuclear-tipped missiles. In 1989, Gorbachev openly supported reformist groups in Eastern European Soviet-bloc countries and informed their communist leaders that in the event of a revolution, he would not intervene. As a result, reformist groups overthrew the communist regimes and Gorbachev began withdrawing Soviet troops. By the summer of 1990, he agreed to a reunification of East and West Germany. As power quickly shifted to new political parties, Gorbachev dismantled large swaths of the political structure throughout the Soviet Union. On December 25, 1991, the day he resigned, the Soviet Union ceased to exist. In 1990, Gorbachev was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his leading role in the peace process.



Mikhail Gorbachev ©Architects of Peace Foundation

“I WILL NEVER AGREE TO HAVING OUR SOCIETY SPLIT ONCE AGAIN INTO REDS AND WHITES, INTO THOSE WHO CLAIM TO SPEAK AND ACT ‘ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE’ AND THOSE WHO ARE ‘ENEMIES OF THE PEOPLE.’”

EXCERPTS FROM MIKHAIL GORBACHEV: 1991 NOBEL PEACE PRIZE LECTURE

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen,

This moment is no less emotional for me than the one when I first learned about the decision of the Nobel Committee. For on similar occasions great men addressed humankind—men famous for their courage in working to bring together morality and politics. Among them were my compatriots.

The award of the Nobel Peace Prize makes one think once again about a seemingly simple and clear question: What is peace?

Preparing for my address I found in an old Russian encyclopedia a definition of “peace” as a “commune”—the traditional cell of Russian peasant life. I saw in that definition the people’s profound understanding of peace as harmony, concord, mutual help, and cooperation.

This understanding is embodied in the canons of world religions and in the works of philosophers from antiquity to our time. The names of many of them have been mentioned here before. Let me add another one to them. Peace “propagates wealth and justice, which constitute the prosperity of nations;” a peace which is “just a

respite from wars ... is not worthy of the name;" peace implies "general counsel." This was written almost 200 years ago by Vasilii Fyodorovich Malinovskiy—the dean of the Tsarskoye Selo Lyceum at which the great Pushkin was educated.

Since then, of course, history has added a great deal to the specific content of the concept of peace. In this nuclear age it also means a condition for the survival of the human race. But the essence, as understood both by the popular wisdom and by intellectual leaders, is the same.

Today, peace means the ascent from simple coexistence to cooperation and common creativity among countries and nations.

Peace is movement towards globality and universality of civilization. Never before has the idea that peace is indivisible been so true as it is now.

Peace is not unity in similarity but unity in diversity, in the comparison and conciliation of differences.

And, ideally, peace means the absence of violence. It is an ethical value. And here we have to recall Rajiv Gandhi, who died so tragically a few days ago.

I consider the decision of your Committee as a recognition of the great international importance of the changes now under way in the Soviet Union, and as an expression of confidence in our policy of new thinking, which is based on the conviction that at the end of the twentieth century force and arms will have to give way as a major instrument in world politics.

I see the decision to award me the Nobel Peace Prize also as an act of solidarity with the monumental undertaking which has already placed enormous demands on the Soviet people in terms of efforts, costs, hardships, willpower, and character. And solidarity is a universal value which is becoming indispensable for progress and for the survival of humankind.

But a modern state has to be worthy of solidarity, in other words, it should pursue, in both domestic and international affairs, policies that bring together the interests of its people and those of the world community. This task, however obvious, is not a simple one. Life is much richer and more complex than even the most perfect plans to make it better. It ultimately takes vengeance for attempts to impose abstract schemes, even with the best of intentions. *Perestroika* has made us understand this about our past, and the actual experience of recent years has taught us to reckon with the most general laws of civilization.

This, however, came later. But back in March-April 1985 we found ourselves facing a crucial, and I confess, agonizing choice. When I agreed to assume the office of the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Central Committee, in effect the highest State office at that time, I realized that we could no longer live as before and that I would not want to remain in that office unless I got support in undertaking major reforms. It was clear to me that we had a long way to go. But of course, I could not imagine how immense were our problems and difficulties. I believe no one at that time could foresee or predict them.

Those who were then governing the country knew what was really happening to it and what we later called "*zastoi*," roughly

translated as "stagnation." They saw that our society was marking time, that it was running the risk of falling hopelessly behind the technologically advanced part of the world. Total domination of centrally-managed state property, the pervasive authoritarian-bureaucratic system, ideology's grip on politics, monopoly in social thought and sciences, militarized industries that siphoned off our best, including the best intellectual resources, the unbearable burden of military expenditures that suffocated civilian industries and undermined the social achievements of the period since the Revolution which were real and of which we used to be proud—such was the actual situation in the country.

As a result, one of the richest countries in the world, endowed with immense overall potential, was already sliding downwards. Our society was declining, both economically and intellectually.

And yet, to a casual observer the country seemed to present a picture of relative well-being, stability and order. The misinformed society under the spell of propaganda was hardly aware of what was going on and what the immediate future had in store for it. The slightest manifestations of protest were suppressed. Most people considered them heretical, slanderous and counter-revolutionary.

Such was the situation in the spring of 1985, and there was a great temptation to leave things as they were, to make only cosmetic changes. This, however, meant continuing to deceive ourselves and the people.

This was the domestic aspect of the dilemma then before us. As for the foreign policy aspect, there was the East-West confrontation, a rigid division into friends and foes, the two hostile camps with a corresponding set of Cold War attributes. Both the East and the West were constrained by the logic of military confrontation, wearing themselves down more and more by the arms race.

The mere thought of dismantling the existing structures did not come easily. However, the realization that we faced inevitable disaster, both domestically and internationally, gave us the strength to make a historic choice, which I have never since regretted.

Perestroika, which once again is returning our people to commonsense, has enabled us to open up to the world, and has restored a normal relationship between the country's internal development and its foreign policy. But all this takes a lot of hard work. To a people which believed that its government's policies had always been true to the cause of peace, we proposed what was in many ways a *different policy*, which would genuinely serve the cause of peace, while differing from the prevailing view of what it meant and particularly from the established stereotypes as to how one should protect it. We proposed new thinking in foreign policy.

Thus, we embarked on a path of major changes which may turn out to be the most significant in the twentieth century, for our country and for its peoples. But we also did this for the entire world.

I began my book about *Perestroika* and the new thinking with the following words: "We want to be understood." After a while I felt that it was already happening. But now I would like once again to repeat those words here, from this world rostrum. Because to understand us really—to understand so as to believe us—proved

to be not at all easy, owing to the immensity of the changes under way in our country. Their magnitude and character are such as to require in-depth analysis. Applying conventional wisdom to *perestroika* is unproductive. It is also futile and dangerous to set conditions, to say: We'll understand and believe you, as soon as you, the Soviet Union, come completely to resemble "us," the West.

No one is in a position to describe in detail what *perestroika* will finally produce. But it would certainly be a self-delusion to expect that *perestroika* will produce "a copy" of anything.

Of course, learning from the experience of others is something we have been doing and will continue to do. But this does not mean that we will come to be exactly like others. Our State will preserve its own identity within the international community. A country like ours, with its uniquely close-knit ethnic composition, cultural diversity and tragic past, the greatness of its historic endeavors and the exploits of its peoples—such a country will find its own path to the civilization of the twenty-first century and its own place in it. *Perestroika* has to be conceived solely in this context, otherwise it will fail and will be rejected. After all, it is impossible to "shed" the country's thousand-year history—a history which we still have to subject to serious analysis in order to find the truth that we shall take into the future.

We want to be an integral part of modern civilization, to live in harmony with mankind's universal values, abide by the norms of international law, follow the "rules of the game" in our economic relations with the outside world. We want to share with all other peoples the burden of responsibility for the future of our common house.

A period of transition to a new quality in all spheres of society's life is accompanied by painful phenomena. When we were initiating *perestroika* we failed to properly assess and foresee everything. Our society turned out to be hard to move off the ground, not ready for major changes which affect people's vital interests and make them leave behind everything to which they had become accustomed over many years. In the beginning we imprudently generated great expectations, without taking into account the fact that it takes time for people to realize that all have to live and work differently, to stop expecting that new life would be given from above.

Perestroika has now entered its most dramatic phase. Following the transformation of the philosophy of *perestroika* into real policy, which began literally to explode the old way of life, difficulties began to mount. Many took fright and wanted to return to the past. It was not only those who used to hold the levers of power in the administration, the army and various government agencies and who had to make room, but also many people whose interests and way of life was put to a severe test and who, during the preceding decades, had forgotten how to take the initiative and to be independent, enterprising and self-reliant.

Hence the discontent, the outbursts of protest and the exorbitant, though understandable, demands which, if satisfied right away, would lead to complete chaos. Hence, the rising political passions and, instead of a constructive opposition which is only normal in a democratic system, one that is often destructive and unreasonable, not to mention the extremist forces which are especially cruel and inhuman in areas of inter-ethnic conflict.

During the last six years we have discarded and destroyed much that stood in the way of a renewal and transformation of our society. But when society was given freedom it could not recognize itself, for it had lived too long, as it were, "beyond the looking glass." Contradictions and vices rose to the surface, and even blood has been shed, although we have been able to avoid a bloodbath. The logic of reform has clashed with the logic of rejection, and with the logic of impatience which breeds intolerance.

In this situation, which is one of great opportunity and of major risks, at a high point of *perestroika*'s crisis, our task is to stay the course while also addressing current everyday problems—which are literally tearing this policy apart—and to do it in such a way as to prevent a social and political explosion.

Now about my position. As to the fundamental choice, I have long ago made a final and irrevocable decision. Nothing and no one, no pressure, either from the right or from the left, will make me abandon the positions of *perestroika* and new thinking. I do not intend to change my views or convictions. My choice is a final one.

It is my profound conviction that the problems arising in the course of our transformations can be solved solely by constitutional means. That is why I make every effort to keep this process within the confines of democracy and reforms.

This applies also to the problem of self-determination of nations, which is a challenging one for us. We are looking for mechanisms to solve that problem within the framework of a constitutional process; we recognize the peoples' legitimate choice, with the understanding that if a people really decides, through a fair referendum, to withdraw from the Soviet Union, a certain agreed transition period will then be needed.

Steering a peaceful course is not easy in a country where generation after generation of people were led to believe that those who have power or force could throw those who dissent or disagree out of politics or even in jail. For centuries all the country's problems used to be finally resolved by violent means. All this has left an almost indelible mark on our entire "political culture," if the term is at all appropriate in this case.

Our democracy is being born in pain. A political culture is emerging—one that presupposes debate and pluralism, but also legal order and, if democracy is to work, strong government authority based on one law for all. This process is gaining strength. Being resolute in the pursuit of *perestroika*, a subject of much debate these days, must be measured by the commitment to democratic change. Being resolute does not mean a return to repression, *diktat* or the suppression of rights and freedoms. I will never agree to having our society split once again into Reds and Whites, into those who claim to speak and act "on behalf of the people"

and those who are “enemies of the people.” Being resolute today means to act within the framework of political and social pluralism and the rule of law to provide conditions for continued reform and prevent a breakdown of the State and economic collapse, prevent the elements of chaos from becoming catastrophic.

All this requires taking certain tactical steps, to search for various ways of addressing both short- and long-term tasks. Such efforts and political and economic steps, agreements based on reasonable compromise, are there for everyone to see. I am convinced that the One-Plus-Nine Statement will go down in history as one such step, as a great opportunity. Not all parts of our decisions are readily accepted or correctly understood. For the most part, our decisions are unpopular; they arouse waves of criticism. But life has many more surprises in store for us, just as we will sometimes surprise it. Jumping to conclusions after every step taken by the Soviet leadership, after every decree by the President, trying to figure out whether he is moving left or right, backward or forward, would be an exercise in futility and would not lead to understanding.

We will seek answers to the questions we face only by moving forward, only by continuing and even radicalizing reforms, by consistently democratizing our society. But we will proceed prudently, carefully weighing each step we take.

There is already a consensus in our society that we have to move towards a mixed market economy. There are still differences as to how to do it and how fast we should move. Some are in favor of rushing through a transitional period as fast as possible, no matter what. Although this may smack of adventurism we should not overlook the fact that such views enjoy support. People are tired and are easily swayed by populism. So it would be just as dangerous to move too slowly, to keep people waiting in suspense. For them, life today is difficult, a life of considerable hardship.

Work on a new Union Treaty has entered its final stage. Its adoption will open a new chapter in the history of our multinational state.

After a time of rampant separatism and euphoria, when almost every village proclaimed sovereignty, a centripetal force is beginning to gather momentum, based on a more sensible view of existing realities and the risks involved. And this is what counts most now. There is a growing will to achieve consensus, and a growing understanding that we have a State, a country, a common life. This is what must be preserved first of all. Only then can we afford to start figuring out which party or club to join and what God to worship.

The stormy and contradictory process of *perestroika*, particularly in the past two years, has made us face squarely the problem of criteria to measure the effectiveness of State leadership. In the new environment of a multiparty system, freedom of thought, rediscovered ethnic identity and sovereignty of the republics, the interests of society must absolutely be put above those of various parties or groups, or any other sectoral, parochial or private interests, even though they also have the right to exist and to be represented in the political process and in public life, and, of course, they must be taken into account in the policies of the State.

Gorbachev continues:

I am an optimist and I believe that together we shall be able now to make the right historical choice so as not to miss the great chance at the turn of centuries and millenia and make the current extremely difficult transition to a peaceful world order. A balance of interests rather than a balance of power, a search for compromise and concord rather than a search for advantages at other people's expense, and respect for equality rather than claims to leadership—such are the elements which can provide the groundwork for world progress and which should be readily acceptable for reasonable people informed by the experience of the twentieth century.

The future prospect of truly peaceful global politics lies in the creation through joint efforts of a single international democratic space in which States shall be guided by the priority of human rights and welfare for their own citizens and the promotion of the same rights and similar welfare elsewhere. This is an imperative of the growing integrity of the modern world and of the interdependence of its components.

I have been suspected of utopian thinking more than once, and particularly when five years ago I proposed the elimination of nuclear weapons by the year 2000 and joint efforts to create a system of international security. It may well be that by that date it will not have happened. But look, merely five years have passed and have we not actually and noticeably moved in that direction? Have we not been able to cross the threshold of mistrust, though mistrust has not completely disappeared? Has not the political thinking in the world changed substantially? Does not most of the world community already regard weapons of mass destruction as unacceptable for achieving political objectives?

Ladies and gentlemen, two weeks from today it will be exactly fifty years since the beginning of the Nazi invasion of my country. And in another six months we shall mark fifty years since Pearl Harbor, after which the war turned into a global tragedy. Memories of it still hurt. But they also urge us to value the chance given to the present generations.

In conclusion, let me say again that I view the award of the Nobel Prize to me as an expression of understanding of my intentions, my aspirations, the objectives of the profound transformation we have begun in our country, and the ideas of new thinking. I see it as your acknowledgment of my commitment to peaceful means of implementing the objectives of *perestroika*.

I am grateful for this to the members of the Committee and wish to assure them that if I understand correctly their motives, they are not mistaken.

FREE EXPRESSION, FREE ELECTIONS, AND DEMOCRATIC REFORMS

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV

LESSON GRADE LEVEL: 9–12
HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES: FREE EXPRESSION; PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY; FREE ELECTIONS

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS:

- **Article 20:** Right of Peaceful Assembly and Association
- **Article 19:** Freedom of Opinion and Information
- **Article 20:** Right of Peaceful Assembly and Association
- **Article 21:** Right to Participate in Government and Free Elections

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

- How do the goals of those who govern affect political processes?
- How do powerful individuals and masses drive political change?

TIME REQUIREMENT:

40–200 Minutes

OBJECTIVES:

After this lesson, students will understand:

- How the policy of *perestroika* led to political, social, and economic change in the Soviet Union.
- Why President Gorbachev pursued the policy of *perestroika*.
- How the changes within the Soviet Union led to a different relationship between the Soviet Union and other nations.

COMMON CORE LEARNING STANDARDS:

- CSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.4
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.11-12.9

VOCABULARY:

- **Glasnost**
- **Perestroika**
- **Demand economy**
- **Command economy**
- **Communism**
- **Capitalism**
- **Autocracy**
- **Bureaucracy**
- **Inalienable/Unalienable human rights**
- **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**
- **Totalitarianism**
- **Coup d'état**

CONCEPTS:

- **Reform**
- **Revolution**
- **Free market**
- **Laissez faire**
- **Demand economy**
- **Peaceable assembly**
- **Human rights**
- **Nobel Peace Prize**
- **Location theory**
- **Urban development models**

TECHNOLOGY REQUIRED:

- Laptop cart (30+ computers, each with Internet connection)
- LCD Projector

MATERIALS:

- *An Introduction to Human Geography* (Rubenstein, 9th ed.)
- CIA World Factbook <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/rs.html>
- Rand McNally *Goode's World Atlas* 22nd ed.
- *Interview:* Excerpt from *Speak Truth To Power* www.rfkhumanrights.org / click on *Speak Truth to Power* / click on "Defenders" tab
- Biography of Mikhail Gorbachev <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Mikhail-Gorbachev>
- *Handout C:* Article on the disintegration of the Soviet Union <http://www.fsmitha.com/h2/ch33.htm>
- *Handout D:* Gorbachev's Acceptance Speech to the Nobel Committee and Nobel Lecture or http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1990/#
- *Online Reading:* <https://filintom.wordpress.com/2011/03/02/why-gorbachev/>

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

ANTICIPATORY SET:

- Show students the clip of President Ronald Reagan speaking at the Berlin Wall <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ei1HnWwzmNk>
- After viewing the clip, begin a discussion using the following prompts:
 - What reforms initiated by Gorbachev were mentioned in the speech?
 - What did the Berlin Wall symbolize?
 - Why did Reagan ask Gorbachev to tear down the wall?
 - Based on what you learned about the Soviet Union, why were these reforms so radical?

ACTIVITY 1:

- Show these two videos:
 - Mikhail Gorbachev <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2yFC2wtllWU>
 - The End of the Soviet Union <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ielyVJUgXK8&feature=related>
- Instruct students to take notes on the videos.
- Once the videos are finished, separate the class into groups of 3 or 4.
- Distribute Gorbachev's Nobel Laureate Lecture and the DePauw University speech article <http://www.depauw.edu/news/index.asp?id=16528>
- Instruct the students to read the two documents, underlining important words, phrases, and examples of change.
- Hand out sticky notes to the groups, instructing students to list and define various reforms implemented by Gorbachev. Place on the wall two large sheets of newsprint, one labeled *glasnost* and the other labeled *perestroika*.
- As students complete the task, the teacher will instruct them to place the sticky notes on either the paper for *glasnost* reforms or *perestroika* reforms.
- After all of the sticky notes are on the papers, begin a discussion on the reforms introduced by Gorbachev and their impact on the dismantling of the Soviet Union.
- Distribute the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and begin a discussion on which human rights the reforms represented. Instruct the students to write an essay using this prompt:
 - Choose two reforms initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev. Describe the reforms and how they changed life in the Soviet Union. Include in the essay the human rights issue that the reforms represented.

ACTIVITY 2:

- Separate students into groups of four.
- Using maps found at http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/historical/history_commonwealth.html and the CIA World Factbook on Russia <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/rs.html> instruct students to label sticky notes of strategic minerals mined and agriculture produced in the Soviet Union, listing their percentage of world production and the finished goods these minerals produce. Where multiple goods are produced from a single mineral, create multiple sticky notes. Be sure to use wheat, rye, oats, barley, potatoes, beet sugar, flax, cotton, hops or beer, and copper, lead, lithium, zinc, iron, manganese, nickel, other ferroalloys, steel production, and precious metals.
- Hang newsprint around the room for each category—consumer, military, industrial, export of finished goods produced by these minerals.
- Instruct the students to place each post-it note on the appropriate newsprint.
- Distribute the article, “End of the Cold War and the Soviet Union,” found at <http://www.fsmitha.com/h2/ch33.htm> (This is a lengthy article and may take the students the remainder of the class to read it. Assign the article for homework.)
- Students are in groups of four. Distribute the Venn Diagram <https://www.studenthandouts.com/01-Web-Pages/2012-10/venn-diagram-2012-10-01.jpg> for comparing the economy of the Soviet Union and the economy under *perestroika*. Instruct students to use the information found in the article to list economic policies under the Soviet Union, economic policies under *Perestroika*, and list any similarities in the middle.
- When the assignment has been completed, lead a discussion using the following prompts:
 - Describe the economic system of the former Soviet Union.
 - Describe the economic system under *perestroika*.
 - Describe any similarities.
 - Ask: What would be the difficulties moving from a command economy to a market economy? Record students' answers on the board.

CULMINATING ACTIVITY:

- Separate students into groups of four.
- Distribute the assignment and read the instructions to the class:
 - You are a group from the Nobel Peace Prize Committee. Your task is to design the Nobel Diploma that will be presented to Mikhail Gorbachev. The Diploma must include the following information:
 - Reforms under *glasnost* and *perestroika*
 - The Universal Declaration of Human Rights Articles the reforms represent
 - How the economic transformation of the Soviet Union led to the award.
- You may refer to the Nobel Prize website on Nobel Diplomas for ideas.

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS FRAMEWORK

Since the creation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) by the United Nations (UN) in 1948, many other international documents—also called treaties, covenants, resolutions, or conventions—have been drafted to develop these rights further. Countries commit to protect the rights recognized in these treaties by ‘ratifying’ them and sometimes a specific institution is created within the UN to monitor their compliance.

Here are examples of relevant international documents:

INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS (ICCPR)

- **Article 18:** Freedom of Thought, Conscience, and Religion
- **Article 19:** Freedom of Opinion and Expression
- **Article 21:** Right of Peaceful Assembly
- **Article 22:** Freedom of Association
- **Article 25:** Right to Participate in Government

For more information, visit the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights’ website: www.ohchr.org

BECOME A DEFENDER

- **Write an article for the school newspaper** identifying a spatial or cultural conflict within the school and a possible solution for that problem; include the possibility of meeting with the student council or the school administration to work out the solution. Then meet with these bodies and create avenues to solve the problem and implement the solution.
- **Create a neighborhood map** identifying safe play zones and potential dangers or neighborhood concerns.
- **Organize a letter-writing campaign** targeting agri-business giants, chocolate producers, or other American businesses that tacitly cooperate with human rights violators.
- **Organize a letter-writing campaign** targeting actions taken by the local government, such as zoning, renting, or other services which may not in the best interests of citizens living in a particular area.

ADDITIONAL VOCABULARY:

- **Agricultural density**
- **Arithmetic density**
- **Demographic transition**
- **Physiological density**
- **Ecumene**
- **United Nations Human Development Index (HDI) Factors**
- **Life Expectancy at Birth (UNHDI)**
- **Mean Years of Schooling (UNHDI)**
- **Expected Years of Schooling (UNHDI)**
- **GDI (Gross Domestic Income) per Capita (UNHDI)**

MAPPING ACTIVITY:

- Each student will create a map. These maps will illustrate the 15 former Soviet Republics (both then and now), showing religions, languages, ethnic groups, and HDI factors. Compare these maps to the maps previously created in order to answer the guiding questions and achieve the listed objectives.
- Students will present their maps to the class and make an argument evaluating the impact of Gorbachev’s reform decisions on the quality of life within those republics (according to UN HDI factors).
- Students will write a paper reflecting on an individual’s ability to affect their world and should cite an action by Gorbachev that inspired their paper.
- Create maps showing population density, transportation, resource location, and industry location in the former Soviet Union. Students should begin to get the impression that the Soviet Demand Economy Model is not the one they’ve studied (i.e., it was not established to maximize profit—the locations are disparate, not concentrated).
- Lead a discussion in which students compare and contrast the development of industry and urbanization in the Soviet Union vis-à-vis Europe and America (e.g., European steel mills sit on top of the iron mines and U.S. steel mills sit atop the coal mines—both reside in the populated zones). Students may have to go back to pre-WWII maps to see where Soviet industries were located before the German invasion. Soviet industry relocated during the war for purposes of security, which has nothing to do with profits.
 - Did they move back after the war or were the new sites further developed?
 - How does this affect Soviet ability to integrate into a world economy based on consumption and profit?
 - How can Soviet exports compete?
 - How does this further define Gorbachev’s role, and his decisions?
 - Were they foolish decisions, or were they the decisions of a brave man who knew what he was doing?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Nobel Prize:

http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1990/gorbachev.html

The Nobel Prize is an award for achievement in physics, chemistry, physiology or medicine, literature and for peace. It is internationally administered by the Nobel Foundation in Stockholm, Sweden.

Achievement Academy:

<http://www.achievement.org/achiever/mikhail-s-gorbachev/>

The Academy of Achievement is a non-profit organization that brings students across the globe in contact with the greatest thinkers and achievers of the age.

The International Foundation for Socio-economic and Political Studies Website:

<http://www.gorby.ru/en/>

The Gorbachev Foundation is an international non-governmental non-profit organization that conducts research into social, economic and political problems of critical importance at the current stage in Russian and world history. The Foundation seeks to promote democratic values as well as moral and humanist principles in the life of society.

Biography: Mikhail Gorbachev, A Man Who Changed the World

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GLujNV-9cf0&noredirect=1>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pMfcOsRq1hc>

BBC News Website:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/1112551.stm>

A timeline of the rise and fall of the Soviet Union beginning with the 1917 Russian Revolution led by Vladimir Lenin and ending in 1991 with the Russian government takeover of the USSR offices.

The Cold War Museum Website

http://www.coldwar.org/articles/90s/fall_of_the_soviet_union.asp

A description of the disintegration of the Soviet Union into 15 separate states and the triumph of democracy over totalitarianism.



CHRONOLOGY OF HUMAN RIGHTS

C. 2100 B.C.

In Iraq, the Code of Hammurabi, the first written legal code, vows to "make justice reign in the kingdom, to destroy the wicked and violent, to enlighten the country and promote the good of the people."

C. 570 B.C.

The Charter of Cyrus is drawn up by King Cyrus the Great of Persia (now Iran) for the people of his kingdom, recognizing rights to liberty, security, freedom of movement, the right to own property, and some economic and social rights.

1215

Bowing to populist pressure, King John of England signs the Magna Carta, which establishes limits on arbitrary power and rights to due process.

1648

The Treaty of Westphalia, Germany, an early international legal treaty, establishes equality of rights between Catholics and Protestants.

WHAT ARE HUMAN RIGHTS?

Human rights are the rights a person has simply because she or he is a human being. Human rights are held by all persons equally, universally, and forever. Human rights are inalienable: you cannot lose these rights any more than you can cease being a human being. Human rights are indivisible: you cannot be denied a right because it is “less important” or “non-essential.” Human rights are interdependent: all human rights are part of a complementary framework. For example, your ability to participate in your government is directly affected by your right to express yourself, to get an education, and even to obtain the necessities of life.

Another definition of human rights is those basic standards without which people cannot live with dignity. To violate someone’s human rights is to treat that person as though she or he were not a human being. To advocate human rights is to demand that the human dignity of all people be respected. In claiming these human rights, everyone also accepts the responsibility not to infringe on the rights of others and to support those whose rights are abused or denied.

Human rights are both inspirational and practical. Human rights principles hold up the vision of a free, just, and peaceful world and set minimum standards for how individuals and institutions everywhere should treat people. Human rights also empower people with a framework for action when those minimum standards are not met, for people still have human rights, even if the laws or those in power do not recognize or protect them.

We experience our human rights every day when we worship according to our beliefs, or choose not to worship at all; when we debate and criticize government policies; when we join a trade union; or when we travel to other parts of the country or overseas. Although we usually take these actions for granted, people both here in America and in other countries do not enjoy all these liberties equally. Human rights violations occur when a parent abuses a child; when a family is homeless; when a school provides inadequate education; when women are paid less than men; or when one person steals from another. Human rights are an everyday issue.

ABBREVIATED VERSION OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ARTICLE 1: RIGHT TO EQUALITY | ARTICLE 16: Right to Marriage and Family |
| ARTICLE 2: Freedom from Discrimination | ARTICLE 17: Right to Own Property |
| ARTICLE 3: Right to Life, Liberty, and Personal Security | ARTICLE 18: Freedom of Belief and Religion |
| ARTICLE 4: Freedom from Slavery | ARTICLE 19: Freedom of Opinion and Information |
| ARTICLE 5: Freedom from Torture and Degrading Treatment | ARTICLE 20: Right of Peaceful Assembly and Association |
| ARTICLE 6: Right to Recognition as a Person before the Law | ARTICLE 21: Right to Participate in Government and in Free Elections |
| ARTICLE 7: Right to Equality before the Law | ARTICLE 22: Right to Social Security |
| ARTICLE 8: Right to Remedy by Competent Tribunal | ARTICLE 23: Right to Desirable Work and to Join Trade Unions |
| ARTICLE 9: Freedom from Arbitrary Arrest and Exile | ARTICLE 24: Right to Rest and Leisure |
| ARTICLE 10: Right to Fair Public Hearing | ARTICLE 25: Right to Adequate Living Standard |
| ARTICLE 11: Right to be Considered Innocent until Proven Guilty | ARTICLE 26: Right to Education |
| ARTICLE 12: Freedom from Interference with Privacy, Family, Home, and Correspondence | ARTICLE 27: Right to Participate in the Cultural Life of Community |
| ARTICLE 13: Right to Free Movement in and out of the Country | ARTICLE 28: Right to a Social Order that Articulates this Document |
| ARTICLE 14: Right to Asylum in other Countries from Persecution | ARTICLE 29: Right to Fulfill Community Duties Essential to Free and Full Development |
| ARTICLE 15: Right to a Nationality and the Freedom to Change It | ARTICLE 30: Freedom from State or Personal Interference in the above Rights |

1679

The Habeas Corpus Act in Britain gives anyone who is detained the right to a fair trial within a certain amount of time.

1689

Britain’s Bill of Rights upholds the supremacy of Parliament over the King, and provides freedom of speech, the right to bail, freedom from torture, free elections, and trials by jury.

1776

The Declaration of Independence declares, “all men are created equal” and establishes North America’s independence from the British Empire.

1789

The French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizens is established when the French monarchy is overthrown by its people.

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

SIMPLIFIED VERSION

ARTICLE 1

All human beings are born free and equal. You are worth the same, and have the same rights as anyone else. You are born with the ability to think and to know right from wrong, and should act toward others in a spirit of friendliness.

ARTICLE 2

Everyone should have all the rights and freedoms in this statement, no matter what race, sex, or color he or she may be. It shouldn't matter where you were born, what language you speak, what religion you are, what political opinions you have, or whether you're rich or poor. Everyone should have all the rights in this statement.

ARTICLE 3

Everyone has the right to live, to be free, and to feel safe.

ARTICLE 4

No one should be held in slavery for any reason. The buying and selling of human beings should be prevented at all times.

ARTICLE 5

No one shall be put through torture, or any other treatment or punishment that is cruel, or that makes him or her feel less than human.

ARTICLE 6

Everyone has the right to be accepted everywhere as a person, according to law.

ARTICLE 7

You have the right to be treated equally by the law, and to have the same protection under the law as anyone else. Everyone should be protected from being treated in ways that go against this document, and from having anyone cause others to go against the rights in this document.

ARTICLE 8

If your rights under the law are violated, you should have the right to fair and skillful judges who will see that justice is done.

ARTICLE 9

No one shall be arrested, held in jail, or thrown and kept out of her or his own country for no good reason.

ARTICLE 10

You have the same right as anyone else to a fair and public hearing by courts that will be open-minded and free to make their own decisions if you are ever accused of breaking the law, or if you have to go to court for some other reason.

ARTICLE 11

- 1 If you are blamed for a crime, you have the right to be thought of as innocent until you are proven guilty, according to the law, in a fair and public trial in which you have the basic things you need to defend yourself.
- 2 No one shall be punished for anything that was not illegal when it happened. Nor can anyone be given a greater punishment than the one that applied when the crime was committed.

ARTICLE 12

No one has the right to butt in to your privacy, home, or mail, or attack your honesty and self-respect for no good reason. Everyone has the right to have the law protect him or her against all such meddling or attacks.

ARTICLE 13

- 3 Within any country you have the right to go and live where you want.
- 4 You have the right to leave any country, including your own, and return to it when you want.

ARTICLE 14

- 1 Everyone has the right to seek shelter from

harassment in another country.

- 2 This right does not apply when the person has done something against the law that has nothing to do with politics, or when she or he has done something that goes against the principles of the United Nations.

ARTICLE 15

- 1 You have a right to a nationality.
- 2 No one shall be denied her or his nationality or the right to change her or his nationality.

ARTICLE 16

- 1 Grown men and women have the right to marry and start a family, without anyone trying to stop them or make it hard because of their race, country, or religion. Both partners have equal rights in getting married, while married, and if and when they decide to end the marriage.
- 2 A marriage shall take place only with the agreement of the couple.
- 3 The family is the basic part of society, and should be protected.

ARTICLE 17

- 1 Everyone has the right to have belongings that they can keep alone, or share with other people.
- 2 No one has the right to take your things away from you for no good reason.

ARTICLE 18

You have the right to believe the things you want to believe, to have ideas about right and wrong, and to believe in any religion you want. This includes the right to change your religion if you want, and to practice it without anybody interfering.

ARTICLE 19

You have the right to tell people how you

1791

The American Bill of Rights and Constitution list basic civil and political rights of citizens, including freedom of speech and rule of law.

1864

The Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of Armies in the Field (First Geneva Convention), an international treaty of the International Committee of the Red Cross, protects war wounded and sick, and gives immunity to hospital staff and the Red Cross.

1899–1907

The Hague Conventions are drafted, establishing international humanitarian laws for the treatment of civilians, prisoners of war, and war wounded.

1919

The Treaty of Versailles establishes both the League of Nations and the International Labor Organization to improve working conditions and promote social justice.

feel about things without being told that you have to keep quiet. You have the right to read news, and watch or listen to broadcasts or listen to the radio without someone trying to stop you, no matter where you live. Finally, you have the right to print your opinions in a newspaper or magazine, and send them anywhere without anyone stopping you.

ARTICLE 20

- 1 You have the right to gather peacefully with people, and to be with anyone you want.
- 2 No one can force you to join or belong to any group.

ARTICLE 21

- 1 You have the right to be part of your government by being in it, or choosing the people who are in fair elections.
- 2 Everyone has the right to serve her or his country in some way.
- 3 The first job of any government is to do what its people want it to do. This means you have the right to have elections every so often, in which each person's vote counts the same, and everyone's vote is his or her own business.

ARTICLE 22

Every person on this planet has the right to have her or his basic needs met, and should have whatever it takes to live with pride, and become the person he or she wants to be. Every country or group of countries should do everything possible to make this happen.

ARTICLE 23

- 1 You have the right to work and to choose your job, to have fair and safe working conditions, and to be protected against not having work.
- 2 You have the right to the same pay as anyone else who does the same work, without anyone playing favorites.

- 3 You have the right to decent pay so that you and your family can get by with pride. That means that if you don't get paid enough to do that, you should get other kinds of help.
- 4 You have the right to form or be part of a union that will serve and protect your interests.

ARTICLE 24

Everyone has the right to rest and relaxation, which includes limiting the number of hours he or she has to work, and allowing for holidays with pay once in a while.

ARTICLE 25

You have the right to have what you need to live a decent life, including food, clothes, a home, and medical care for you and your family. You have the right to help if you're sick or unable to work, if you're older or a widow or widower, or if you're in any other kind of situation that keeps you from working through no fault of your own.

ARTICLE 26

- 1 Everyone has the right to an education. It should be free, and should be required for all, at least in the early years. Later education for jobs and college has to be available for anyone who wants it and is able to do it.
- 2 Education should help people become the best they can be. It should teach them to respect and understand each other, and to be kind to everyone, no matter who they are or where they are from. Education should help promote the activities of the United Nations in an effort to create a peaceful world.

ARTICLE 27

- 1 You have the right to join in and be part of the world of art, music, and books. You have the right to enjoy the arts, and to

share in the advantages that come from new discoveries in the sciences.

- 2 You have the right to get the credit and any profit that comes from something that you have written, made, or discovered.

ARTICLE 28

All people have the right to a world in which their rights and freedoms, such as the ones in this statement, are respected and made to happen.

ARTICLE 29

- 1 You have a responsibility to the place you live and the people around you—we all do. Only by watching out for each other can we each become our individual best.
- 2 In order for all people to be free, there have to be laws and limits that respect everyone's rights, meet our sense of right and wrong, and keep the peace in a world in which everyone plays an active part.
- 3 Nobody should use her or his freedom to go against what the United Nations is all about.

ARTICLE 30

Nothing in this statement that says anybody has the right to do anything that could weaken or take away these rights.

1941

The Allies proclaim "four freedoms" as their objective: freedom of speech and worship, and freedom from want and from fear. The Allies repeat that commitment in the 1941 Atlantic Charter.

1942

UN War Crimes Commission establishes international war crimes trials in Nuremberg and Tokyo after World War II.

1945

UN Charter sets forth United Nations' goals, functions, and responsibilities.

1947

The partition of India displaces up to 12.5 million people in the former British Indian Empire, with estimates of loss of life varying from several hundred thousand to a million.

1948

Chinese Laogai (forced labor camps) system built. An estimated 50 million have been sent to *laogai* camps.

A SHORT HISTORY OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The belief that everyone, by virtue of his or her humanity, is entitled to certain human rights is fairly new. The roots of this belief however, lie in earlier traditions and teachings of many cultures. It took the catalyst of World War II to propel human rights onto the global stage and into the global conscience.

Throughout much of history, people acquired rights and responsibilities through their membership in a group—a family, indigenous nation, religion, class, community, or state. Most societies have had traditions similar to the “golden rule” of “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” The Hindu Vedas, the Babylonian Code of Hammurabi, the Bible, the Qur’an (Koran), and the Analects of Confucius are five of the oldest written sources that address questions of people’s duties, rights, and responsibilities. In addition, the Inca and Aztec codes of conduct and justice and an Iroquois Constitution were Native American sources that existed well before the creation of the U.S. Constitution in the eighteenth century. In fact, all societies, whether in oral or written tradition, have had systems of propriety and justice as well as ways of tending to the health and welfare of their members.

PRECURSORS OF TWENTIETH CENTURY HUMAN RIGHTS DOCUMENTS

Documents asserting individual rights, such as the Magna Carta (1215), the English Bill of Rights (1689), the French Declaration on the Rights of Man and Citizens (1789), and the United States Constitution and Bill of Rights (1791), are the written antecedents to many of today’s human rights documents. Yet many of these documents, when originally translated into policy, excluded women, people of color, and members of certain social, religious, economic, and political groups. Nevertheless, oppressed people throughout the world have drawn on the principles these documents express, in order to support revolutions that assert the right to self-determination or to protect individual rights.

Contemporary international human rights law and the establishment of the United Nations (UN) have important historical antecedents. Efforts in the nineteenth century to prohibit the slave trade and to limit the horrors of war are prime examples. In 1919, countries established the International Labor Organization (ILO) to oversee treaties protecting workers with respect to their rights, including their health and safety. Concern over the protection of certain minority groups was raised by the League of Nations at the end of the First World War. However, this organization for international peace and cooperation, created by the victorious European allies, never achieved its goals. The League floundered because the United States refused to join and because the League

failed to prevent Japan’s invasion of China and Manchuria (1931) and Italy’s attack on Ethiopia (1935). It finally died with the onset of World War II (1939).

THE BIRTH OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The idea of human rights emerged stronger after World War II. The extermination by Nazi Germany of more than six million Jews, Sinti and Romani (gypsies), homosexuals, and persons with disabilities horrified the world. Trials were held in Nuremberg and Tokyo after World War II, and officials from the defeated countries were punished for committing war crimes, “crimes against peace,” and “crimes against humanity.”

Governments then committed themselves to establishing the United Nations, with the primary goal of bolstering international peace and preventing conflict. People wanted to ensure that never again would anyone be unjustly denied life, freedom, food, shelter, or nationality. The essence of these emerging human rights principles was captured in President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s 1941 State of the Union Address when he spoke of a world founded on four essential freedoms: freedom of speech and religion and freedom from want and fear. The calls came from across the globe for human rights standards to protect citizens from abuses by their governments, standards against which nations could be held accountable for the treatment of those living within their borders. These voices played a critical role in the establishment of the United Nations Charter in 1945—the initial document of the UN, which set forth its goals, functions, and responsibilities.

THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Member states of the United Nations pledged to promote respect for the human rights of all. To advance this goal, the UN established a Commission on Human Rights and charged it with the task of drafting a document spelling out the meaning of the fundamental rights and freedoms proclaimed in the Charter. The Commission, guided by Eleanor Roosevelt’s forceful leadership, captured the world’s attention. On December 10, 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was adopted by the fifty-six members of the United Nations. The vote was unanimous, although eight nations chose to abstain.

The UDHR, commonly referred to as the International Magna Carta, extended the revolution in international law ushered in by the United Nations Charter—namely, that how a government treats its own citizens was now a matter of legitimate international concern, and not simply a domestic issue. It claims that all rights are interdependent and indivisible. Its preamble eloquently asserts: “Recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal

1948

Apartheid system of legal racial segregation enforced in South Africa.

1960

Last of the Soviet Gulags close, but political dissidents continue to be imprisoned until the Gorbachev era.

1966

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights are ratified by the United Nations. Along with the UDHR, they complete the International Bill of Human Rights.

1969

Adoption of the American Convention on Human Rights in San José, Costa Rica, which incorporates human rights standards for Latin American countries.

1971

Widespread violation of human rights in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) where an estimated 200,000 to 3 million civilians are killed and millions flee to India.

and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world.”

The influence of the UDHR has been substantial. Its principles have been incorporated into the constitutions of most of the more than 185 nations now in the UN. Although a declaration is not a legally binding document, the Universal Declaration has achieved the status of customary international law because people regard it “as a common standard of achievement for all people and all nations.”

THE HUMAN RIGHTS COVENANTS

With the goal of establishing mechanisms for enforcing the UDHR, the UN Commission on Human Rights proceeded to draft two treaties in 1966: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and its optional Protocol, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Together with the Universal Declaration, they are commonly referred to as the International Bill of Human Rights. The ICCPR focuses on such issues as the right to life, freedom of speech, religion, and voting. The ICESCR focuses on such issues as food, education, health, and shelter. Both covenants trumpet the extension of rights to all persons and prohibit discrimination.

As of 2010, more than 160 nations have ratified these covenants.

SUBSEQUENT HUMAN RIGHTS DOCUMENTS

In addition to the covenants in the International Bill of Human Rights, the United Nations has adopted more than twenty principal treaties which further elaborate human rights. These include conventions to prevent and prohibit specific abuses like torture and genocide, and to protect especially vulnerable populations, such as refugees (Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, 1950), women (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979), and children (Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989).

In Europe, the Americas, and Africa, regional documents for the protection and promotion of human rights extend the International Bill of Human Rights. For example, African states have created their own Charter of Human and People’s Rights (1981), and Muslim states have created the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam (1990). The dramatic changes in Eastern Europe, Africa, and Latin America in the last twenty years have powerfully demonstrated a surge in demand for respect of human rights. Popular movements in China, Korea, and other Asian nations reveal a similar commitment to these principles.

THE ROLE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Across the globe, champions of human rights have most often been citizens, not government officials. In particular, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have played an important role in focusing the international community’s attention on human rights issues. For example, NGO activities surrounding the 1995 United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, drew unprecedented attention to serious violations of the rights of women. NGOs such as Amnesty International, Anti-Slavery International, the International Commission of Jurists, the International Working Group on Indigenous Affairs, Human Rights Watch, Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights, Physicians for Human Rights, Human Rights First, the Laogai Research Foundation, and the Foundation for Human Rights monitor the actions of governments and pressure them to act according to human rights principles.

Government officials who understand the human rights framework can also effect far-reaching change for freedom. Many world leaders, such as Abraham Lincoln, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, Michelle Bachelet Jeria, and Jimmy Carter, have taken strong stands for human rights. In other countries, leaders like Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi, Dag Hammarskjöld, Graça Machel, Wangari Maathai, and Vaclav Havel have brought about great changes under the banner of human rights.

Eleanor Roosevelt, New York, 1949.



1973

The Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet carries out a military takeover that initiates massive disappearances, illegal detentions, torture and extrajudicial killings.

1975–1979

More than a million Cambodians are executed in the “killing fields” by Pol Pot’s Khmer Rouge regime.

1979

The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women is ratified by the United Nations.

1981

The Africa Charter of Human and People’s Rights is unanimously approved.



Signing of the United Nations Charter, San Francisco, California, 1945.

THE EVOLUTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS LAW

Since 1948, the UDHR has served as the foundation for twenty major human rights conventions. Many human rights conventions have entered into force; some are still in the process of ratification. Others, such as a convention on the rights of indigenous peoples and a convention on environmental rights, are presently being drafted. As the needs of certain groups of people are recognized and defined, and as world events point to the need for awareness and action on specific human rights issues, international human rights law continually evolves in response. The ultimate goal is to protect and promote the basic human rights of every person, everywhere.

Although much progress has been made to protect human rights worldwide, the disturbing reality is that people who have killed, tortured, and raped on a massive scale are still likely to escape punishment.

After years of intense preparation, governments met in 1998 in Rome, Italy, to adopt the statute establishing a permanent International Criminal Court (ICC). In 2002, sixty states ratified the Rome Statute to officially implement the Court's function to prosecute the gravest global crimes. As of 2009, the Statute has been ratified by 109 states.

The ICC is a permanent judicial tribunal with a global jurisdiction to try individuals for the worst crimes in the world—genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes.

MODERN HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT

The adoption of the UDHR in 1948 is thought to be the beginning of the modern human rights movement. The modern human rights movement has seen profound social changes: the women's rights movement gained more equality for women, such as the right to vote. Anti-apartheid movements in South Africa and across the world demonstrated the significance of "transnational activism," which helped create democratic governance based on self-determination and equality.

Human rights is an idea whose time has come. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a call to freedom and justice for people throughout the world. Every day, governments that violate the rights of their citizens are challenged and called to task. Every day, human beings worldwide mobilize and confront injustice and inhumanity. Like drops of water falling on a rock, they wear down the forces of oppression and move the world closer to achieving the principles expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Source: Adapted from David Shiman, Teaching Human Rights (Denver: Center for Teaching International Relations Publications, University of Denver, 1993).

1984

International Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment is ratified by the United Nations.

1989

Tiananmen Square Massacre in China follows weeks of peaceful protests calling for political reform. Government troops fire on unarmed protesters, killing thousands.

1989

International Convention of the Rights of the Child is ratified by the United Nations.

1990s

Peace accords are signed in Central America, ending decades of killings and enforced disappearances in El Salvador, Nicaragua and Guatemala.



BECOME A DEFENDER

Everyone can become a defender, whether you have one day or an entire academic year. Following are a few examples of how you can support students in their efforts to be defenders.

TIPS:

Have a strategy:

- Identify the problem to be addressed.
- Research the problem: Why is this a problem, what solutions have been tried (some of this will have been covered in the lesson)?
- What change is required?
- Define actions steps and specific target audiences—who can make the change happen?
- How can the group involve other supporters?
- How will the impact of the group's efforts be measured?

1 DAY:

If you have one day to take action, select an action that is simple and focused, such as writing letters or organizing an information day in your school.

1 WEEK:

If you have a week to take action, focus on an event or program that builds over the week from awareness to action.

FOR EXAMPLE:

- Organize a week for effecting change. Over the course of the week, begin by educating your target community on the issue and then provide a series of actions people can take.

1 SEMESTER:

If you have a term to take action, build a program that integrates your classroom learning with a comprehensive, multi-layered project. Consider designing a human rights-based service learning project.

1991

Burmese democracy activist Aung San Suu Kyi receives Nobel Peace Prize. She remains under house arrest despite repeated calls from the international community for her release.

1993

International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia is established.

1994

An estimated 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus are killed in Rwandan genocide.

1994

Apartheid system of racial segregation is dismantled in South Africa.

1994

November International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda is established.

Robert Kennedy meets a local man in Soweto, Johannesburg, South Africa, 8 June 1966. Photographer unknown. In the Robert F. Kennedy Photograph Collection.



1995

The Fourth World Conference on Women is held in Beijing, China. Participants agree on a five-year action plan to enhance the social, economic, and political empowerment of women, improve their health, advance their education, and promote their marital and sexual rights.

1995

Srebrenica massacre. More than 8,000 Bosnian men and boys are killed in largest mass murder in Europe since World War II.

1998

The Rome Statute, signed by 120 countries in 1998, entered into force on July 1, 2002, establishing the legal basis for the International Criminal Court (ICC). The ICC has jurisdiction over the most serious crimes which concern the international community, such as genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes.

1998–2008

Estimated 5.4 million people die in a decade of war in the Democratic Republic of Congo.