

6.4 The balloon ride

Goal

The students become aware of the importance and universality of human rights. They understand that some human rights are implicitly included in others, but are equally indispensable. It becomes clear that human rights are inviolable and that it is not permissible to arbitrarily suspend them.

4th–6th grade

45 minutes



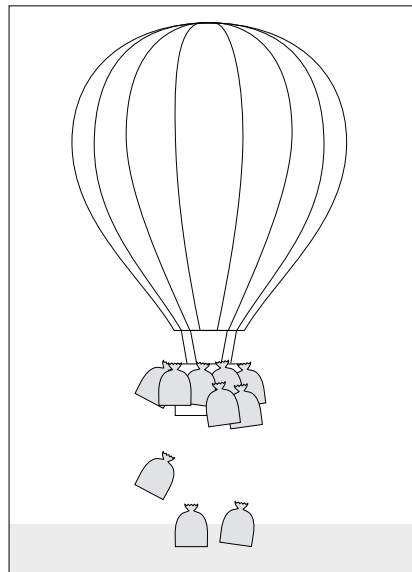
Materials:
pencils, paper, large sheets
of paper, list with human rights
or children's rights (for selection,
see next page).

Hints:

- The present exercise can be used as an introduction into an instructional sequence about human rights or implemented at the end of such a sequence for practical application and deeper understanding.
- The weights or ballast, respectively, of a hot air balloon, could be comprised from the below referenced human rights. Also possible is another choice of human rights (see the complete list on various websites in the internet).

Procedure:

- The class forms groups of five or six students. Each group receives a poster and felt pens with the instruction to draw a hot air balloon that floats above a landscape (e. g. above the school or the capital of the country of origin). The sandbags that weigh down the balloon symbolize ten human rights and are pasted on the poster (see list on following page).



- Now the game can begin. The students should imagine that they are riding in the “human rights balloon”. The balloon begins to descend and the passengers must release two or three bags of ballast in order to avoid a crash.
- The students must prioritize the human rights that are represented by the ballast bags. The following criteria are essential in determining the priorities: is a particular right implicitly included in another right? Is a certain right particularly essential for a democracy or for our personal needs?
- The balloon continues to sink, however. Additional two to three bags of ballast, or human rights must be dropped. After discarding about four or five bags, the balloon is able to safely land on the ground.

- Reflection by the class as a whole. Each group presents its list and comments on some of their priorities. Subsequently, the lists can be compared. What kinds of differences are there? There should be a follow-up discussion about the group work. Where did a decision become particularly difficult to reach, and why? Wherein lies the difficulty in prioritizing certain human rights over others?
- In a functioning constitution any abolition of any one of these rights would greatly damage the democracy. Human rights are natural rights and therefore inviolable. In this respect, the balloon ride was only a simulation of a situation that, it is hoped, will never occur. In closing, this must be clarified once more.
- The sequence can be continued on the upper level by analyzing which ones of these rights are found in the constitution of the country of origin and the host country, and how they are protected.

Selection of human rights

→ Right to free elections
→ Right to property
→ Equal rights for men and women
→ Right to a clean and healthy environment
→ Right to healthy food and clean water
→ Right to education
→ Right to freedom of thought, conscience and religious freedom
→ Right to clothing and housing for all citizens
→ Right to privacy that cannot be interfered.
→ Right to freedom of movement.