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Human Rights
Commission

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Human rights
education resources
for teachers



Photo: Anita Bauer

Voices of Australia

Voices of Australia



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- Subjects:** Civics and Citizenship, History, all Society and Environment subjects, English and Literature.
- Level:** Some activities are suited for Upper Primary (Years 5–6) Most suited to Upper Secondary (Year 10 and up)
- Time needed:** There is enough material for a 10 week program, however activities could be used individually to suit topic requirements. Activities 1–4, and 7, 8 are for single lessons, activities 5 and 6 will require more substantial research time.

Introduction

This education resource is designed to complement the publication *Voices of Australia: 30 years since the Racial Discrimination Act*. The publication is available at: www.humanrights.gov.au/racial_discrimination/voices

The stories in the *Voices of Australia* publication remind us that Australia is a society of many diverse communities. While it is an ancient land, and home to the world's oldest continuing culture, it is also a young and vibrant multicultural society with nearly a quarter of Australians born overseas, and another quarter having at least one parent who was born in another country.

The stories also remind us that within our diversity there are values that many of us share. One of these values is that racism and discrimination have no place in our communities. It is essential for all Australians to understand that equality before the law is not something that we should take for granted. It is essential that shared values be discussed at all levels in our communities in order to minimise the potential for conflict. This is especially important in our classrooms.

The teaching and learning activities incorporated in the resource allow for students to share ideas about each other, to explore their own family history and experiences of diversity, discrimination, race relations, friendships and signs of respect. The resource is intended to help students understand the laws that frame the society we live in, and to appreciate how these laws have been, and continue to be developed.

Aim

The *Voices of Australia* education resource has been designed to:

- provide students with an understanding of the *Racial Discrimination Act* through actual examples and case studies;
- encourage discussion and dialogue amongst students about issues associated with race relations and their relevance to:
 - society
 - their school community
 - themselves
- to keep students informed about the role and the activities of the Australian Human Rights Commission.

The activities can be photocopied for class use and used individually or as an entire resource.

Learning outcomes

The *Voices of Australia* education resource has been designed to assist students develop:

- an ability to apply the concepts of human rights and responsibilities to their daily lives
- an understanding of how human rights instruments are applied in Australian law and society
- an understanding of issues that concern different groups in the Australian community, such as migrants, refugees and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- literacy and comprehension skills, through listening, speaking, reading and responding to various media and text
- research skills and an ability to communicate effectively with others
- skills in describing, reflecting, interpreting, analysing, evaluating and higher order thinking.

Activities/resources

Teaching and learning activities explore the following themes:

- Australian identities and experiences
- the *Racial Discrimination Act*
- a timeline of race relations

1. Discussion game

- Activity sheet: Find someone who

2. Role play and discussion

- Resource sheet: Character profiles
- Activity sheet: Find a character who

3. Map and timeline work

- Resource sheet: World map
- Activity sheet: Timeline response

4. Listening activity

- *Voices of Australia* audio files
- Activity sheet: Listening to *Voices of Australia*
- Transcript: *Voices of Australia* audio transcripts

5. Legal investigation

- Activity sheet: The laws and me
- Activity sheet: Information map
- Resource sheet: Racial discrimination and the law: an overview
- Resource sheet: Protection of human rights in Australia
- Activity sheet: Investigating racial discrimination
- Case study 1: racial discrimination and vilification
- Case study 2: racial discrimination and employment

6. Research project

- Activity sheet: Family tree
- Activity sheet: Research organiser

7. Creative expression

- Activity sheet: Poetry *Don Dale Boys Hip Hop*
- Activity sheet: Reflecting on literature
- Activity sheet: Get creative

8. Vocabulary fun

- Activity sheet: Matching exercise
- Activity sheet: Find-a-word

9. Suggested answers

Teaching strategies

The activities have been designed using an inquiry-based approach to learning.

Inquiry phase	Focus question	Type of learning and teaching activity	Activity in <i>Voices of Australia</i> education resource
Tuning in	What are your rights and responsibilities in Australia?	Discussion game Vocabulary building	Activity 1 <i>Find someone who</i> Activity 8 <i>Find-a-word</i>
	What are the rights and responsibilities of those in our society?	Role play	Activity 2 <i>Character profiles</i>
Finding out	Have the rights and responsibilities of Australians changed during the last 50 years?	Mapping and timeline activities Listening exercise	Activity 3 <i>Mapping character profiles and using a timeline</i> Activity 4 <i>Listening to Voices of Australia</i>
Sorting out	Who and what protects our rights and responsibilities?	Reading comprehension (includes activity questions and essay topics) Media review	Activity 5 <i>Legal investigation</i>
Going further	What are some examples of how rights can be protected?	Source discussion and analysis	Activity 5 <i>Case studies</i>
Making connections	How can we present the stories of different Australians to reflect our rights and responsibilities?	Research project	Activity 6 <i>Researching and presenting stories of family and community history</i>
Taking action	How can we promote rights and responsibilities?	Poetry/song writing Media development	Activity 7 <i>Creative expression</i>

1. Discussion game

This activity is designed as a warm-up exercise to introduce concepts of diversity and anti-discrimination. It also helps students to learn a little more about each other, and works well with students from different backgrounds and with different language abilities.

The activity can be undertaken in small groups, or as a whole class, depending on numbers (no more than 14 in a group).

1. Provide each student with a copy of the activity sheet *Find someone who*. If necessary, demonstrate the language needed for the question that students need to ask *(eg. Have you ever played football?).
2. Students then move around their group, or class, asking questions and recording the names of people who fit the description.
3. After completing the activity sheet, students regroup to compare notes as a class. Teachers can use this as a brainstorming activity to work out similarities and differences between class members.
4. This activity should be followed by other activities that explore the concepts of diversity and anti-discrimination in more depth.

Descriptions can be changed to suit the class.

Resources:

- Activity sheet: Find someone who

2. Role play and discussion

The aim of this activity is to provide students with an understanding of the different backgrounds that people have, and of the diversity that exists in Australia, through role play. This activity complements topics of migration, and on the impact of the Racial Discrimination Act.

1. Using the *character profiles*, divide students into groups and give each student a different role card. Each student should read the character outline and prepare to answer questions about their character.
2. Once the students have familiarised themselves with their character, give them each a copy of *Find a character who*. As with the first activity, students circulate asking questions (about each character) in order to complete the descriptions on the worksheet.
3. After completing the worksheet, students regroup to compare notes as a class. Students can make a list of similarities and differences (either drawn on the whiteboard or on large sheets of paper), followed by class discussion on migration patterns.

Sample discussion starters

- Why do people move between countries?
- What similarities does each of the characters share?
- Do you know anyone in your family/class that has moved to Australia from another country?
- What are the advantages of migration?

This activity provides a lead in to activities 3, 4, 5 and 6.

Resources:

- Resource sheet: Character profiles
- Activity sheet: Find a character who

3. Map and timeline work

This activity aims to improve student's geospatial awareness. By mapping patterns of migration, students will gain a greater appreciation for the distance that people have travelled to Australia.

Students will be able to reinforce geographical knowledge and make links between local and global issues.

The latter part of the activity is designed to help students understand the changes to migration patterns in Australia over time.

1. Using the *world map* and the *character profiles* in the second activity, students identify the country that each particular character has come from. This activity could also be completed using a large wall poster version of a world map.

As a further activity, students could also map the countries from which their classmates have come from originally.

2. Students complete the worksheet *timeline response* using the timeline from *Voices of Australia* magazine available at: www.humanrights.gov.au/racial_discrimination/voices/pdf/voices_mlc50dpi.pdf

Teachers can refer to the answer section for a guideline if needed. Note that Q.13 answers are generated from the *History of change – timeline of race relations*. Some further information on migration dates are provided in the answer section, although students may have other dates to add.

Resources:

- Poster reference: History of change – Timeline of race relations
- Resource sheet: World map
- Activity sheet: Timeline response

4. Listening activity

Students will be able to empathise with others in regards to their experiences of migration, making friends, racism and establishing community values. Students will acquire knowledge through listening and sharing ideas.

1. Students listen to selected stories from *Voices of Australia*. The audio files are in five sections. Teachers should either select a section to focus on, or play it from start to finish.
2. Using the activity sheet *Listening to Voices of Australia*, students should complete questions about the different characters (either individually or in groups).
3. Discuss answers as a class (refer to answer guide).

Each of the five audio sections run for 10–12 minutes each. The lesson could be split over two lessons, or shortened by either selecting fewer sections of the audio CD, or having each group answer different sections before reporting back to the class.

Resources:

- Activity sheet: Listening to *Voices of Australia*
- *Voices of Australia* audio files (available at: www.humanrights.gov.au/racial_discrimination/voices)

5. Legal investigation

Students will gain knowledge and understanding of the legal aspects and issues surrounding the *Racial Discrimination Act* (RDA) including:

- how racial discrimination and the law relates to young people
- the relationship between international law and Australian (domestic) law
- how the RDA protects the rights of people in Australia
- the role of the Australian Human Rights Commission

This activity is aimed at higher-level students who require information about government law and policy. It includes several resource sheets, activity sheets and case studies for students to utilise. The resources included can be used separately or together, depending on the key learning area and the level being taught.

Resources:

- **Activity sheet: *The laws and me***

An introductory worksheet intended for students to brainstorm their own knowledge about rules for living harmoniously. Students should be given time to complete this on their own before discussing their response in small groups. Teachers may wish to use this opportunity to clarify classroom and school rules for behaviour.

At the introductory stage, students are not expected to know the state/federal and/or international laws, though some of these are listed in case they are able to identify the appropriate jurisdiction.

- **Activity sheet: *Information map***

The questions on the information map are the basis of the legal investigation. The answers are in the corresponding boxes.

Teachers will need to introduce the topic by discussing and brainstorming racial discrimination. The information map can be provided either as an overview, or cut into individual boxes for students to match questions and answers. Students should be able to match most questions and answers without prior knowledge owing to the word syntax.

Students may have further questions they would like to know about the RDA. If so, they should add questions to this page for use as a study guide at later stages.

- **Resource sheet: *Racial discrimination and the law: an overview***

This overview provides most of the information needed for the activity sheets. It gives an overview of the different levels of law and gives examples of direct and indirect discrimination. Each information sheet has key words and questions for students to consider. One method of using the information sheet is to use the **dictagloss** technique. The dictagloss is an effective literacy strategy and will help students improve their listening skills while simultaneously learning about the topic.

Students should be divided into groups of three (or four) students for this activity.

1. Read a paragraph of the material *Racial discrimination and the law: an overview* aloud at normal pace. During the first reading, students should have their pens down and no writing should take place.
2. Re-read the text aloud, at a normal pace. The students should be asked to write down only key words or phrases this time. Allow two minutes for students to think about additional key words.
3. Re-read the text aloud, at a normal pace. Working in groups, students reconstruct the passage as they heard it. The students' version may then be compared with the original version. Allow students approximately 15 minutes to reconstruct the passage, depending on the number of paragraphs read.

- **Resource sheet: *Protection of human rights in Australia***

This section explains the link between international law and the laws in Australia.

The relationship between international law and Australian domestic legislation can be seen clearly in the case of racial discrimination, because the RDA relates directly to the *International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination*.

Students who have a prior understanding of the federal system and the common law system will need less introduction and explanation for this topic. The important point to highlight is that state legislation around racial discrimination and vilification differs slightly.

For further information on the role of the Australian Human Rights Commission, the work of the Race Discrimination Commissioner, and on the RDA, see http://www.humanrights.gov.au/racial_discrimination/index.html.

- **Activity sheet: Investigating racial discrimination**

This worksheet has two sections: short answer questions and essay questions. The short answer questions complement the information sheet *racial discrimination and the law: an overview*. The essays are intended as prompts for senior level students who are required to do further research.

Answers are provided in the answer section.

- **Case study 1: racial discrimination and vilification**

This case study is topical when discussing changes and amendments to discrimination laws. The *Western Australian Equal Opportunity Act 1984* was amended around the time of this story. The case study is particularly useful for students discussing the limits of racially discriminatory language.

- **Case study 2: racial discrimination and employment**

This case study is taken from an Australian Human Rights Commission Annual Report. Students are required to consider the reason why it is a case under federal legislation (the employer in this case is a federal government department). The case study provides students with an opportunity to discuss why their own actions are equally as important as an effective policy against racial discrimination or harassment.

For further information and activities on international human rights instruments see: www.humanrights.gov.au/education/hr_explained/index.html.

6. Research project

This activity aims to provide students with an opportunity to explore their own family/social group experiences.

After reading stories from *Voices of Australia*, students begin a research project in order to investigate stories of migration from their own family.

Instructions for students (teachers can modify according to class program)

- Draw a family tree showing your family members.
- Use the local library and your family members to research where each of your ancestors originally came from. How far back can you trace the family tree?
- Are there any stories that you would like to record? (ie. maybe your grandfather invented something important, or one of your parents has an interesting story about their childhood.) Write a short paragraph about their experience.
- Make a presentation showing how your family members arrived in Australia, or in the place they are now living (an alternative suggestion is for students to show patterns of movement between the country areas and the city).

Students can use the resources as a guide for completing their research and presentation.

Resources:

- Activity sheet: Family tree
- Activity sheet: Research organiser

For ideas on how to research oral history, see 'Stages for an Oral History project' at www.teachingheritage.nsw.edu.au/3readings/wd1_block.html

7. Creative expression

These activities are designed to allow students to be creative with their interpretations and understanding of migration and diversity issues. The activities can be modified for use with most age groups and are suitable in subjects across the curricula.

Teachers can adapt the ideas highlighted on each worksheet to suit their individual needs.

Resources:

- Activity sheet: Poetry *Don Dale Boys Hip Hop*
- Activity sheet: Reflecting on literature
- Activity sheet: Get creative

8. Vocabulary fun

There are two different exercises for students to complete in order to improve their vocabulary. The activities can be used at the end of the unit or as a time-filler for fast finishers.

Resources:

- Activity sheet: Matching exercise
- Activity sheet: Find-a-word