

Teaching Strategy: “A Universal Declaration of Human Rights”

A Universal Declaration of Human Rights is an international document that states basic rights and fundamental freedoms to which all human beings are entitled. The Universal Declaration was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 10, 1948. Motivated by the experiences of the preceding world wars, the Universal Declaration was the first time that countries agreed on a comprehensive statement of inalienable human rights.

Have your students read this document found at <http://un.org/>, and watch one of the following films to write about the connection between the two.

Au Revoir les Enfants (1987)

This autobiographical film about two French boys in a Catholic boarding school during World War II. One of them is secretly Jewish, being hidden by the priests from the Nazis.

The Killing Fields (1984)

This film is the true story of reporter Sidney Schanberg, and his colleague and friend, Cambodian journalist Dith Pran. Like most Westerners, Schanberg fled Cambodia after the murderous Khmer Rouge regime seized power in 1975, but Pran could not. For the next four years, Pran labored in rice paddies as the genocide unfolded around him.

Casualties of War (1989)

The story of a five-man patrol in Vietnam that kidnaps and eventually kills a young girl and the one soldier in the group who refuses to participate.

A Civil Action (1998)

Based on a real-life case, a lawyer agrees to represent eight families whose children died from leukemia after two large corporations leaked toxic chemicals into the water supply of Woburn, Massachusetts, even though the case could mean financial and professional suicide for him.

Snowpiercer (2013)

In a future where an experiment to halt global warming kills most of the humans on Earth, the survivors are on a train called the Snowpiercer that travels around the planet. A class system is installed, with the elite in the front and the poor in the rear, and rebellions soon follow.



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