

PROJECT-BASED LESSON

WHAT IS FREEDOM?

Summary

After viewing the film chapter(s), students will write narrative essays reflecting on their perception of what freedom means. Students will explore the freedoms they have, compared to those of girls living in oppressive situations. Once the essays are completed, they can be published as a class book.

Objective

Encourage students to examine their beliefs about civil rights. Students will investigate how a girl's legal status or the culture or economics of her community impacts her opportunities.

Subjects

Language Arts, Writing, Social Studies (Civics)

Common Core State Standards

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.3/11-12.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.4/11-12.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.1/11-12.1: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.2/11-12.2: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

Time Needed

Three to six class periods; 50 minutes each

Skill Building

- Developing essays, including planning, revising, editing, and rewriting
- Developing clarity and precision in writing

Resources and Materials

- Teacher-selected film chapters from *Girl Rising*
- Teacher Guides for selected chapters, which include a list of Resources, a mini-lesson for introducing the film chapters, and a Film Viewing Guide
- Venn Diagram (found in the Resources section)
- US Constitution Bill of Rights at www.senate.gov/civics/constitution_item/constitution.htm
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights at www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/
- See Additional Resources Guide for other resources, including relevant videos (found in the Resources section).

Essential Questions

1. How do my civil rights impact the opportunities that I have?
2. How do the opportunities that I have impact my rights?
3. How does a girl's legal status impact her opportunities?
4. How can individuals and organizations effect change?

Sample Content Questions

1. What happens when a country does not value all citizens equally? What are the ramifications?
2. What happens when a country's constitution or its laws conflict with tradition?
3. Is it okay to give different demographic groups different rights and freedoms?

Building a Foundation and Making Connections

View the selected film chapter(s) from *Girl Rising* and use the introductory lessons and Film Viewing Guides, relevant Country and Issue Fact Sheets, and Resources to engage students so that they begin to develop an understanding of the numerous issues that influence a girl's ability to access an education.

Split the class into groups of two or three students and have each group fill in a Venn Diagram comparing and contrasting one girl's story with their own lives. Have groups share with the class the commonalities and differences that they found. How do these girls' situations compare with their own?

Essay

Individually, students will write a narrative essay examining their lives and the freedoms they enjoy as compared with the lives of girls in other countries, where fundamental rights are sometimes denied. As students are drafting and editing, encourage them to analyze the issues. For example, if a student writes that freedom means "free education," encourage him or her to explain why that is important. How difficult is it to care for oneself or one's family, or to contribute to a community, when one cannot read or write? "What else?" is a great general question to ask students to encourage them to think deeply about an issue.

Publishing

Students will publish their essays in a class book. As the students work through the writing process, encourage them to brainstorm ways in which they could use the book that they will create. Could they donate it to a veterans association? Display it in their school library for other students to read? Or participate in a community event promoting a specific freedom?

Ideas for Encouraging All Learners

English Language Learners

- Encourage students to focus on a specific set of vocabulary words surrounding one particular civil right. For example, an essay focusing on educational opportunities may include vocabulary such as access, value, rights, government, public, free, education, and opportunity.

Support Services

- Encourage students to focus their essay on one specific freedom, such as being allowed to go to school or being able to choose who they marry.

Gifted and Talented Students

- Encourage students to explore founding documents from different countries. How do these documents influence the freedoms that citizens enjoy? How do they impact education?
- Have students explore how voting rights affect different populations in a society. How are the rights of girls affected if women don't have an opportunity to vote? How does this impact their ability to go to school?
- Consider and discuss the distinction between civil rights and human rights?
- To expand the lesson geographically, have students view and write an essay reflecting on Rehema for President, a video on YouTube, in which a young woman from Tanzania dreams of becoming the first female president of her country: www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Gz2y8yzGTw&list=PLvJB0krBJIcy3MatvMWG8o1sSf5fil1I9&index=1

Extending the Lesson

- The class book could take many forms. Consider any technology-based options to which your class has access.
- Write thank-you letters to your country's servicemen and servicewomen.