



Amnesty International

EDUCATION ACTIVITIES
LGBT HISTORY MONTH 2005

INTRODUCTION

This set of six classroom activities for teachers aims to encourage students (age 14+ – KS 4) to explore human rights, diversity, intolerance, and in particular the human rights of sexual minorities. Through role-play, research and case studies, students are invited to examine the use of language, the nature of prejudice and how it can be challenged in the UK and around the world. The exercises introduce the experience of lesbians and gay men around the world as an example of how people have been oppressed for their identity and how they are overcoming that oppression.

Within the framework of the Citizenship Orders of the National Curriculum for England these activities cover:

- **Knowledge and understanding** of the legal and human rights underpinning society, the significance of the media in society, the diversity of identities in the UK and the need for mutual respect and understanding, thinking about topical moral, social and cultural issues, problems and events
- The development of the **skills** of enquiry, analytical thinking, of participation and oral and written communication, justifying an opinion and using their imagination to consider other people's opinions and express views that are not their own, and reflecting on the process of participation

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ACTIVITY 1 WORD POWER

Language shapes the way we think, the way we perceive ourselves and others and the world around us

Ask the students in pairs to list some positive and negative ways in which words can be used. Talk about times when others have used words which:
have made the students feel good about themselves
have silenced them or made them feel less good about themselves.

Ask the students in pairs to discuss an experience of being insulted or taunted:

- what happened?
- was the insult based on a real 'difference'?
- how did they feel and react at the time?
- why do they think it happened?
- what might have motivated the person or people involved?
- how would they deal with a similar situation now?

What words have they used to taunt or insult others?

Have they ever said anything that they wished they could 'unsay'?

Have they ever wished they had said something when it was too late?

Invite the students in groups to pool examples to make a common list of taunts, grouped into aspects of 'difference', eg skin colour, size, physical impairment, sexuality, not conforming to expectations, being unfashionable, etc.

The whole class can then discuss:

- What messages do these insults give about what is 'normal' and 'acceptable'?
- Where might these messages come from?
- Which aspect of 'difference' attracts most insults?

Aldous Huxley said:

'Educators have done a good deal less than they might reasonably have been expected to do in explaining to young people the nature, the limitations, the huge potentialities for evil as well as good, of that greatest of all human inventions, language. Children should be taught that words are indispensable but can also be fatal.'

(*Perspective* 1962)

Write this on the board, and invite the whole class to discuss:

- What does he mean by 'words are indispensable but can also be fatal'?
- Can they think of examples of words being fatal?
- Is language the 'greatest of all human inventions'?

Write up these words:

'I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it.'
(Attributed to Voltaire (1694-1778) – summary not actual quote.)

Ask groups to come up with three points in favour of the statement and three points against

Groups can then look at the list of the statements below, discuss them and rank them in order from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree':

- There are some words that are so offensive they should never be used.
- Everyone should be able to say anything they want to say.
- It is all right to say something offensive in private but not in public.
- It is better to let hateful opinions be spoken so that they can be known and challenged.
- Hate speech is more dangerous than censorship.
- Pornography is a form of hate speech.
- It is all right for someone to use an offensive word to describe themselves.
- It's equally damaging if a woman tells a sexist joke or a black person tells a racist joke.
- Politically correct language is a form of censorship.
- Principles of equality do not make money.

ACTIVITY 2

KILLING TUNES

Recent moves have been made in the UK (Autumn 2004) to ban performances and records and appearances on music award shows by a number of Jamaican reggae artists whose lyrics include the advocacy of violence, especially against gay men. Among those targeted have been Sizzla (Miguel Collins), with his controversial lyrics like 'Pump Up' which advocate burning men who have sex with men, Beanie Man, Bounty Killer, Vybz, Kartel and Buju Banton whose songs also incite violence against gays.

Hold a debate on the banning of bands that are recording music with sexist and homophobic lyrics. Students take on the following roles:

- parents opposed to sexually explicit lyrics
- record company executive
- record shop keeper
- fans of the bands who think their lyrics are cool and funny
- a group of school students who are fed up with the terms that fellow pupils have been using to them since the record came out
- a DJ who refuses to play tracks with sexist and homophobic lyrics
- anti-censorship campaigners, who operate on the principle that, no matter what the lyrics are, the band has the right to be heard.

ACTIVITY 3 LANGUAGE SURVEY

In this activity students investigate the power of words by carrying out their own research and critically evaluating language that is used from different perspectives.

Over a period of one week, students keep their own diaries and note words, phrases and conversations that they hear/encounter about sexuality. Their data should record the situation, the apparent intention of the speaker and the context in which the words were used. Their record should be anonymous – nobody's names should be used – but the approximate age and occupation (if adults) of those involved could be noted. The record should aim at accurate reporting, so notes should be made as soon after the conversation as possible.

At the end of the week students pool their data and analyse it. What do their results reveal?

- What words and phrases were most commonly used?
- Were the words used in a positive way to praise or celebrate someone or something, or used neutrally without placing any value, or in a negative way aiming to demonise or hurt someone?
- Were the words used about a person, or about a thing or an abstract idea?
- What was the probable intention of the speaker?
- What reactions, if any, did the remarks produce in those listening? In the recorder?
- Was the language used an inaccurate statement?

Ask students to find out the meanings and origins of the following terms.

Print the words on cards. Cut them up and share them among groups of students. Groups now write definitions of their word/s.

When they have finished ask them to look up their word/s in a good dictionary or an encyclopaedia. How accurate were their definitions?

- Gay
- Homophobic
- Lesbian
- Sexual orientation
- Transvestite
- Prejudice
- Queer
- Bisexual
- Gender identity
- Biological sex
- Transgender
- Heterosexist

ACTIVITY 4: IN THE PAPERS

As a follow-up exercise groups of students can scan newspapers and magazines, cutting out any articles that they can find that deal with issues of sexuality and human rights, either in the UK or abroad.

Hand out a copy of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to each student (See Appendix 2)

Ask groups to decide if the story that they have found about concerns:

- a right being denied?
- a right being demanded?
- a right being enjoyed or exercised?

Is the way the issue is being reported an abuse of human rights itself?

Can groups relate their stories to relevant articles in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights? Which articles in the UDHR guarantee the right to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual or transvestite?

Try and match the examples below with articles of the UDHR.

- A mother loses custody of her child in a divorce because she is a lesbian.
- An officer is expelled from the army because he is gay.
- A pop star tells his fans he is gay to pre-empt being exposed by a tabloid paper.
- Legislators in Hawaii discuss amending state law to allow people of the same sex to marry.
- A 16-year-old commits suicide because she has been taunted and bullied at school for being a lesbian.
- The police keep secret files on men and women they suspect are homosexual.
- In a Latin American country 'death squads', linked to the police, torture and murder transvestites.
- Police keep stopping and searching men coming out of a gay night club.
- Two men kiss on a soap programme.
- Lesbians and gay men hold the annual Pride festival.
- Amnesty International campaigns to release men and women who have been imprisoned because of their homosexuality.

BACKGROUND NOTE:

THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

In 1948 the 56 member states of the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). They said that the inherent dignity and equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family were the foundation for freedom, justice and peace in the world.

They said that these rights are:

inalienable – you cannot lose these rights any more than you can stop being human.

indivisible – you cannot lose one of these rights in favour of another 'more important' right.

interdependent – each of these human right is complementary to the next – eg the right to participate in government is directly affected by the right to get an education, the right to free speech and the right to the necessities of a decent life.

Discrimination against minority groups on grounds of age, race and gender, for example, is recognised and forbidden under international human rights treaties. While no international human rights document actually mentions discrimination on grounds of 'sexual orientation', landmark human rights law cases have been decided on the basis of an interpretation of human rights laws like the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms or the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

ACTIVITY 5: **IS IT A CRIME TO BE GAY IN BOLDOVIA?**

Ask students to read the handout describing the background situation in 'Boldovia'. (The situation in the fictional country of Boldovia has some parallels to the recent situation in Romania in 1997, when homosexual acts between consenting adults were still illegal (as they were in a third of the countries around the world).

Divide the class into small groups.

Appoint one group to be the Committee. They listen to the evidence in order to make recommendations about homosexuality to the Boldovian government. They must prepare questions to put to all the groups offering testimony.

Other groups are given the role-play cards. They prepare their testimony to present to the Committee.

After they have heard all the testimonies the Committee debates and agrees its recommendations.

The rest of the class, out of role, take notes on:

- Which testimonies were the Committee most persuaded by?
- Are any Committee member's personal views dominating the debate?
- What do they think of the Committee's decisions and reasons?

The whole class can then discuss:

- How did it feel to be in their group?
- Did they agree with the testimony of their own group?
- Which testimony did they most/least agree with and why?
- What do they think of the Committee's decision?
- What will be the consequence of the decision?

Follow up

Visit the Amnesty International web-site (www.amnesty.org.uk) to find out AI's recommendations to governments on protecting the rights of lesbians and gay men.

STUDENT INFORMATION

IS IT A CRIME TO BE GAY IN BOLDAVIA?

Background information on the situation in Boldovia today

You live in the newly democratic (imaginary) Eastern European state of Boldovia. After decades of totalitarian government, the country seeks to join the Council of Europe – the organisation of the European democracies that have more tolerant laws towards homosexuality than Boldovia. The Council of Europe will not consider closer political, economic and cultural ties with Boldovia until it decriminalises homosexuality.

The Boldovian government has appointed a Committee to review existing legislation. One of the most controversial laws under review is Section 8 of the Penal Code. This law condemns homosexuality as 'an abomination against nature'. The punishment for promoting homosexuality is two years in jail. The punishment for adults found guilty of involvement in homosexual acts is five years in jail. The uncorroborated testimony of a single person is enough to convict someone under the Act. Section 8 has been used to

arrest and discredit many people in Boldovia who were not gay men or lesbians.

A Committee of six members of the Boldovian Parliament has been set up to take testimony from the public, and to recommend if Section 8 should be repealed and, if so, what the consequences might be. The committee will listen to representatives of:

- The Boldovian police
- The Boldovian Council for Civil Liberties
- The Boldovian Council of Faiths
- The Boldovian Brigade of Light for Family Values
- The Boldovian Institute for Social Research
- The Boldovian Medical Association
- The Boldovian Campaign for Homosexual Equality
- Amnesty International

ROLE CARD 1:

THE BOLDOVIAN POLICE

You represent the police force of Boldovia.

A survey of Boldovian police revealed the following, sometimes conflicting opinions:

- Most police do not like homosexuals or homosexuality.
- Some police are homosexuals. The illegality of homosexual acts gives rise to blackmail of those involved.
- Homosexual acts between consenting adults are victimless crimes.
- Given the increasing rate of violent crime in Boldovia, resources that are now being used to arrest and jail gays and lesbians could be better used elsewhere.
- Decriminalisation of homosexuality may lead to an increase in pornography and prostitution.
- The current high rate of violent attacks on lesbians and gay men would decrease if homosexuality were decriminalised.
- Police attitudes towards homosexuality would probably remain hostile even if Section 8 were abolished.

ROLE CARD 2:

THE BOLDOVIAN COUNCIL FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES

You represent the newly established Boldovian Commission for Civil Liberties.

Human rights and civil liberty organisations in Boldovia and abroad believe that:

- Sexual minorities should have the right to expect complete equality under Boldovian law as do all other minorities.
- Sexual activity between consenting adults is a private matter and is not appropriate for state legislation.
- As Boldovia is now a signatory to the European Convention on Human Rights, it must respect the European Court of Human Rights, which has ruled that it is illegal for nations to criminalise homosexual relationships between consenting adults.

ROLE CARD 3:

THE BOLDOVIAN COUNCIL OF FAITHS

The Boldovian Council of Faiths speaks for all the main religious faiths in the country – Islamic, Jewish and all the main Christian churches, Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant.

The council contains a conservative element and a progressive element – both of whom are represented on the delegation. The council claims to speak for 68 per cent of the Boldovian population.

Some of your council’s conservative members believe:

- Homosexuality is evil and unnatural.
- Holy scriptures condemn homosexual acts as a sin.
- AIDS is a divine punishment.
- The state should strengthen traditional morality.
- Your followers can be mobilised to pressure lawmakers against repealing Section 8.

Some of your council’s liberal members believe:

- Homosexuals should receive support and not punishment.
- The laws against homosexuality should be abolished.
- State recognition of lesbian and gay marriages is ‘going too far’.

ROLE CARD 4:

THE BOLDOVIAN BRIGADE OF LIGHT FOR FAMILY VALUES

The brigade is a conservative group, small in number but very vocal, with some support in the new government and the media. You believe that:

- God ordained the natural order of things – men and women – Adam and Eve, not Adam and Adam.
- Homosexuality is a perversion and a mental illness.
- Homosexuals should be pitied and should receive treatment to try and cure them. This is best done in prison.
- No child will be safe from influence and abuse if lesbians and gay men are allowed to become teachers, parents, or youth workers.
- The traditional family unit is the only place to bring up children. The brigade will strongly resist any attempts by the government to broaden the definition of ‘family’.

ROLE CARD 5:

BOLDOVIAN INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH

You are a member of the state body that organises social research in Boldovia.

From your information you believe that:

- Approximately one Boldovian in 10 is a lesbian or a gay man – figures that reflect international statistics.
- Children suffer no harm from having a lesbian or gay parent.
- The current high rate of suicide among lesbians and gays would be reduced if homosexuality were decriminalised.

ROLE CARD 6:

BOLDOVIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

The Boldovian Medical Association represents the doctors of Boldovia.

- Health care and health education should reach as much of the population as possible.
- It is impossible effectively to teach safe sex and HIV prevention without acknowledging the reality of homosexuality, and the widespread practice of same-sex relationships in Boldovia.
- More people would be tested for HIV infection if lesbian and gay relationships were not illegal.

ROLE CARD 7:

BOLDOVIAN CAMPAIGN FOR HOMOSEXUAL EQUALITY

You are members of the recently formed Boldovian Campaign for Homosexual Equality.

Some of your members are prominent Boldovian lesbians and gay men. You have gathered international support for your campaign for equal status and rights for lesbians and gays. The main points of your campaign are:

- Gay men and lesbians should be full citizens with equal protection under the law.
- All laws against homosexual acts among consenting adults and against the promotion of homosexuality should be abolished.
- Evidence does not support the argument that children suffer negatively from having lesbian or gay parents; on the contrary, most child sex abusers are heterosexual men. You therefore demand full parental rights for lesbians and gay men.
- Decriminalisation of homosexuality is not linked to an increase in prostitution and pornography, especially since the overwhelming majority of both pornography and prostitution is heterosexual.

ROLE CARD 8:

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL (AI)

You represent an international human rights organisation. AI maintains that it is a violation of human rights to imprison people on the grounds of their homosexuality. You are therefore demanding that:

- Section 8 be repealed and homosexuality be decriminalised in Boldovia.
- All persons imprisoned because of consensual relations with a partner of the same sex be released immediately.

ACTIVITY 6

QUEER CELEBRITIES

Major studies of human sexuality from the work of Dr Alfred Kinsey in the 1940s to the latest opinion surveys suggest that there is a high level of same-sex attraction and same-sex relations among people of all countries, classes and cultures. Actual statistics tend to vary wildly. In Kinsey's data 13 per cent of the men interviewed and 6 per cent of the women identified themselves as predominantly homosexual, and a third of men and half as many women said that they had been involved in same-sex activity at some stage in their lives. A recent survey by Kaiser Family Associates in the USA 18 per cent of those polled identified themselves as gay, lesbian or bisexual. In France in a recent poll, a quarter of men interviewed said they had been involved in a homosexual experience. In a National Survey in the UK in 1994 6 per cent of the men and 3.4 per cent of the women interviewed identified themselves as homosexuals.

Around the world across the centuries, homosexuals and bisexuals have made extraordinary contributions to culture, knowledge and discovery.

Here is a list of distinguished figures who are believed to have been gay, lesbian or bisexual.

Divide this list of names among groups of students. Invite each group to search on the Internet or in the library or in encyclopaedias to find a picture of their personalities and information about their lives: where they are from, their dates, and their contribution. If possible include an actual quotation from them or the name of something that they have made.

Each group is to make an A3 sized poster of each of their personalities and prepare a two-minute presentation to the rest of the class about them and their contribution to the world. They should line their personalities up in chronological order on a time line before the presentations begin . Students may suggest many other personalities.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Czar Alexander I of Russia | 18. Plato |
| 2. Alexander the Great of Macedon | 19. Yves Saint Laurent |
| 3. Pedro Almodóvar | 20. Sappho |
| 4. Hans Christian Andersen | 21. Socrates |
| 5. Giorgio Armani | 22. Walt Whitman |
| 6. Lord Byron | 23. Oscar Wilde |
| 7. James Dean | 24. Tennessee Williams |
| 8. Rock Hudson | 25. Virginia Woolf |
| 9. King Edward II of England | 26. Drew Barrymore (<i>considers herself bisexual</i>) |
| 10. Elton John | 27. T. E. Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia) (<i>some ambiguity</i>) |
| 11. Billie Jean King | 28. John Maynard Keynes (<i>some ambiguity</i>) |
| 12. Leonardo da Vinci | 29. King Richard the Lionheart (<i>no consensus</i>) |
| 13. Federico Garcia Lorca | 30. Sir Francis Bacon |
| 14. Freddie Mercury | |
| 15. George Michael | |
| 16. Michelangelo (Buonarotti) | |
| 17. Martina Navratilova | |

APPENDIX 1

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORTS ON SEXUAL MINORITIES AT RISK

In countries all over the world, individuals are being targeted for imprisonment, torture and even murder, simply on the grounds of their sexual orientation. Gay men, lesbians, transvestites, transsexuals, any person who doesn't adhere to the dictates of what passes for 'normal' sexuality may be subject to such persecution at the hands of private individuals or government agents. Abuses may take such subtle forms as everyday hostility, harassment or neglect. In such cases, antipathetic authorities may refuse to protect the basic rights of gays and lesbians, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation, sexual attack, public or domestic violence and even murder, all without recourse to the law. In other instances, governments are themselves the perpetrators of abuses: unfair trials, imprisonment, ill-treatment (including false 'medical cures'), torture (including rape), and execution are among the violations against sexual minorities recorded by Amnesty International.

Lesbians and gay men were targeted by the Nazis for extermination, but despite the clear indication of their particular vulnerability to human rights abuses, they were not specifically included in the framework for international human rights protection in the UDHR or included in subsequent human rights conventions.

Some governments in the world deny the very existence of gays and lesbians among their people.

In some countries same-sex relations are still regarded as a grave crime, even as a sin against God, that is punishable by imprisonment or even by death.

Other governments claim that the very concept of equal rights for sexual minorities is a Western idea that should not be recognised.

The stigmatised position of gay men and lesbians around the world and the lack of recognition of sexuality as a basic human right contributes to their experiences of ill-treatment at the hands of the authorities (in 1995 approximately 78 countries had laws criminalising homosexual acts).

(From *Breaking the Silence* – Amnesty International report on human rights and sexual minorities, 1995)

APPENDIX 2

SUMMARY OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The 30 articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaim in clear and simple terms the rights that belong equally to every person on this earth. These rights are your rights. Familiarise yourself with them and help to promote and defend them for yourself as well as for your fellow human beings.

Your rights can be restricted only in limited circumstances, such as to protect other people's rights. No person or state may use any of the articles in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to justify undermining the rights to which we are all entitled.

ARTICLE 1

'All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights'

You have the same human rights as everyone else in the world, because you are a human being. These rights are inalienable — they cannot be taken away from you. Every individual, no matter who they are or where they live, should be treated with dignity.

ARTICLE 2

'Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind'

You should not suffer discrimination, or be deprived of any of your rights, because of your race, colour, sex, language, religion or political opinions. When it comes to respect for your basic rights, it should not matter what country you were born in, what social class you belong to, or how rich or poor you are. Everyone should enjoy all the rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

ARTICLE 3

'Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person'

We all have the right to live in freedom and safety. No one should be arbitrarily killed, or deprived of their liberty without good reason.

ARTICLE 4

'No one shall be held in slavery or servitude'

Human beings must not be owned, bought or sold. No one has the right to enslave anyone else. Slavery is a crime.

ARTICLE 5

'No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment'

Torture is forbidden at all times and in all circumstances. No one should suffer treatment or punishment that is cruel or makes them feel less than human. These rules apply everywhere – in police stations, prisons, on the streets, in peacetime or during a war.

ARTICLE 6

'Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law'

Every human being has the right to be treated as a person in the eyes of the law. We must all be granted the rights and bear the obligations accorded to every person by the law.

ARTICLE 7

‘All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law’

You have the right to be treated by law in the same way as everyone else. You have the same right to be protected by the laws of your country as anyone else.

ARTICLE 8

‘Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law’

If your rights under the law are violated by someone else – be they another individual or a member of the police or security forces – you have the right to see justice done.

ARTICLE 9

‘No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile’

You may not be arrested or held in a police station or prison without good reason. You may not be kept out of your own country. If you are detained, you have the right to challenge the detention in a court of law.

ARTICLE 10

‘Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal’

You have the right to a fair and public hearing if you are ever accused of breaking the law, or if you have to go to court for some other reason. The courts must be independent from the government, competent to interpret the law and free to make their own decisions.

ARTICLE 11

‘Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty’

If you are accused of a crime, you have the right to be treated as innocent, unless or until you are proved guilty, according to the law, in a fair and public trial, where you are allowed to mount a proper defence. You cannot be tried for doing something which was not a criminal offence in law at the time it was done.

ARTICLE 12

‘No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation’

No one has the right to intrude in your private life or to interfere with your home or family without good reason. No one has the right to attack your good name without reason. The law should protect you against such interference.

ARTICLE 13

‘Everyone has the right to freedom of movement’

You have the right to move about freely within your country. You also have the right to travel freely to and from your own country, and to leave any country.

ARTICLE 14

‘Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution’

If you are forced to flee your home because of human rights abuses, you have the right to seek safety in another country. This means that border police or other authorities may not refuse you entry, or return you to your own country, without proper consideration being given to your request for asylum.

ARTICLE 15

'Everyone has the right to a nationality'

You have the right to be treated as a citizen of the country you come from. No one can take away your citizenship, or prevent you from changing your nationality, without good reason.

ARTICLE 16

'Men and women... have the right to marry and to found a family'

All adults have the right to marry, regardless of their race, country or religion. Both partners have equal rights in the marriage, and their free and full agreement is needed for the marriage to take place. The family is entitled to protection by the state.

ARTICLE 17

'Everyone has the right to own property'

You have the right to own goods, land and other property, alone or with other people. No one has the right to take your property away without good reason.

ARTICLE 18

'Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion'

You have the right to hold views on any issue you like without fear of punishment or censure. You also have the right to believe in any religion – or none at all. You have the right to change your religion if you wish, and to practise and teach your religion or beliefs.

ARTICLE 19

'Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression'

You have the right to tell people your opinion. You should be able to express your views, however unpopular, without fear of punishment. You have the right to communicate your views within your country and to people in other countries.

ARTICLE 20

'Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association'

You have the right to gather together with other people, in public or private. You have the right to hold meetings and organise peaceful demonstrations. Everyone has the right to form or join societies, trade unions, political groups and other associations. No one may force you to join any group if you do not wish to.

ARTICLE 21

'Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country'

You have the right to be part of your government, either by being in it yourself or by choosing others to represent you. Governments have the authority to govern because they represent the will of the people. This means there should be free and fair elections on a regular basis.

ARTICLE 22

'Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realisation... of... economic, social and cultural rights'

You have the right – by virtue of being a human being – to have your basic needs met. Everyone is entitled to live in economic, social and cultural conditions that allow them dignity and let them develop as individuals. All countries should do everything they can to make this happen.

ARTICLE 23

'Everyone has the right to work... Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions'

You have the right to work in fair and safe conditions and to choose your job. You have the right to be paid enough for a decent standard of living, or to receive supplementary benefits. You also have the right to form or join trade unions to protect your interests.

ARTICLE 24

'Everyone has the right to rest and leisure'

You have the right to time off from work. No one may force you to work unreasonable hours, and you have the right to holidays with pay.

ARTICLE 25

'Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for... health and well-being'

Every human being has the right to a decent life, including adequate food, clothing, housing, medical care and social services. Society should help those unable to work because they are unemployed, sick, disabled or too old to work. Mothers and children are entitled to special care and assistance.

ARTICLE 26

'Everyone has the right to education'

Everyone has the right to an education. It should be free of charge, and everyone should be required to complete at least the early years of schooling. Education at a higher level should be equally available to everyone on the basis of merit. Education should strengthen respect for human rights.

ARTICLE 27

'Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community'

No one may stop you joining in cultural events organised within your community. You have the right to enjoy music, plays, exhibitions, poetry or any other form of artistic or collective expression. You have the right to share in the benefits that scientific discovery may bring.

ARTICLE 28

'Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realised'

Human beings have the right to live in the kind of world where their rights and freedoms are respected.

ARTICLE 29

'Everyone has duties to the community'

We all have a responsibility to the people around us, and we can only develop fully as individuals by taking care of each other. All the rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights can only be limited by law and only if necessary to protect other people's rights, meet society's sense of right and wrong, maintain order and look after the welfare of society as a whole.

Article 30

'Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying... any right to engage in any activity... aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth'

There is nothing in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that justifies any person or state doing anything that undermines the rights to which we are all entitled.