

# SPEAK TRUTH TO POWER



CLASSROOM ACTIVITY  
**LOUNE VIAUD**

## WORKING FOR WOMEN'S AND CHILDREN'S HEALTH & WELLNESS

### KEY LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- interpret and summarize information about Haiti's geography, history, social structure, and people;
- evaluate and explain how advocates can effectively defend the human rights of others;
- analyze a public health issue affecting women and/or children in the U.S. or abroad;
- design and communicate an action plan to defend others' right to adequate health care.

### OVERVIEW

In this activity students learn about the life and work of Loune Viaud, who is fighting to protect the rights of her fellow Haitians to receive adequate health care. Students begin by developing questions and then conducting research to learn about Haiti's geography, population, history, standard of living, and health status and systems. They then read about and evaluate Viaud's efforts as a human rights defender. Working in small groups, students research a health care issue affecting women and/or children in the U.S. or abroad and identify ways to take action. They then present their issue and action plans to classmates. As an extension, students can implement their action plans.

### UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

- Article 1: All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.
- Article 25: Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family.

### TARGET AUDIENCE

Social Studies, Language Arts, Grades 9–12

### ACTIVITY DURATION

Two 45- to 60-minute class periods

### ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

- All humans have basic rights that are universal and transcend the rights granted by the nations in which they live. Among these are the right to an adequate standard of living.

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- We have a collective responsibility to protect and defend the human rights of people everywhere.
- Citizens can advocate for the rights of women and children in their own country and around the globe.

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What health care rights and supports should be guaranteed to all people?
- To what extent are governments obligated to protect citizens' right to an adequate standard of living?
- How can ordinary citizens advocate on behalf of the health care rights of women and children?

## MATERIALS

- Access to the biography of Loune Viaud available on the Interactive Map
- Haiti Inquiry Project Activity Sheet (one per student)
- Public Health Advocacy Project Activity Sheet (one per student)
- Internet and computer access

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION/LINKS

### Haiti Country Facts

The Republic of Haiti is located on the island of Hispaniola, which is east of Cuba in the Caribbean Sea. Christopher Columbus discovered the island in 1492 and named it Hispaniola. Haiti occupies the smaller western part of the island, which it shares with the Dominican Republic. It has an area of 10,714 square miles.

Haiti's population in 2019 is estimated at 11.3 million people. Over half of the Haitian population is under the age of 25 years. Hispaniola was originally inhabited by indigenous Taíno people, but this native population was exterminated as a result of foreign occupation and disease. Today, most Haitians are descended from black African slaves and mixed racial backgrounds. The rest have European and Levantine/Semitic backgrounds. Many Haitians live abroad, including roughly 8800,000 in the U.S.

Haiti's capital and largest city is Port-au-Prince, which is home to 20% of the country's population. Its official languages are French and Haitian Creole. Its official currency is the Haitian gourde.

Haiti's political history has been marked by continuous unrest. Haiti is the second oldest independent nation in the Western hemisphere, having gained its independence from France in 1804. Between 1804–1915, the country was ruled by seventy different dictators. The United States occupied Haiti from 1915–1934, despite resistance from Haitians who resented their loss of sovereignty. Between 1934–1957, Haiti had five presidents, the last of whom was François Duvalier, known as Papa Doc. Papa Doc's regime, which lasted from 1957–71, is regarded as one of the most repressive and corrupt in modern times. Duvalier used violence against his political opponents and exploited the Vodou religion to instill fear in much of the population. When Duvalier died in 1971, power passed to his son Jean-Claude, who became known as Baby Doc. Under Baby Doc, Haiti's economic and political condition continued to decline. Pope John Paul II's visit in 1983, during which he condemned the current regime, led to a rebellion. In 1986, the army forced Duvalier to resign and go into exile.

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Since 1986, Haiti has struggled to become a democracy. A new constitution, which provided for an elected bicameral parliament, an elected president, a prime minister, cabinet ministers, and supreme court justices appointed by the president with parliament's consent, was ratified in 1987. However, Haitians weren't able to successfully elect a president with significant support until Jean-Bertrand Aristide took office in 1990, only to be ousted by a coup the following year. With support from the U.S., Aristide was able to resume power in 1994, following three years of military rule. When Aristide's term ended in February 1996 and his ally René Prével took office, it marked Haiti's first ever transition between two democratically-elected presidents. In late 1996, Aristide broke with Prével and created his own political party, which led to years of political deadlock.

Aristide resumed the presidency from 2001–2004, a period during which he and his colleagues faced allegations of drug trafficking and corruption. Eventually, anti-Aristide rebels staged a coup d'état that led to his removal from office. UN peacekeeping forces were called in to help bring stability to the nation. Despite ongoing violence, an election was held in 2016 that returned Prével to the presidency. His second presidency was marked by ongoing protests over rising food prices and a devastating earthquake in January 2010, which left a million Haitians homeless and hundreds of thousands starving. Michel Martelli, elected in 2011, is credited with helping to rehabilitate the nation during his five years in office. He stepped down in 2016 and was replaced by Haiti's current president Jovenel Moïse. Both Moïse and Martelli were recently implicated in an embezzlement scheme, so Haiti's political future remains uncertain.

Today, Haiti is the poorest nation in the Western hemisphere. A 2012 household survey revealed that over 6 million Haitians lived on less than \$2.41 per day, and more than 2.5 million lived on less than \$1.23 per day. In 2018, Haiti was ranked 163 out of 188 countries, using the Human Development Index, a measure of life expectancy, education, and per capita income.

In terms of education, almost 80% of Haitian teachers receive no pre-service training, and roughly 50% of Haitian children do not attend school. According to USAID, only 29% of Haitians 25 years of age or above attended secondary school. Haiti's literacy rate is around 60% for males and 57% for females, which is well below the rate for the region.

Life expectancy in Haiti is 63 years, compared to 76 years for men and 81 years for women in North America. Roughly a third of the population is considered food insecure. The under-5 mortality rate is 71 out of 1,000. The adult prevalence of AIDS is 1.7%. Women are disproportionately affected by HIV in Haiti. Of the 150,000 adults living with HIV, 58% are women. HIV treatment is also higher among women, with 63% of diagnosed women on treatment compared to 58% of diagnosed men.

## SOURCES

- <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/haiti/overview>
- <https://haitipartners.org/haiti-statistics/>
- <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ha.html>
- <https://www.pih.org/country/haiti>
- <https://www.unaids.org/en/regionscountries/countries/haiti>
- <https://www.usaid.gov/haiti/education>
- <https://www.britannica.com/place/Haiti/Government-and-society>

# SPEAK TRUTH TO POWER

This activity is sequenced in four phases: Ask, Analyze, Apply, and Act:

- Ask: The students brainstorm what they already know about Haiti, and the teacher introduces an inquiry project focused on Haiti. (10 minutes)
- Analyze: The students will use secondary source materials to answer questions they have generated about Haiti's geography, population, history, standard of living, education, and health status and systems. They will then summarize Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. After these summaries are completed, students will learn about Loune Viaud's efforts to protect the rights of her fellow Haitians and provide them with critically-needed healthcare. (35–50 minutes)
- Apply: The students will research a health care issue affecting women and/or children in the U.S. or abroad and identify ways to take action. (25–30 minutes)
- Act: The students will present their issue and action plans to classmates. If desired, students will then implement their action plans. (20–30 minutes, plus additional time to implement action plans)

## PROCEDURE

### Ask

1. Before class, write the word Haiti on the board or a piece of chart paper. Below the name of the country, write the following six topics: Geography, Population, Government, Standard of Living, Education, and Health.
2. At the start of class, direct students' attention to the board or paper and ask some or all of the following questions to elicit prior knowledge:
  - Where is Haiti located?
  - What, if anything, have you heard about Haiti in the news?
  - Do you know anyone from Haiti?
3. Explain that students are going to learn about a human rights defender working in Haiti, but before they do so, they are going to learn about the nation and its people.
4. Organize students into six small groups and assign each group one of the topics written on the board.
5. Distribute the Haiti Inquiry Project Activity Sheet and challenge students to brainstorm 3–5 questions they want to answer within their topic area.
6. After student groups have developed their questions, call on each group in turn to share the questions that were generated. After each group has presented, ask other students if they can suggest questions to add to the list.

### Analyze

7. Provide time for student groups to conduct research on their topic. You may wish to recommend that they use the sources provided in the Background Information/Links section.
8. After students have completed their research, invite each group to present 5 key facts about their topic. Encourage other students to take notes on their activity sheets during presentations.
9. Ask students: "Do you think that everyone should have the right to an adequate standard of living? What does an adequate standard of living include?" Call on several students to share their opinions.

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10. Explain that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a document intended to protect the rights of individuals around the globe, includes an article that specifically addresses the right to an adequate standard of living, which includes health care. Read aloud the text of Article 25:
  - a. Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age, or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.
  - b. Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.
11. Ask students to summarize the text in their own words. If time allows, call on one or more student volunteer(s) to share their summary.
12. Introduce Loune Viaud by explaining that she is a Haitian who is fighting to protect the rights of her fellow Haitians and provide them with critically-needed healthcare.
13. Project the [Loune Viaud biography](#) available on the Interactive Map or have students access it on their individual computers. Conduct a round robin reading in which student volunteers read one paragraph each or ask students to read silently.
14. Ask students to summarize their key takeaways from the article via brief, tweet-like messages. You can challenge students to use only 140 characters or give them 280 characters.
15. Call on student volunteers to share their "tweets."

## Apply

16. At the beginning of class, have students reassemble into their groups from the previous class session.
17. Distribute the Public Health Advocacy Project Activity Sheet and review the directions.
18. Allow time for student groups to conduct research and complete the assignment.

## Act

19. When students have completed their activity sheets, invite each group in turn to present their research findings and action plan. Encourage other students to ask questions and provide feedback.
20. Facilitate a closing discussion using the following questions:
  - What surprised you most from the presentations?
  - Which issue(s) do you consider most critical and why?
  - What types of strategies are advocates using to defend individuals' human rights?
  - Do you consider these strategies effective? Why or why not?
21. Close the discussion by helping students understand that just as we all have universal human rights, we have a responsibility to help our fellow citizens and defend their rights. Often, this requires persistent effort. Encourage students to continue to think about the issues they have learned during this exercise and implement their action plans.

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## CONNECTIONS

Connect to Student Lives	Connect to Contemporary Events	Connect to the Future
Students will consider the importance of their own health and well-being and their right to an adequate standard of living.	Students will investigate current public health issues in Haiti and around the globe and efforts to address them to protect the rights of women and children.	Students will promote understanding of public health issues and the importance of an adequate standard of living and consider their responsibility to protect the rights of others.

## NATIONAL STANDARDS

### College, Career & Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies Standards

- D1.5.9-12 Determine the kinds of sources that will be helpful in answering compelling and supporting questions, taking into consideration multiple points of view represented in the sources, the types of sources available, and the potential uses of the sources.
- D2.Civ.7.9-12 Apply civic virtues and democratic principles when working with others.
- D2.Civ.10.9-12 Analyze the impact and the appropriate roles of personal interests and perspectives on the application of civic virtues, democratic principles, constitutional rights, and human rights.
- D2.Civ.12.9-12 Analyze how people use and challenge local, state, national, and international laws to address a variety of public issues.
- D2.Civ.14.9-12 Analyze historical, contemporary, and emerging means of changing societies, promoting the common good, and protecting rights.
- D3.1.9-12. Gather relevant information from multiple sources representing a wide range of views while using the origin, authority, structure, context, and corroborative value of the sources to guide the selection.
- D4.6.9-12. Use disciplinary and interdisciplinary lenses to understand the characteristics and causes of local, regional, and global problems; instances of such problems in multiple contexts; and challenges and opportunities faced by those trying to address these problems over time and place.
- D4.7.9-12. Assess options for individual and collective action to address local, regional, and global problems by engaging in self-reflection, strategy identification, and complex causal reasoning.

### Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts

- RI.11-12.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain
- W.11-12.7 Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
- W.11-12.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

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- SL.11-12.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- SL.11-12.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.

**Topic:**

**Inquiry Questions:**

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Haiti Facts:**



**Directions:** Choose one of the following public health topics impacting women and/or children around the globe—or propose one of your own—to learn about and develop an advocacy action plan.

- Malnutrition
- Mental Health
- HIV/AIDS
- Menstrual Hygiene
- Domestic Violence

**Health Topic:**

**Key Facts:**

Description (what is the problem?):

Prevalence (where is it happening and who does it impact?):

Efforts to address the problem to date:

**How will we take action?** Describe the advocacy tools and/or strategy you believe will be most effective and why. Also, describe what your group will do to take action, including the resources you will need, the role each of you will play, your timeline, and what your action will involve.