

English and Literacy: Children's rights

Lesson plan 7: Letter writing

Age group: 8-10

Resources:

You will need:

- the **worksheet: Quotation from Liam O'Neill** (below), 13, Ireland (*Stand Up For Your Rights*, 1998);
- the **worksheet: List of addresses and websites** (below).

Introduction and whole-class activity:

Read the **quotation by Liam O'Neill** (below) to the class. Ask the pupils whether or not they agree with Liam. Have they ever been in a situation where they have felt afraid to speak the truth? Ask them who they think has the power to make things better or worse for children in other parts of the world. How could pupils influence those who have the power to make changes?

Discuss letter writing as a useful tool in persuading organisations or individuals with power to change the way they do things. Organisations such as Amnesty International encourage people to write to others who are imprisoned in order to give them support. Organisations such as UNICEF support children's education all over the world. You may want the children to follow the same format, writing to a specified person or group on one particular point, or you may wish to give a variety of options from which the pupils can choose. It may be possible for some of the class to write letters to find out more information about Children's Rights, while others write directly to world leaders persuading them to change the way children are treated. A writing frame may help the pupils to write persuasively and to back up their points of view with examples. Formal letter writing may need to be revised, and the teacher could also model the writing of a formal letter.

Plenary:

The pupils should have decided who they are going to write to and be very clear on the expected outcomes of their letter writing. This could be shared with the class.

This activity will take more than one session. Responses to the pupils' letters can lead to a greater involvement with particular charities or organisations. The pupils may be encouraged continue to explore these areas and share them over the following few weeks.

There are also a number of very good websites which some of the pupils could investigate.

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Worksheet: Quotation from Liam O'Neill

"Last week I read in the newspaper about someone who had been put in prison for saying something against his government. This is so wrong. Everyone should be able to think and say what they like, as long as they aren't lying. If you believe something from the bottom of your heart - say it and don't be afraid."

Liam O'Neill, 13, Ireland

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Worksheet: Children's rights - addresses and websites

Addresses

- Children's Legal Centre, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester CO4 3SQ
- Child Poverty Action Group, 94 White Lion Street, London N1 9PF
- Children's Rights Office, 235 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8EL
- Oxfam Campaigns, Oxfam House, John Smith Drive, Oxford OX4 2JY
- Save the Children, 1 St. John's Lane, London EC1M 4AR
- UNICEF, Africa House, 64-78 Kingsway, London WC2B 6NB
- Amnesty International, The Human Rights Action Centre, 17-25 New Inn Yard, London EC2A 3EA
- NSPCC, Weston House, 42 Curtain Road, London EC2A 3NH

Websites

- www.nspcc.org.uk
For the pupils there is a good section called Kid's Zone.
- www.unicef.org
This site contains the complete version of the Convention.
- www2.essex.ac.uk/clc
The site of the Children's Legal Centre, with some interesting information.
- www.antislavery.org
Contains news on children's rights around the world.