

LESSON PLAN

International Law and United States Resistance

FOUNDATION: *UNIT V. International Human Rights in the Domestic US Context*

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LENGTH

4 days

NEBRASKA SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS

World History: 12.2.10

McREL NATIONAL STANDARDS

World History: 44.4, 44.7, 44.10,
44.11, 44.14
US History: 30.5

OBJECTIVES

Students will each select one of the conventions/treaties not signed by the United States and research what issues prevented its acceptance.

1. Students will examine United States concerns about various aspects of international law and its domestic relevance in this country
2. Students will compare the United States history of approving human rights legislation with that of world powers
3. Students will consider the impact of the United States position on various treaties and its global implications

TERMS

Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)
Convention on the Rights of the Child. (CRC)

MATERIALS

- Summary of Key Points of Treaties (attached)
- Websites:
 - CEDAW (Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women)
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>
 - ICESCR (International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights)
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/cescr.htm>
 - CRC (Convention on the Rights of the Child)
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc.htm>

Day One:

- I. List for students some of the basic key elements of each of the treaties (CEDAW, ICESCR, and CRC) and engage in a class discussion of whether students believe national and international law should protect such rights. Expand the discussion to include possible global ramifications if a major world power does not ratify such treaties.
- II. Break students into three groups and assign each group one of the treaties to research. Ask that they collect information on the status of each treaty in the United States and what the prevailing arguments have been for and against ratification.

Day Two – Three:

- III. Subdivide each group into two and assign one side to prepare a case for ratification and one against ratification. They should collect as much relevant information as possible on the need (or lack thereof) in the United States for the treaty provisions.

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Day Four:

- IV.** Have students present arguments and hold a class vote to ratify each treaty.

- V.** Have students select one of the treaties to examine its international status and global need. Ask them to pay particular attention to which world powers have signed. Assign an essay where students detail their findings and comment specifically on whether they support or oppose the US position and why.

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Summary of Key Points of CEDAW, ICESCR, and CRC

Convention to End Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

The Convention defines discrimination against women as:

... any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.

By accepting the Convention, States commit themselves to undertake a series of measures to end discrimination against women in all forms, including:

- to incorporate the principle of equality of men and women in their legal system, abolish all discriminatory laws and adopt appropriate ones prohibiting discrimination against women;
- to establish tribunals and other public institutions to ensure the effective protection of women against discrimination; and
- to ensure elimination of all acts of discrimination against women by persons, organizations or enterprises.

United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women Department of Economic and Social Affairs
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>

The International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)

Article One:	States the right to self-determination of all people.
Article Two:	Each state takes steps to achieve these rights and be guaranteed without any discrimination.
Article Three:	States that men and women have equal rights to the enjoyment of these rights.
Articles Four/Five:	Explain the legal limitations countries can put on these rights.
Article Six:	The right to work and choose one's work freely.
Article Seven:	Guarantees favorable conditions of work and the right to fair remuneration.
Article Eight:	States the right to form and join labor unions.
Article Nine:	States the right to social security including social insurance.
Article Ten:	Protections for the family including the right to marry freely and protection for children from exploitation from dangerous labor.
Article Eleven:	States the right to a standard of living including food, clothing, housing and improvement of condition of living.
Article Twelve:	States the right to a high quality of mental and physical health.
Articles Thirteen/Fourteen:	The rights to education.
Article Fifteen:	States the rights to take part in cultural life, to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress, and protection of intellectual property.

Women's Rights and Economic Change, Number 3, August 2002
http://www.unl.edu/HumanR/teach/00/0000/media/ICESC_Primer.pdf

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Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

The Convention acknowledges that every child has certain basic rights, including the right to life, their own name and identity, to be raised by their parents within a family or cultural grouping and have a relationship with both of their parents even if separated.

The Convention obliges states to allow parents to exercise their parental responsibilities. The Convention also acknowledges that the child has the right to express its own opinions and to have those opinions heard and acted upon when appropriate, to be protected from abuse or exploitation, to have their privacy protected and requires that their lives not be subject to excessive interference.

The Convention also obliges signatory states to provide separate legal representation for a child in any judicial dispute concerning their care and asks that the child's viewpoint be heard in such cases. The Convention forbids capital punishment capital for children.

The Convention generally defines a child as any person under the age of 18 years, unless an earlier age of majority is recognized by a country's law.

“Convention on the Rights of the Child”, Wikipedia
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Convention_on_the_Rights_of_the_Child