

Should Human Rights concerns be part of the Olympics?

AIMS

Students consider the role of the Olympic Games with regard to human rights issues.

Students speak and listen effectively.

Students justify their arguments.

Students work together to effectively make decisions.

Students plan and create a brochure.

LINKS

S&E (Investigation, Communication and Participation, Natural and Social Systems) English (Processes and Strategies, Conventions, Listening, Speaking, Writing, Reading)

MATERIALS

Newspapers, computer, printer, pens, paper

LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Ask students to collect news stories about human rights and China or the Olympics to share with the rest of the class.

Discuss the question: "Now that China is hosting the 2008 Summer Olympics, what can participating countries do to encourage the Chinese government to respect human rights."

Have students meet in small groups to discuss following questions.

- What is to be gained and lost by having a country with the human rights record of China host the Olympics?
- Should China's human rights record be an issue during the 2008 Beijing Olympics or should all politics be kept out of the Olympics and Chinese human rights violations should be addressed at a different time?
- If China's human rights record is to be an issue during the Olympics, what are some ways to go about doing this? What actions can be taken to get China to improve its human rights record?

Ask students to work in their groups to develop brochures that reflect one of the possible actions listed below to address China's human rights record. You may assign these to each group or have them choose. Encourage students to be creative in their layout of the brochures and include reasons in support of their ideas. Each brochure should address the following points:

- Identify your audience. For whom is the brochure intended?
- List the major points that support your position
- List the major concerns you have about alternative courses of action
- Describe the call to action you want your audience to take
- List the benefits you expect will result from the actions you advocate.

OPTIONS

- Keep politics out of the Olympics. Watch the Games on television, patronize sponsors, and make contributions supporting the event. Address China's human rights violations through different avenues other than the Olympics.
- Support Beijing Olympics and encourage all countries to participate in hopes the exposure to alternative ideas will improve China's human rights record. Explain how this event provides a unique opportunity to encourage positive change in China.
- Support the Beijing Olympics but continue to express concerns about China's human rights policies through letters to leading heads of state encouraging them to take this opportunity to put pressure on the Chinese government to improve their human rights record.
- Boycott the Beijing Olympics. Don't attend, encourage your friends not to attend, sponsor, or watch the Beijing Olympics on television. Write letters to existing and potential sponsors and your local newspaper discouraging people from supporting the Beijing Olympics.
- Openly protest in your home country against people attending or watching the Beijing Olympics. Promote rallies and demonstrations at key times (during major Olympic events) and key places (major sponsors' headquarters, Olympic committee offices, and international governmental organizations). Make sure they understand your issues of concern.
- Go to China and participate in public protests against the Chinese government's human rights policies in front of the international media at Olympic venues.

Adapted from <http://answers.yahoo.com/question/?qid=20080603111829AAWEkXL>

VARIATIONS/EXTENSIONS

- If the students have not learnt about human rights before some work with books such as *Stand Up for Your Rights* by Peace Child International (available at the One World Centre) might be useful.
- Also, Amnesty International's resource at http://action.amnesty.org.au/images/uploads/hre/China_The_Olympics_and_Human_Rights.pdf would inform or extend this activity well.
- Students may wish to take some of the actions they advocate in their brochures.