

SAMPLE PROJECTS

PREPARATION, ACTION, REFLECTION

PREPARATION

Teachers:

- Receive *Educator's Guide to Write for Rights* for engaging in the letter-writing project, and supplemental materials
- Connect with AIUSA staff in Chicago to confirm participation and for any clarifications or additional information
- Lead or participate in planning a Write for Rights letter-writing project (examples below under “Action”), including goal-setting with class

Students:

- **Research – Human Rights Basics**
 - Read the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)
 - What are universal human rights? What is the history of human rights? What institutions or individuals have helped shape the current understanding of human rights? What are some specific threats to the realization of human rights for all?
 - What are examples of past human rights movements or victories? (Students may use prior Amnesty International campaigns as examples.) Who was mobilized, and what did they do?
- **Research – Write for Rights 2016**
 - Students learn how to write an effective letter advocating for someone’s human rights.
 - Students may research the specific human rights issues surrounding each of the six cases.
 - To which articles of the UDHR does each case relate? What other international laws pertain to this issue?
 - What examples of this human rights violation do we see in other countries, and where can we see this issue in our own communities?
 - Examples of issues addressed in this year’s 6 cases include: freedom of expression, discrimination, environmental rights and fair trials.
 - Students brainstorm and learn the different ways in which they can engage in human rights advocacy, beginning with letter-writing. Other examples include social media, lobbying, demonstrations, traditional media, public education, and other forms of grassroots activism.
 - Students reflect on personal skills and interests and consider which methods of advocacy they find most appealing.
 - Students research how letter-writing can make a difference, including stories of individual cases previously included in Write for Rights that are now free or otherwise resolved. See materials for examples.
- **Understand**
 - Students recognize the universality of human rights, but also understand that these same rights apply to themselves, their friends, family and community. Students identify examples of human rights that they exercise in their own lives.
 - Students understand that they will be writing letters directly to the government officials that are able to stop the human rights violation in each case, and also letters directly to the individuals impacted in each case.
 - Students understand their power to speak up and make a difference.
- **Plan**
 - Set goals for how many letters the class will write.
 - Work together to plan their action, drawing on different skills and interests. Planning could include developing a vision, logistics, and shared goals.

ACTION

This action would fall into the category of civic action, advocacy, or research with a letter-writing component.

- 1) The first element of the action is letter-writing, as indicated by the name of the project (Write for Rights). After writing their own advocacy and solidarity letters, students may also engage in one of the following for their classroom integrated project:
 - a. **Develop a classroom campaign on one (or several) of the individual cases**
 - i. The class draws on the strengths and interests of everyone to plan and engage in different actions over a period of time on the case. Skilled writers (or English classes) could pen LTEs or op-eds; those interested in government could organize an in-district meeting with their Congressperson or state representatives to ask them to speak out on the case; social media enthusiasts could organize a week of action on Twitter; artists could plan an art evening where attendees create works inspired by the cases.
 - b. **Host a community letter-writing event**
 - i. The class works together to host a single event. Students invite members of the community, local officials, community organizations or local nonprofits, family, and friends. Students share what they have learned about human rights and introduce these individual cases, and equip attendees to write letters to advocate for their human rights as the students have. Event could take place in a school auditorium, local café, park, library, or other community center. Class sets goals regarding the number of attendees and the number of human rights letters that will be written, and share in the preparation.

We only ask that teachers share the activities taken during the Write for Rights project with Emily at ewalsh@aiusa.org, including the number of letters written. Teachers can simply send any letters to the AIUSA Chicago office, and staff can take care of sending the letters internationally, to remove that cost from teachers (while funds last). Please see the *Educator's Guide to Write for Rights* for these instructions.

REFLECTION

- **Potential methods of reflection**
 - Blog—post every week with progress and new information learned
 - Video journal
 - Discussion—AIUSA staff in Chicago could connect individual classrooms with other CPS classrooms that have also completed a Write for Rights project, students could compare experiences, ideas, lessons learned and inspiration. There is the possibility that we could connect a classroom in Chicago with a classroom in another country that has also participated in Write for Rights.
- **Framing questions**
 - How has your understanding of human rights changed?
 - How did it make you feel to speak up and advocate for someone else's human rights?
 - What are some of the ways that you learned to take action for someone else's human rights?
 - How can you use these methods of advocacy in your community, city or state moving forward?
 - Which cases inspired you the most, and why?

SEND YOUR LETTERS!

- A. **Either:** Send all letters written to each official by yourself, following instructions included in the Educator's Guide.
 - a. *If you send the letters yourself, please fill out this quick online form to tell us about your letter-writing. Visit WRITE.AMNESTYUSA.ORG/IMPACT*
- B. **Or:** Send all letters written in one envelope (unsorted) to AIUSA's Chicago office, following instructions included in the Educator's Guide.
 - a. *This will save postage cost and time!*