

BC SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM & CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE IN IRAN

What is the connection?

Why should the 2022 protests in Iran be taught in our schools?

Currently in Iran, youth have taken to the streets to voice their frustration with the governing bodies of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Amid growing repression, unjust social standards, gender inequalities and bleak prospects, the death of a young woman whose only crime was improper wearing of the compulsory hijab has sparked fury. Many peaceful protestors have been brutally killed by the regime in this uprising since September 16th, 2022.

The impetus behind the proposed sample lesson plans is three-fold: First, our young learners today use social media platforms as a source of information which gives them tools in constructing their identities as knowers, meaning-makers, appliers, supporters, action-takers, advocates, and so on. To engage our youth in learning, classroom material offered to them needs to expand over a wide variety of topics, be current and relevant. Today's social media generation is invested in issues of advocacy- be it human rights, social justice, environmentalism, EDI, leadership, feminism, gender studies, sexuality studies, equal rights and freedom, and many more. The uprising of protestors in Iran is an umbrella topic which encompasses all of these issues. Students' participation in guided inquiry - which must be carefully-planned, well-researched and critically reviewed through sample lesson plans - as outlined below will enhance learning of the core "Thinking and Communications" competencies, and promote positive student identity construction. This way the learners can actively participate in debates, discussions, and advocacy groups in connection with social justice issues important in their own communities.

Second, current affairs have an important place in our school curriculum, especially when they link closely with the social studies curriculum competencies. Schools are not isolated, stagnant, archaic, confined spaces detached from the ever-changing societies we live in. They are extensions of our societies. Implementing current affairs in Social Studies and Language Arts lessons bridges classrooms to the broader society while providing background knowledge. Learners will be able to compare and contrast their communities and social conditions with those on a more global scale, such as some recent examples: Greta Thunberg for climate change, Keystone pipeline protests, the Black Lives Matter movement, DREAM act against deportation, Malala Yousafzai activism, etc. By teaching current events, students can grow to become social thinkers who will be agentive and able to participate in the construction of their social futures.

Third, Iranian-Canadian students enrolled in BC's K-12 school system make up a large percentage of the student body. The well-being and the recent tragic events in their mother land is talked about in their homes and the conversations should meaningfully continue in classrooms. Naturally, preconceptions and misconceptions can exist in students' background knowledge and a careful, guided inquiry facilitated by the classroom teacher can address the existing gaps in knowledge and promote core competency-building skills such as critical thinking, investigating, reasoning, critiquing, concluding, and considering multiple perspectives.

For the reasons outlined above, I have borrowed, adapted and designed a number of lesson plans for the BC, K-12 classroom instructors to have available when teaching about the uprising in Iran. The lesson plans are meant to be age-appropriate and inquiry-driven using reliable online sources and text while being modifiable and adaptable to address the needs of specific learners. The activities are not meant to be taught in succession- rather for the teacher to select those that can be effectively woven into social justice topics already planned. The idea is not to forgo the Canadian social studies content, but to supplement the existing unit plans with global current events.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me via email: nikta.razavi@ubc.ca

INTRODUCING THE TABLE

The table below illustrates the Social Studies curriculum as outlined on the BC Ministry of Education website (<https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum/social-studies>).

The big ideas in each of the primary (grades K-3), intermediate (grades 4-7) and secondary (grades 8-12) categories are selected from a list of big ideas for the entire range of the grades. Those selected displayed strong curricular connections in relation to social justice, human rights, and global citizenship for the BC curriculum which also tied in seamlessly with the protests and the uprising in Iran. This made the job of building content very easy. The proposed content is an adaptation of the content listed on the website to both satisfy the curriculum competencies while teaching the topic of Iran and the recent civil disobedience in a way that is age-appropriate and cognitively-engaging.

The suggested sample lesson plans apply to a wide range of teaching styles and learning objectives. Teachers are invited to select and adapt as they see fit.

SOCIAL STUDIES	BIG IDEAS	CURRICULUM COMPETENCIES	CONTENT
Grades K-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local actions have global consequences, and global actions have local consequences. - Canada is made up of many diverse regions and communities. - Individuals have rights and responsibilities as global citizens. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gather, interpret and analyze ideas - Communicate findings and decisions - Explain the significance of events, people or places - Recognize causes and consequences of events - Explore different perspectives - Identify fair and unfair aspects of events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students will work within a guided inquiry to explore characteristics of a community through diverse cultures, immigration patterns, perspectives, traditions, holidays, religions, clothing and dress. - Students will explore diverse communities across Canada and globally using images, songs, books, maps and movies to discuss how people's needs and wants are met. - Students will engage in learning about needs and how needs can range from small to big in order to address basic human rights and other rights. - Students will investigate the rights and responsibilities of individuals regionally and globally through examples and case studies.

<p>Grades 4-7</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Economic self-interest can be a significant cause of conflict among peoples and governments. - Complex global problems require international cooperation to make difficult choices for the future. - Systems of government vary in their respect for human rights and freedoms. - Media sources can both positively and negatively affect our understanding of important events and issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plan of action for addressing problems - Alternative perspectives on issues - Defending a position on an issue - Canada's justice system - Equality / equity / fairness in the Charter of Rights - Individual and collective rights and responsibilities - What is advocacy and does it work? - Various cases and examples of human rights in Canada and globally - Nature and extent of pluralism and equity in various cultures - Role of Canada in the world 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students will learn migration patterns in Canada using maps, encyclopedias and images - Students will investigate and analyze global poverty and inequality issues - Students will research large exporters of oil, gas, lithium, and machinery - Students will examine the political, economic and social implications of having rich natural resources - Students will investigate roles of individuals, governments, and NGOs in responding to poverty and issues of inequality - Students will learn the definition of economic independence - Students will examine regional and international conflicts such as war, genocide, religious and ethnic violence and terrorism - Students will explore the role of international community in conflict resolution - Students will discuss media technologies and coverage of current events - Students will debate who decides what is news and how it is covered
<p>Grades 8-12</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Global and regional conflicts have been a powerful force in shaping our contemporary world and identities. - The development of political institutions is influenced by economic, social, ideological, and geographic factors. - Disparities in power alter the balance of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use inquiry processes to ask, gather data, interpret, analyze findings and communicate results - Compare varying perspectives on their significance from group to group - Assess the justification of competing accounts - Compare and contrast changes and continuities in various governments and for their people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students will learn forms of government (e.g. parliamentary democracy, constitutional monarchy, theocracy, etc). - Students will learn models for classifying political and economic ideologies (e.g. linear left/right; two-dimensional) - Students will become familiarized with ideologies (e.g. socialism, communism, capitalism, fascism, liberalism, conservatism, authoritarianism, feminism, etc.) - Students will learn Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

	<p>relationships between individuals and between societies.</p> <p>- Historical and contemporary injustices challenge the narrative and identity of Canada as an inclusive, multicultural society.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assess how underlying conditions of groups, influence events, decisions and consequences - Explain prevailing norms and values worldwide and locally - Recognize implicit and explicit ethical judgements in a variety of sources - Make reasoned ethical judgements about actions and appropriate ways to respond 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students will research Canada's immigration and multicultural laws and immigration and refugee policies - Students will investigate the arrival of diverse groups of immigrants and the effect on Canadian identity - Students will discuss women's rights, LGBT2Q+ rights, ethnic discrimination, political discrimination, and freedom of expression - Students will examine advocacy for human rights such as protests and other advocacy movements - Students will debate Canada's role in global armed conflict, involvement in international organizations and agreements, and support of NGOs - Students will consider processes, methods, and approaches individuals, groups and governments use to promote social justice
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Grades K-3 Sample Lesson Plans

Activity 1

Teacher uses a world map to brainstorm about Canada in connection with Iran. Students can discuss the questions in groups and present to the class.

Use guiding questions to help the young learners describe characteristics of Canadian culture and identity (e.g., education, health care, official bilingualism, religions, military, special interest groups, service organizations, sports and recreation activities, stamps and currency, multiculturalism and the “cultural mosaic”). They can then apply their understanding to the world and Iran as an example.

- 1) Where is Canada? Can you find it on the world map?



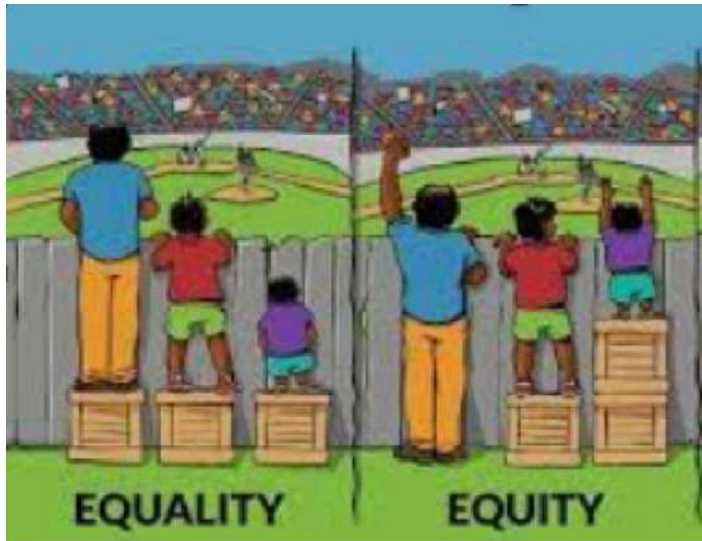
- 2) What are some things that make Canada unique? Make a list.
- 3) What does the word “culture” mean?
- 4) Does your list in question 2 help in describing the culture in Canada?
- 5) Is there only one culture in Canada or do people practice many different cultures?
- 6) Has Canada been welcoming to people who want to make Canada their new home?
- 7) Do you know anyone in Canada who was born in Iran or has parents who came from Iran?
- 8) Where is Iran? Can you find it on your map?
- 9) Can you ask your Iranian-Canadian friends to tell you a little about the culture in Iran?
- 10) Do you find similarities between the culture in Canada and the culture in Iran? Draw them.

Activity 2

Begin with a class brainstorm, asking students what it means to them to

- be just / fair / equitable
- be advocates for social justice

Use the visual below to help facilitate brainstorming and dialogue.



- Students will engage in learning about needs from small to big in order to address their basic rights as children, students, pet-owners, athletes, dancers, artists, environmentalists, citizens, as humans.

- Students will investigate the rights and responsibilities of individuals regionally and globally through examples and case studies:

Can students in all parts of the world attend school?

Do they have the same resources in their schools?

Do children in all parts of the world have access to medicine and medical professionals?

Can all children play sports and take dance lessons or art lessons?

Do all humans have access to clean water, nutritious food and safe living spaces?

From the discussion above, draw conclusions about the questions below. Use examples where children have raised funds to donate to the charity of their choice. What school-wide examples can you think of?

- What are the basic needs of children?
- What are the rights of children?
- What can you do to protect the rights of children in all parts of the world?

Activity 3

Open-ended Discussion

Discuss various ways individuals and groups can influence legal systems and political structures.

Students can start with their classroom as a structure where they have their needs and their rights met. Do they have a say in how this structure is organized, managed, and how learning takes place? How are their voices heard and opinions respected?

Create a skit where students decide on a new class rule in a unanimous way and bring it to the teachers' attention for change to take place.

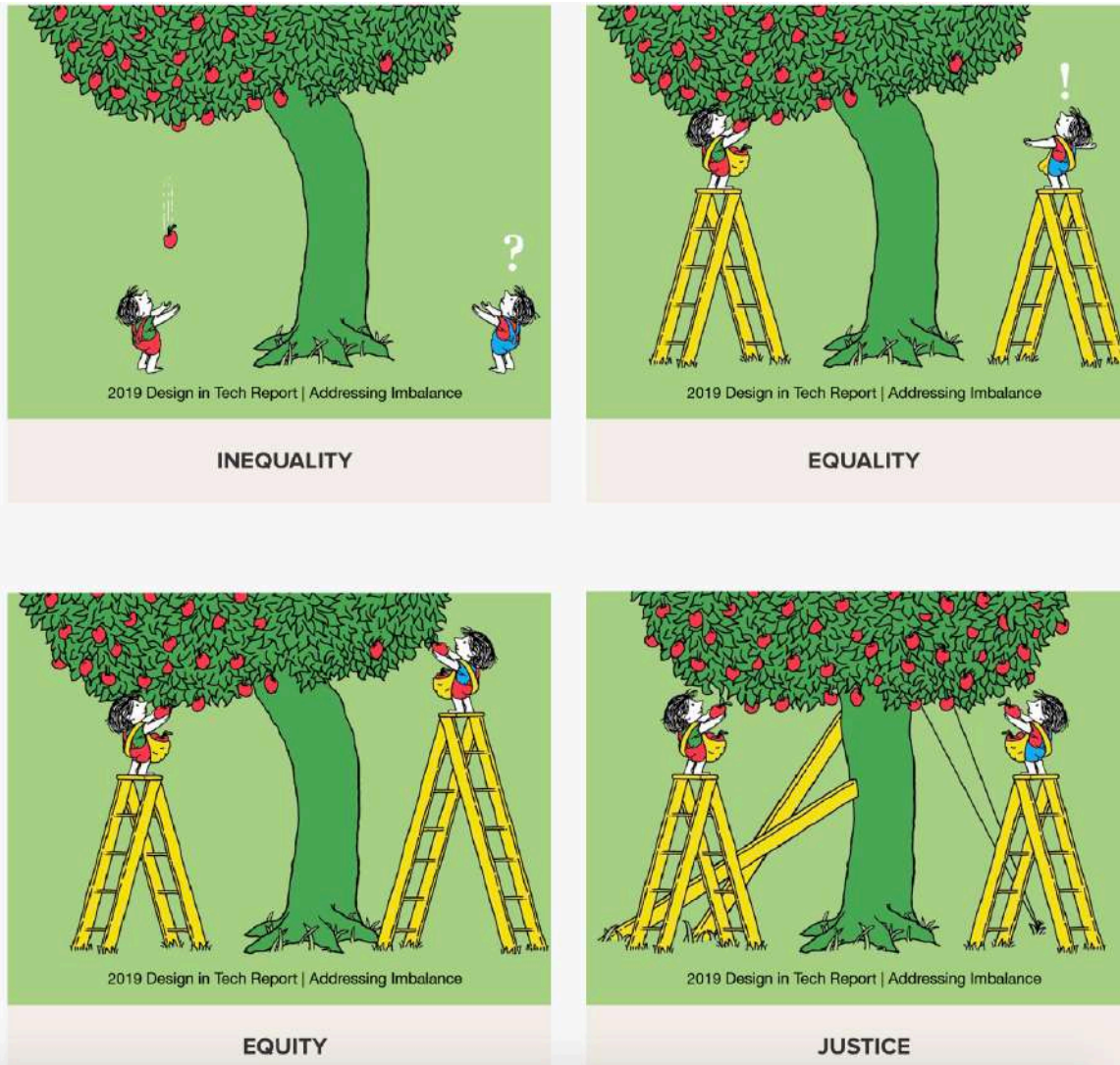
The teacher can play the role of a democratic leader or demonstrate how dictatorship responds to people.



Activity 4: A Picture is worth a thousand words

Reference: <https://onlinepublichealth.gwu.edu/resources/equity-vs-equality/>

Use the visual below to discuss human rights, basic needs and the justice system.



Ask the learners to find examples from their daily lives that resemble each of the images? Ask the class as a whole to create a list of examples for each image and each student chooses one example for which they draw an image.

Grades 4-7 Sample Lesson Plan

Activity 1

Curricular Connection: - [Systems of government vary in their respect for human rights and freedoms.](#)

What does it mean to be Canadian?

Begin with a class brainstorm, asking students what it means to them to be Canadian. Use guiding questions to help them describe characteristics of Canadian culture and identity (e.g., education, health care, official bilingualism, religions, sports and recreation activities, features of the land, and the “cultural mosaic”). Discuss in groups characteristics of Canadian culture which make students proud to be Canadians.

What does it mean to advocate for social justice?

Next, conduct a class brainstorm around the term “social justice.” Ask students what it means to them to be advocates for social justice as Canadians. Introduce and discuss how concepts such as the following relate to social justice:

- equality and fairness (e.g., based on ethnicity, age, sex, sexual orientation, religion, socioeconomics, mental and physical ability)
- acceptance, respect, and inclusion
- conflict and peace
- the environment and the economy

Create a class web of these terms. Discuss: What characteristics of Canadian society support social justice? Which do not, or could be improved? Have students work in groups to prepare and present a slide show of images and text with examples of social justice and/or social injustice in Canada and the world.

What does social justice look like in Iran? Students will examine advocacy for human rights such as protests and other advocacy movements.

As part of discussions of current affairs, compare the situation in Iran to the current situation in Canada. Read the article below and answer the following questions.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/24/world/middleeast/iran-protests-raisi-khamenei-hijab.html>

- 1 Who holds power in the current Islamic regime?
- 2 Who is powerless?
- 3 What factors determine this hierarchy of rights and privileges?
- 4 Do these factors support social justice among all citizens in Iran?
- 5 In linking with the “evolution of responsible government” in Canada, focus on the progression of rights. Have these rights progressed in Iran based on the article?
- 6 How do we promote and protect these rights and the rights of peaceful protestors in Iran?

Activity 2

Curricular Connection: Systems of government vary in their respect for human rights, women's rights, children's rights and freedoms.

Watch the video below titled "It's a Men's Club": <https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/05/25/its-mens-club/discrimination-against-women-irans-job-market>



Video Questions:

- 1) What are some of the restrictions or barriers imposed on women in work places in Iran?
- 2) Do you agree with these restrictions or barriers?
- 3) Talk with your group about "gender equality in economic participation".
- 4) Can you give examples of gender equality in work places that you know in Canada?
- 5) Design a skit, draw an image, or write a story displaying an example of unfair gender equality like shown in the video.

Students will investigate and analyze poverty and inequality issues.

- 6) What is the outcome of these restrictions?
- 7) Who is affected negatively by these outcomes?

Students will investigate roles of individuals, governments, and NGOs in responding to issues of inequality.

- 8) How can this situation improve?
- 9) If you were to write a letter demanding change to improve this situation in Iran, who would you write to and what would your letter say?
- 10) What is the role of the international community in conflict resolution?

Students will discuss media technologies and coverage of current events.

- 11) What tools do Iranian women protestors have to make their voices heard?
- 12) What positive steps have been taken so far on and on which platforms?
- 13) Can you research and cite two credible sources where you found your information?

Activity 3

Curricular Connection: Media sources can both positively and negatively affect our understanding of important events and issues.

Women and girls are cutting their long locks—and posting videos of it on social media—as acts of defiance and in support of Women’s rights in Iran. Women cutting their hair has roots in ancient Persian poems and in other cultural traditions. This moment portrays politics on a very personal level.



Right: The actresses Marion Cotillard and Juliette Binoche posted photos cutting their hair in support of Iran’s women.

There have been many demonstrations in major cities around the world showing women cutting their hair. Why are Iranian women cutting their hair in an act of defiance?

Choose the best answers:

- They are forced to keep their hair long under the Islamic rules and they don’t want to be forced to do anything
- They are fed up with poverty in the country and they don’t have money to afford a haircut
- Cutting hair is symbolic of freedom of expression
- Cutting hair is symbolic of change
- Long hair is more difficult to cover
- Long hair is traditional and they want to be more modern
- Women are showing they are frustrated with many of Iran’s policies, including the compulsory hijab, and they want change

HAIR or PROTEST HAIR?

Research Question: Are there other examples in history when women cut their hair in an act of defiance?

Reference: <https://thebeaulife.co/beauty-news/history-of-protest-hair>

Reference: <https://www.newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/irans-protests-are-the-first-counterrevolution-led-by-women>

Reference: <https://www.voanews.com/a/oscar-winners-chop-off-their-hair-for-protesters-in-iran-/6776688.html>

Students will discuss social norms and what it is like to question the status quo.

Compare the two photos below. What message is expressed in the photo of Frida Kahlo (a Mexican painter, who was often portrayed wearing her hair in a long braid) when her hair is cut and shown to be beneath her seat.

The Starbucks logo was changed by an artist to show that Iranian women are frustrated with unfair politics and are cutting their hair as a symbol of change and empowerment. What other logos or images have you seen that express the same sentiments? Can you make a drawing which shows an act of defiance?



Self-Portrait with Thorn Necklace



Frida Kahlo. Self-Portrait with Cropped Hair. 1940 | ...



Activity 4

Curricular Connection:

- Media sources can both positively and negatively affect our understanding of important events
- Students will discuss media technologies and coverage of current events
- Students will debate who decides what is news and how it is covered
- Students will explore the role of international community in conflict resolution

Media literacy: Students will explore the role of media in news

Questions to brainstorm:

- 1 What makes news?
- 2 Who decides what news is?
- 3 Where do we get our news?
- 4 How can we trust that news is accurate and unbiased?
- 5 Why would any news lie?
- 6 What is government censorship?
- 7 Why is it difficult to hear about the events in Iran right now?



What if the only news was videos made on personal cell phones?

In several of the videos of the uprising that have torn across social media, women rip off their head scarves and burn them in street bonfires, including in deeply religious cities. In one, a young woman atop a utility cabinet cuts off her hair in front of a crowd of roaring demonstrators. In another, young women dare to dance bareheaded in front of the riot police. And in many of the videos, the police kill the protestors.

Is this news and should major news outlets cover this?

The government in attempts to block the leakage of such video clips shuts down all internet access. Internet access continues to be disrupted or fully blocked, especially on widely used messaging apps such as WhatsApp and Instagram, making it difficult for Iranians to communicate with one another or to share updates on the unrest with the outside world.

What other means of communication can people use to keep those outside of Iran informed?

The internet outages have partly returned. To help Iranians access the internet, the Biden administration on Friday authorized technology companies to offer secure platforms and services inside Iran without risk of violating United States sanctions that normally prevent doing business with Iran. It also greenlit the export of private satellite internet equipment, such as the Starlink service offered by Elon Musk's SpaceX, to Iran.

Questions:

- 1 Why is it difficult to know what is going on in Iran right now?
- 2 How do the major news outlets get information about what is happening?
- 3 Why would the government block internet access?
- 4 What did the international community do to bring internet back to Iran?
- 5 Have students work in groups to prepare and present a slide show of images and text with examples of media and news shaping how social justice and/or social injustice are portrayed globally.

Activity 5

Curricular Connection: **Students will examine international conflicts such as war, genocide, religious and ethnic violence and terrorism**

Read the poem, “First They Came ...” by Pastor Martin Niemöller

Discuss in your groups the meaning of the poem.

How can you apply this poem to the situation occurring in Iran.

Create a skit to show the significance of the poem.

*First they came for the Communists,
and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Communist.
Then they came for the Jews,
and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew.
Then they came for the trade unionists,
and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a trade unionist.
Then they came for the Catholics,
and I didn't speak up because I was a Protestant.
Then they came for me,
and by that time no one was left to speak up.*

Curricular Connection: Students will investigate roles of individuals, governments, and NGOs in responding to issues of inequality

Watch the video and discuss why teens living in Canada are fighting for women's rights in Iran. Would you advocate for human rights for other groups outside of your community?

<https://www.cbc.ca/kidsnews/post/give-our-people-hope-why-2-teens-are-fighting-for-womens-rights-in-iran>

In addition, teachers may find the following approaches helpful in furthering a social justice agenda:

- Use an anticipation guide to help students identify their own preconceptions, and to examine those ideas via the video. Present the class with a series of statements related to the story, and ask students to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement. Have them explain their thinking.
- After reading or viewing the story, revisit the statements and have students compare their responses. What changed? Why?
- Conduct a whole-class debate.
- Use texts to look for ways to empower students who may feel marginalized (e.g., immigrants or those who adhere to Islamic law and wear a hijab, or those who adhere to other religious or cultural traditions and have a recognizable way dress or head gear, such as a turban).

Activity 6

Curricular Connections: Students will defend a position on an issue while explore Individual and collective rights and responsibilities.

“The anger isn’t over just Mahsa’s death, but that she should have never been arrested in the first place,” said Shadi Sadr, a prominent human rights lawyer who has campaigned for Iranian women’s rights for two decades.



The protestors are chanting: Woman, Life, Freedom.

What do you think they mean?

Can you create your own slogan?

Can you draw your slogan in graffiti or turn it into a visual art piece?

What colors would you use for your visual and why?

Revisiting biases in media:

Read the article below and answer the following questions.

<https://www.newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/irans-protests-are-the-first-counterrevolution-led-by-women>

- 1 Examine characterization for indications of assumptions or bias (recognizing that a text may sometimes expose one form of oppression while accepting/perpetuating other forms).
- 2 Construct your own meanings from the material presented (recognizing that there is not always one “right” interpretation, but that interpretations must be supported by evidence and careful argument in order to be credible).
- 3 Produce texts (e.g., media messages, protest songs) reflective of your own social justice interests or concerns.
- 4 Create a group and see if others in your group defend your social justice concern. If they do, build a team with them. If they do not, ask them to form an opposing team. Brainstorm with your group, how can you have a friendly debate to discuss different perspectives. Choose a referee or judges to decide which team wins the debate.

Grades 8-12 Sample Lesson Plan

Activity 1

Curricular Connection: [Global and regional conflicts have been a powerful force in shaping our contemporary world and identities.](#)

Why Iranians Are Protesting

Reference: Proulx, N. (2022). Lesson Plan, Why Iranians Are Protesting? *New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/29/learning/lesson-plans/lesson-plan-why-iranians-are-protesting.html>

The 22-year-old woman emerged from the Tehran subway, her dark hair covered with a black head scarf and the lines of her body obscured by loose clothing, when the capital city's Guidance Patrol spotted her. They were members of Iran's notorious morality police, enforcers of the conservative Islamic dress and behavior rules that have governed daily life for Iranians since the 1979 revolution, and newly energized under a hard-line president who took office last year.

By their standards, Mahsa Amini was improperly dressed, which could mean something as simple as a wisp of hair protruding from her head scarf. They put her in a van and drove her away to a detention center, where she was to undergo re-education. Three days later, on Sept. 16, she was dead. Her death has prompted an outpouring of anger across Iran. In this lesson, students will learn about the many factors that have led to this moment. Watch the video and answer the following questions:

<https://www.nytimes.com/video/world/middleeast/10000008547381/iran-protests-video.html>

- 1 What do you notice?
- 2 What do you wonder?
- 3 What could the demonstrations be about based on what you see and hear?
- 4 What connections can you make between these protests and others like the gas exploration protests by indigenous groups, Black Lives Matter protests, Roe vs Wade, or others.

Further Research

For more information, you might read one or more of the following articles to be able to discuss the questions below:

[“What’s Behind the Protests in Iran”](#) (2022) Washington Post

[“Iran: A Really Simple Guide to Protests”](#) (2022) BBC News

[“Women Take Center Stage in Antigovernment Protests Shaking Iran”](#) (2022) NY Times

[“I Can’t Imagine a Good Future’: Young Iranians Increasingly Want Out”](#) (2021) NY Times

[“The Entire Country is on Fire”](#) (2022) UofT News

[“The Iran Revolution at 40: From Theocracy to ‘Normality’”](#) (2019) NY Times

[“How Iran Became an Undemocratic Democracy”](#) (2017) NY Times

Going Further: Please select from the many questions below to lead a discussion or assign a research activity.

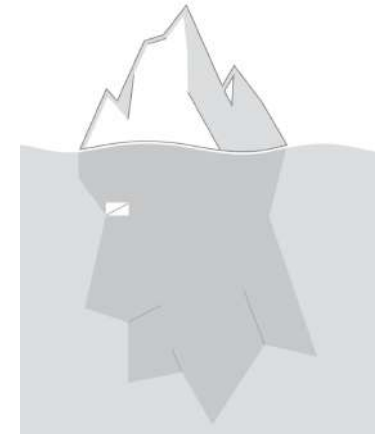
Reference: Facing History and Ourselves. (November 19, 2009). <https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/iceberg-diagrams>

While the unrest in Iran started with Ms. Amini's death, Iranians say it is about much more than just that. As with an iceberg, what we're seeing is only part of the story; much of the rest lies below the surface.

Demonstrate your understanding of what is happening in Iran by creating an Iceberg Diagram. You can use this handout or draw your own iceberg.

On the tip of your iceberg, list everything you know about the protests: What is happening? When and where is it happening? Who is affected? What choices are being made by the protesters and by the government?

Then, in the bottom part of the iceberg, list the factors that have led to this moment in Iranian history and that have influenced people's choices: Why are Iranians angry with the government? Why is the government responding as it is? What other past and current events have influenced those actions and reactions? As Facing History and Ourselves suggests, factors might also include "aspects of human behavior or nature such as fear, obedience to authority, conformity or opportunism."



After completing your diagram, use one or more of the prompts below, also from Facing History and Ourselves, as a guide to write about the topic or discuss it with your classmates:

What did you learn from completing your iceberg?

Which of the causes listed below the surface do you think were the most significant? Why?

What more would you need to know to better understand why the protests took place?

How does the information in this iceberg help you better understand the world we live in?

How does the information in this iceberg help you better understand identity construction and empowerment?

How do you think Global and regional conflicts have been a powerful force in shaping our identities?

Discussion Questions:

- 1 Why is it difficult to know what is going on in Iran right now? How did the articles referenced get information about what is happening?
- 2 How would you describe the unrest in Iran in your own words? How has the Iranian government responded?
- 3 According to the articles, young people are at the forefront of the demonstrations. Why are they willing to rise up and risk their lives?
- 4 The head scarf known as the hijab is at the center of the protests. Why is it an especially inflammatory issue? How have religiously conservative and liberal Iranians come together over it?
- 5 What is your reaction to the protests? What questions do you still have about them?

Activity 2

The Islamic “Hijab”

Curricular Connection: The development of political institutions is influenced by economic, social, ideological, and geographic factors.

- 1) How much do you know about an Islamic hijab and how it should be worn and by whom?
- 2) Now read the articles suggested below. What did you learn that you did not know before?

References:

Askew, J. (2022). Explained: Why is the Hijab Significant in Iran Society? *Euronews.culture*. <https://www.euronews.com/culture/2022/09/21/explained-why-is-the-hijab-significant-in-iranian-society>

Knipp, K. (2020). Why Iranian Authorities Enforce Veil Wearing? *DW Made for Minds*. <https://www.dw.com/en/why-iranian-authorities-force-women-to-wear-a-veil/a-56014027>

- 3) Read the paragraphs below and state whether you agree or disagree with the writers. Make a connection: Hijab in line with one’s religious or cultural beliefs and compulsory hijab as a tool to enforce strict regime ideologies.

The compulsory veiling law was enforced by the Islamic regime since it came into power. This has been the cornerstone of the Islamic identity of this government. It has been brutally enforced for more than four decades with many implications. It is a massive suppression of freedom of expression, academic freedom, censoring publications and different forms of art production. It is a suppression of women’s rights, control of women’s sexuality and their reproductive rights – all of that is enshrined in the constitution of Iran.

Reference: Mojab, S. (2022). UofT News. *The Entire Country is on Fire*.

Likewise, the Hijab-Free Movement is another campaign that’s becoming popular in the region despite its controversy. Malaysian activist Maryam Lee said that it’s all about choice and not the vilification of the hijab. “What people need to understand is that the hijab can be both liberating and oppressive, depending on the situation and context. The problem is not the hijab per se, but the social conditions that compel a woman into or out of her hijab,” she wrote in her book Unveiling Choice. “Muslim women, hijabi or not, in considering whether the hijab is compulsory in Islam, must agree that their common enemy is disingenuous men who insist on telling women what to wear.” Considering all these forms of hair protest, what it really boils down to is choice, freedom to express and ownership of one’s body.

Reference: Lim, T.M. (2021). The BeauLife. *Why Hair is a Potent Act of Defiance: The Long and Short of Hair Protest*.

- 4) Do you support that the development of political institutions should be influenced by ideological factors? Can you find examples for when secularism is helpful or harmful?

Activity 3

It's a men's club

Curricular Connection: Disparities in power alter the balance of relationships between individuals and between societies.

Watch the video below:



<https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/05/25/its-mens-club/discrimination-against-women-irans-job-market>

Summary: Laws and policies that discriminate against women interfere with Iranian women's right to work. Women confront an array of restrictions, such as on their ability to travel, prohibitions on entering certain jobs, and an absence of basic legal protections. Over the past four decades, Iranian women have become half of the country's university graduates. But, based on the most recent official statistics available, for the period between March 2016 and March 2017, only 14.9 percent of Iran's women are in the workforce, compared with 64.1 percent of men. This rate is lower than the average of 20 percent for all women in the Middle East and North Africa. The unemployment rate for women, currently 20.7 percent, is double that for men.

- 1 How did you feel after watching the video?
- 2 What power is altering the balance of relationship between individuals, their aspirations, their career paths and their contributions to society?
- 3 What kind of an intervention is required to correct the disparities in power?

Drama Activity

Create a skit to act out the inequities shown in the video or any other forms of privilege afforded to select groups.

Next create a skit where the inequities are reduced or abolished.

Write an essay about what it takes individually, nationally and globally to overcome all forms of inequities in the workplace.

OCCUPATION CHECKLIST ACTIVITY

Reference: Gender Equity Activities. https://education.alaska.gov/tls/cte/docs/nto/gender_equity.pdf

Using the Occupation Checklist at the end of this activity, students will match jobs and careers to gender. The desired outcome from this activity will be, the discovery and discussion of persistent gender stereotyping, with its wage and status implications, in terms of career opportunities.

1. There are many approaches to conducting the following class survey in a meaningful way.
 - Poll students on how and why they answered the way they did.
 - Have students conduct research of the occupations. You may want to divide students into groups and assign each group several occupations.
 - Another method would be to find out the areas of controversy, assign groups to research those areas.
2. The class, with instructor's help, answers the following questions. Ask for a student volunteer who will plot the results of the questions on the board.
 - Which group "male" or "female" had the largest number?
 - Which jobs require working with people? Which group had the larger number?
 - Which jobs have the most "status," and, of those, how many are designated "males" and how many "females?"
 - Which jobs offer the most salary potential, and, of those, how many are designated "males" and how many "females?" This will require research to complete.
 - Which jobs require the most/least amount of education, and, of those, how many are designated "males" and how many "females?" Will also require research.
3. Class should discuss any issues concerning gender as they arise. The focus should always be steered to "WHY?" Why are some jobs traditionally gender designated? Why is there an inequity of wage and status along gender lines?

RELATED ACTIVITIES:

1. For a math connection, have students create graphs of a variety of occupations to show percentage of male and female employees, wages for each gender, highest level of education for each gender, etc.
2. A research component has been touched on for this activity. While requiring more time and effort, researching specific occupations in terms of opportunity, availability, skills required, etc., would be a valuable and eye opening experience for the students.
3. After research has been completed, have student's choose one occupation to write a short research paper about.

JOB**GENDER**

Licensed Practical Nurse	M	F	Both
Security Guard	M	F	Both
Day Care Worker	M	F	Both
Police Officer	M	F	Both
Bookkeeper	M	F	Both
Custodian	M	F	Both
Graphic Artist	M	F	Both
Technical Writer	M	F	Both
Lawyer	M	F	Both
Gardener Radio Announcer	M	F	Both
Forest Ranger	M	F	Both
Physical Therapist	M	F	Both
Occupational Therapist	M	F	Both
Speech Therapist	M	F	Both
Homemaker	M	F	Both
Accountant	M	F	Both
Musician	M	F	Both
English Teacher	M	F	Both
Auto Body Instructor	M	F	Both
Dairy Farmer	M	F	Both
Auto Mechanic	M	F	Both
Factory Worker	M	F	Both
Gas Station Attendant	M	F	Both
Pilot	M	F	Both
Professional Athlete	M	F	Both
Computer Programmer	M	F	Both
Truck Driver	M	F	Both
Landscaper	M	F	Both
Bartender	M	F	Both
Clothing Designer	M	F	Both
Carpenter	M	F	Both
Physician	M	F	Both
Architect	M	F	Both

JOB**GENDER**

Construction Worker	M	F	Both
Flight Attendant	M	F	Both
Social Worker	M	F	Both
Secretary	M	F	Both
Elementary Teacher	M	F	Both
Hair Stylist	M	F	Both
Model	M	F	Both
Store Clerk	M	F	Both
Veterinarian	M	F	Both
Physical Education Teacher	M	F	Both
Cook	M	F	Both
Photographer	M	F	Both
Nurse	M	F	Both
Computer Analyst	M	F	Both
Machinist	M	F	Both
Dental Assistant	M	F	Both
Artist	M	F	Both
News Reporter	M	F	Both
Telephone Operator	M	F	Both
NASA Technician	M	F	Both
CAD Specialist	M	F	Both
Pharmacist	M	F	Both
Baby-sitter	M	F	Both
Newspaper Editor	M	F	Both
Cashier	M	F	Both
Mechanical Engineer	M	F	Both
FBI Investigator	M	F	Both
Plumber	M	F	Both
Librarian	M	F	Both
Bank Teller	M	F	Both
Dietitian	M	F	Both

Activity 4

Canada Takes Action

Curriculum Connection: **Historical and contemporary injustices challenge the narrative and identity of Canada as an inclusive, multicultural society.**

Pre-reading exercise:

You are the Prime Minister of Canada. Would you take any actions to condemn the Islamic Republic of Iran for its violations of human rights? Write a formal letter to the parliament highlighting what new measures you are taking against the IRI.

Read the articles below and watch the CBC and the CAPC videos:

<https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2022/10/07/canada-implement-new-measures-against-iranian-regime>

<https://nationalpost.com/opinion/the-2022-iranian-revolution-has-begun-will-canada-stand-with-the-people-or-the-tyrants>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SqzqF3-6Jpo>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sa-NL6bJ2Ys>

Group Research Questions:

1. What are the actions the Canadian government is going to take in response to the ongoing violations of human rights in Iran?
2. Why is Canada proceeding with such political and legal actions?
3. How is Canada portrayed as a collective society?
4. What are Canada's political ideologies? (e.g. liberalism, feminism, socialism, conservatism, etc)
5. Are there any other steps that Canada can take in further strengthening its identity as an inclusive and multicultural society?
6. How are the new measures stated in the articles in accordance with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms?
7. According to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, what is Canada's role in global armed conflict and involvement in international organizations, such as the UN?
8. Do any of the new measures promised by the Prime Minister, a reflection of Canada's immigration and multicultural laws and refugee policies?
9. Can you find other past examples where Canada's involvement in foreign affairs has helped build an identity of inclusion and multicultural?
10. Can you find example where the opposite is true?



Activity 5

For the Power of One Song

Curricular Connections: Students will examine advocacy for human rights such as protests and other advocacy movements.

What does “freedom of expression mean”? What components do they have? Check off the choices below that fit under freedom of expression and highlight those that women and girls in Iran can freely express under their “Freedom of Expression.”

- Freedom of speech
- Freedom of religion
- Freedom of press
- Freedom of assembly
- The right to petition the government
- Freedom to dance in public
- Freedom to sing in public
- Freedom to let the wind in your hair in public
- Freedom to wear what you like in public
- Freedom to hold hands with your partner in public

The power of one song:

The song “baraye” has become an anthem of resistance for the uprising of protestors inside and outside of Iran. Baraye, the Persian word “For” or “Because,” is composed of tweets about the protests and highlights longings people have for things lacking in sanctions-hit Iran, where many complain of hardship caused by economic mismanagement. It also draws on everyday activities that have landed people in trouble with the authorities in the Islamic republic due to enforcement of Islamic extremist beliefs. “We rise so we can dance in the streets; for being able to kiss; for my sister, your sister, our sisters...” the song’s lyrics say. The song was viewed over 40 million times on Instagram before it was deleted, and the singer, Shervin Hajipour, was arrested and jailed.

*For dancing in the alleys and the streets,
For the thrill and the fear of getting caught kissing
For my sister, my brother, and unity
For all the times we tried to change their minds and stale beliefs
For the loss of pride, and poverty
For the dream of just a normal life for you and me
For all the children who are starving for a loaf of bread
For the greed of politics and all the lies they spread
For all the mass-polluted air we breathe,
For all the litter in the streets and all the dying trees
For all the animals who suffer from extinction
For all the cats and dogs who love us without no conditions
For all the tears that seem to never end
For all the images that keep on turning in our heads
For a simple smile, for just a little while
For the future generations fighting for their time*

*For empty promises of heaven in the after-life
For all the imprisonment of beautiful minds
For all the babies who are born and for the ones who died
For all the times you told the truth, and all the times you lied
For all the speeches that we heard about a million times
For all the shacks and shelters that were sold to make a dime
For just a glimpse of a peaceful life,
For the rising of the sun after an endless night
For all the pills we pop just to get some sleep
For all mankind, for our country
For all the boys and girls who never knew equality
For Woman, for Life, Liberty
For Liberty
For Liberty
For Liberty
“Baraye” by Shervin Hajipour*

Why did this song resonate with the Iranian people in the midst of the “woman, life, freedom” movement and the brutal crackdown on protestors who rose to gain their freedom of expression?

Create your own artistic expression to portray a range of diversity and social justice topics in relation to “freedom of expression” (e.g., documentary films, performance art, public sculpture, protest songs, posters, poetry). This could be a collaborative creative process (e.g., ensemble performance) and use dance, drama, music, and visual arts as a means to explore resolutions to problems and conflicts (e.g., incidents of school racism or homophobia, poverty, environmental destruction, genocide, child exploitation, etc.).

Activity 6

Women, Life, Freedom

Curricular Connections: Students will consider processes, methods, and approaches individuals, groups and governments use to promote social justice.

Reference: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/oct/08/iran-mahsa-amini-women-girls-revolt-hope>

Reference: <https://www.newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/irans-protests-are-the-first-counterrevolution-led-by-women>

Iran’s protests may well be the first time in history that women have been both the spark and engine for an attempted counter-revolution. “The role played by Iranian women right now seems very unprecedented,” Daniel Edelstein, a political scientist at Stanford and an expert on revolutions, told me. One of the few possible parallels was the role of Parisian female *poissonnières*, or market workers, who stormed Versailles to prevent the king from turning against the National Assembly and crushing the nascent French Revolution, he said. In that case, however, “the women were seeking to prevent counter-revolution, not contributing to it.” During the Russian Revolution, bread riots led by women in Petrograd played a pivotal role in the tsarist empire’s collapse, [Anne O’Donnell](#), a Russia historian at New York University, told me. But Iran’s protests have been unique because, she said, “this is not just an upheaval involving women, it is an upheaval about women and women’s freedom, and that makes it very special.” (The New Yorker, 2022).

Post Reading Activity:

- 1 What other examples of women suffrage and the fight for women’s rights in our current history can you name?
- 2 What do you know about the 19th century, social reform movements – abolition, temperance, and women’s rights?
- 3 What parallels can you draw between the 19th century women’s rights movement and Iran’s current women’s right movement?
- 4 How was the 19th century social reform movement mobilized?
- 5 How can we as individuals, organized groups, and governments advocate for women-led movements?