

SPEAK TRUTH TO POWER



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PROTECTING POLITICAL RIGHTS IN HONG KONG AND AROUND THE WORLD

KEY LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will:

- Explain the history and complexity of the “one country, two systems” framework.
- Evaluate the extent to which mainland China has limited political rights in Hong Kong.
- Explain the role students have played in challenging Chinese restrictions.
- Create public service announcements about political rights in Hong Kong.

OVERVIEW

In this activity, students will learn about human rights abuses and pro-democracy protests that have taken place in Hong Kong. Students will use recent images from Hong Kong protests to generate compelling questions about human rights violations and the nature of student-driven pro-democracy protests. Students will then review selected infographics and articles to analyze and chart a timeline of protests in response to restrictions placed by mainland China on Hong Kong. Students will use these sources along with articles from the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights to create their own Public Service Announcement on the infringement of political rights in Hong Kong.

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

- **Article 5:** Prohibition against torture or cruel, inhuman, degrading treatment, or punishment.
- **Article 3:** Everyone has the right to life, liberty, and security of person.
- **Article 10:** Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.
- **Article 19:** Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Social Studies, Language Arts, Grades 9–12

ACTIVITY DURATION

Two 45–60 minute class periods

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

- Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.
- We have a collective responsibility to protect and defend the human rights of people everywhere.
- All citizens can help tackle large, systemic problems by contributing in small ways.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What are political rights and why must they be protected?
- What role can individuals play in impacting government policy?

MATERIALS

- [“The Rule of Law: Hong vs. China”](#) Infographic Article
- Access to the biography of Joshua Wong available on the Interactive Map
- Observe, Reflect, Question Slip (x3 to a page)
- United Nations Declaration of Human Rights Handout
- Hong Kong and Human Rights Handout
- Political Rights Advocacy Project Handout
- Internet and computer access

BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND LINKS

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was created in the aftermath of World War II, in an effort to ensure that the atrocities committed by Nazi Germany would not be repeated. Representatives from all regions of the world, who symbolized a variety of legal traditions and cultural backgrounds, came together to codify a list of human rights to which all people around the globe should be entitled. The drafting committee, known as the UN Commission on Human Rights, was chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt, widow of American President Franklin D. Roosevelt and a long-time advocate on behalf of minorities, refugees, women, and the working class. The final document, containing 30 articles, was recognized as a common standard by the United Nations General Assembly on December 10, 1948. Since that date, the document has been translated into over 500 languages.

The Commission's work did not end with the approval of the declaration. The treaty still needed to be ratified by nations, with the expectation that every nation that signed on “would then be obligated to change its laws wherever they did not conform to the points contained in the covenant.” The Commission was optimistic that this work could be completed within a few years. However, the challenge was far greater than they realized. Today, advocates continue to fight to secure the human rights of citizens around the globe.

HONG KONG PROTESTS

When the sovereignty of Hong Kong was transferred to China in 1997, a principle was established that called for “one country, two systems.” This principle is protected in a document called the Basic Law, which serves as Hong Kong’s de facto constitution. The Basic Law protects freedom of assembly and freedom of speech and sets out the structure for governance of the territory. Hong Kong is ruled by a Chief Executive who is responsible for implementing the Basic Law. It also has a semi-representative legislature and an independent judiciary. As Joshua Wong’s story shows, and as other human rights defenders report, the Hong Kong government, in step with mainland China, is taking steps to restrict the fundamental rights guaranteed to citizens.

In recent years, a series of new bills proposed by the government of Hong Kong has set up protests throughout the region. In 2014, China stated that it would allow elections in Hong Kong for its officials, but only from a list of candidates that were pre-approved by the Chinese government. This decision sparked months of protests known as the Umbrella Movement. In 2019, the government proposed a bill that would allow extraditions to mainland China, making it easier to limit freedom of speech or protests. In response, millions of citizens took to the streets in protests that often turned into violent clashes with the police. Now, in 2020, the Hong Kong legislature has passed a bill making it illegal to insult the Chinese national anthem. This latest bill demonstrates a move by China to further restrict the rights of citizens in Hong Kong.

In addition to pro-democracy figures being prosecuted and jailed for their protest against these bills, they are being denied the right to run for elected office. The Hong Kong and mainland Chinese authorities have gone after academics for expressing unfavorable opinions and interfered with academic freedoms by imposing views favored by the Chinese government on schools and textbook publishers. These highly contentious bills infringe on citizens’ freedom of speech and many believe it will lead to further imprisonment or punishments. Additional threats to freedom of speech have come in the form of abductions of booksellers associated with a publishing house known for printing books critical of Chinese leaders.

Sources

[How Hong Kong Came Under “One Country, Two Systems” Rule](#)

[A Brief History of Protest in Post-Handover Hong Kong](#)

[Hong Kong Passes China National Anthem Bill Amid Protests](#)

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

- Ask: The students will use a quick protocol to generate questions from three images from the Hong Kong protests.
- Analyze: The students will review primary and secondary sources to learn about Joshua Wong and the pro-democracy protests against mainland China.
- Apply: The students will evaluate the extent to which mainland China has infringed upon the political rights of citizens of Hong Kong.
- Act: The students will take action by creating public service announcements on the violations of political rights in Hong Kong.

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PROCEDURE

Ask

1. As class begins, project on the board or display the images from Hong Kong protests. Distribute copies of Observe, Reflect, Question note-taker. Set a timer and ask students to take three minutes to quietly process them and take the following steps to analyze the images:
 - **Observe:** List all the things you see in the images.
 - **Reflect:** What do you think is happening in the images?
 - **Question:** What questions do you have about the images?
2. Invite students to share a few of their thoughts about the images. Ask students to share questions or wonderings they may have from analyzing the images. As needed, provide students with background information (see above) to ensure that all students understand Hong Kong's location and that protests against mainland China have been consistently taking place over the last few years in response to human rights violations.
3. After students have shared their thoughts, explain that they are going to investigate why so many protests have taken place in Hong Kong.

Analyze

4. Ask students to find a partner to work with. Project the "[The Rule of Law: Hong vs. China](#)" infographic article on the board. If need be, provide each partner-set with a copy of the article.
5. Explain that this article is an analysis of the differences in government between Hong and China. While Hong Kong is considered to be a part of China, it has largely functioned with an independent government. Tell students that they will be analyzing and taking notes on the four important parts of the infographic article. Students should pay careful attention to the following sections:
 - constraint on government power
 - corruption in government
 - government openness
 - fundamental rights
6. It may be helpful to remind students that this article is largely an infographic and may take two or more read-throughs to process the information.
7. Call on student groups to share the information they obtained with the class. Helpful questions to probe for understanding could include:
 - what information did you find the most surprising? Why?
 - which part of the article was difficult to grasp? Why?
 - what political differences exist between Hong Kong and China?
 - what connections do you see with this information and the violation of human rights in Hong Kong?
8. Project or have students access the *biography of Joshua Wong* available on the Interactive Map. Allow students time to read through the brief biography. To promote active reading, have students take notes on Wong's personal history and the tools and tactics he, and others, have used to advocate political and rights.

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9. Ask students to summarize their key takeaways from the article by identifying their "Golden Line." (Golden Line is a reading strategy that invites students to identify a line from the reading that they believe is the most important part of the article or struck them as most interesting.)
10. Call on student volunteers to share their "Golden Lines."

Apply

11. Remind students that they are exploring the following questions:
 - What are political rights and why must they be protected?
 - What role can individuals play in impacting government policy?
12. Explain that political rights are embedded in human rights as outlined by the *United Nations Declaration of Human Rights*.
13. Project or distribute copies of the *United Nations Declaration of Human Rights* handout.
14. Divide students into small groups and provide each group with the *Hong Kong and Human Rights Handout*. Using the links to articles below, direct each group to analyze their assigned article and use the *United Nations Declaration of Human Rights* to track violations in Hong Kong.
 - [Human Rights in Hong Kong in Rapid Decline](#)
 - [Hong Kong's National Anthem Bill is Sparking Renewed Protests](#)
 - [Hong Kong Activist Joshua Wong Says Beijing's New Bill is About Boosting Communist Regime, Not National Security](#)
15. After students have reviewed their sources and made connections call on each small group to present its findings.
16. Ask students, "What political rights are outlined by the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights? What role can individuals play in impacting government policy?"

Act

17. Explain that, like Joshua Wong, students can become leaders in advocating political rights.
18. Distribute copies of the *Political Rights Advocacy Project* handout and review the directions. Explain to students that they will be creating a short Public Service Announcement that places a spotlight on a government that is currently infringing upon citizens political rights.
19. Provide time for students to form small groups and allow them time to research a current event, either domestic or international, where political rights are being violated.
20. After students have implemented their action plans, provide time for them to write and create their PSA.

CONNECTIONS

Connect to Student Lives	Connect to Contemporary Events	Connect to the Future
Students will analyze how individuals can take action in advocating their political rights.	Students will evaluate the extent to which political rights are being violated in Hong Kong. They will connect the situation unfolding in Hong Kong with protecting political rights around the world.	Students will promote an understanding of the connection between political rights and human rights. Students will see the importance of campaigning for political rights

NATIONAL STANDARDS

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

- 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 the 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.
- 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.

OBSERVE REFLECT QUESTION

([Library of Congress: Teaching with Primary Sources](#))

Observe:

What is the first thing I notice?

Is there anything unexpected or unusual?

What do I notice that I can't explain?

After a second or third glance, what is something new that I notice?

Reflect:

What do I already know?

What do I bring to this source to help me make sense of it?

Question:

What do I wonder about who made this source, and who was the audience?

What do I wonder about what the source is?

What do I wonder about where, when, and why it was created?



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LIST OF HUMAN RIGHTS FROM THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

- **Article 1:** Right to Equality
- **Article 2:** Freedom from Discrimination
- **Article 3:** Right to Life, Liberty, and Personal Security
- **Article 4:** Freedom from Slavery
- **Article 5:** Freedom from Torture and Degrading Treatment
- **Article 6:** Right to Recognition as a Person before the Law
- **Article 7:** Right to Equality before the Law
- **Article 8:** Right to Remedy by Competent Tribunal
- **Article 9:** Freedom from Arbitrary Arrest and Exile
- **Article 10:** Right to Fair Public Hearing
- **Article 11:** Right to be Considered Innocent until Proven Guilty
- **Article 12:** Freedom from Interference with Privacy, Family, Home, and Correspondence
- **Article 13:** Right to Free Movement in and out of the Country
- **Article 14:** Right to Asylum in other Countries from Persecution
- **Article 15:** Right to a Nationality and the Freedom to Change It
- **Article 16:** Right to Marriage and Family
- **Article 17:** Right to Own Property
- **Article 18:** Freedom of Belief and Religion
- **Article 19:** Freedom of Opinion and Information
- **Article 20:** Right of Peaceful Assembly and Association
- **Article 21:** Right to Participate in Government and in Free Elections
- **Article 22:** Right to Social Security
- **Article 23:** Right to Desirable Work and to Join Trade Unions
- **Article 24:** Right to Rest and Leisure
- **Article 25:** Right to Adequate Living Standard
- **Article 26:** Right to Education
- **Article 27:** Right to Participate in the Cultural Life of Community
- **Article 28:** Right to a Social Order that Articulates this Document
- **Article 29:** Right to fulfill Community Duties Essential to Free and Full Development
- **Article 30:** Freedom from State or Personal Interference in the above Rights

Article Title:

Human Rights Violation: Article _____

Evidence from Article:

Human Rights Violation: Article _____

Evidence from Article:

Human Rights Violation: Article _____

Evidence from Article:



Essential Questions:

What are political rights and why must they be protected?

What role can individuals play in impacting government policy?

Directions: With your group, research a current event or country where political rights are being violated. Use the capture sheet below to record your information and to begin creating your Public Service Announcement.

Title:

Source:

Scenario: Characters act out the problem or narrate the context	
Goal: Why is this a problem?	
Human Rights Abuses: Identify the specific violations based on the UNDHR	
Evidence: How is this happening?	
Next Steps: What can you do to learn more and take action?	

Joshua Wong was born in Hong Kong on October 13, 1996. His mother helped him to overcome dyslexia and succeed academically. His father helped raise his social awareness by taking him to visit the underprivileged when he was a child; this was reinforced by Joshua's actively participating in local politics.

When Joshua was less than a year old, in July 1997, the British government transferred sovereignty over Hong Kong to the Chinese government, ending 156 years of British colonial rule. As a British-run territory, Hong Kong had enjoyed greater freedom and transparency than mainland China, an authoritarian state controlled by the Communist Party. The Chinese government promised to maintain "one country, two systems," but, over time, many of the freedoms Hong Kong residents were used to have been slipping away.

Joshua's activism began when he was just 14 years old. He demonstrated against plans to build a high-speed rail link between Hong Kong and the Chinese mainland, believing that the project sacrificed the interests of the common people to a small minority of the economic elite. Activists also raised concerns about the cost of the project, noise pollution, and customs and border control complications. Ultimately, the protestors were unsuccessful in stopping the development of the rail link.

Undeterred, Joshua helped to create a pro-democracy student group called Scholarism two years later. The group started with simple tactics and a simple goal: distributing leaflets denouncing the Communist Party's efforts to replace the existing curriculum with a new one called "Moral and National Education." The new curriculum was viewed as pro-China brainwashing. Over time, the group's tactics evolved, and it grew in size and influence. In August 2012, activists occupied a park below government offices and a few went on a hunger strike. Scholarism also organized large public demonstrations. In September 2012, over 100,000 supporters rallied outside government offices. Shortly thereafter, the government retracted its plans to introduce "Moral and National Education" as a compulsory subject in schools.

Two years later, Joshua became a leader of Hong Kong's Umbrella Revolution. This emerged to protest a decision made by China that would restrict elections in Hong Kong to a list of candidates pre-approved by the Chinese government. Joshua led protestors in occupying a forecourt outside government offices. He was subsequently arrested for forcible entry to government premises, disorderly conduct, and unlawful assembly. His arrest, along with more than 60 fellow protestors, galvanized demonstrators. Tens of thousands of people camped in the streets and demanded the right to fully free elections.

In 2016, after Scholarism disbanded, Joshua worked with other student leaders to establish a new political party, Demosistō. The party advocates a referendum in 2047 to determine Hong Kong's sovereignty. That is the year that laws put in place during the transition of power from the United Kingdom to mainland China are set to expire.

Joshua was jailed again in 2017 and 2019 for his participation in the Umbrella Revolution. After a series of appeals, he was released from jail in time to join the 2019 protests against a controversial bill that would allow suspects arrested in Hong Kong to be extradited to mainland China. The bill was eventually scrapped, but efforts to defend democracy and human rights in Hong Kong continue.