



Judges in the Classroom

Classifying Rights From Various Constitutions

Source:

Adapted by Tarry L. Lindquist from Lesson 2 of Constitutional Kaleidoscope: A Comparison of Individual Rights Around the Pacific Rim, written by Margaret Fisher, the Institute for Citizen Education in the Law, Seattle, WA, and Tarry L. Lindquist, and updated in 2012. Staff at the Washington State Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) edited the lesson. For more information, contact AOC Court Services, 1206 Quince Street SE, PO Box 41170, Olympia, WA 98504-1170. For an electronic copy of this lesson, or to view other lesson plans, visit Educational Resources on the Washington Courts Web site at: www.courts.wa.gov/education/.

Objectives:

1. Students will understand the classification categories of rights: liberty, security, cultural, and group rights.
2. Students will identify and classify rights listed in the constitutions of five countries of the Pacific Rim.
3. Students will analyze differences and similarities.

Grade Level: _

Grades 4-8

Time: _

One class period (approximately 50-55 minutes)

Materials:

One copy of Handout 1 (Classification of Rights) for each student

One copy of Handout 2 (Classification of Rights Work Sheet) for each student

Copies of the Constitutional Rights from Canada, China, Mexico, Philippines, and USA for the members of each country group (Constitutional Rights of these countries are on pages 149-167 in the *Teaching the Bill of Rights* Teacher's Guide. The teacher should prepare these ahead of time for students and the judge.)

Note: This lesson assumes the teacher has introduced students to the individual rights sections of five different constitutions from countries around the Pacific Rim. Students will have a basic understanding of the vocabulary of the rights. However, they may need some additional explanation of various concepts as they go through this lesson.

Procedures:

1. **Begin the class by introducing yourself** to the students and telling a little bit about what you do, if this is your first class.
2. **Explain to the students** that your role today will be to help them classify individual rights from the constitutions of five different countries.
3. **Review the definition** of a constitution.

A constitution is a body of basic laws or legal rules for governing a state or country.

4. **Ask students:** What is the purpose of a bill of rights or declaration of rights?

The purpose of a bill of rights or declaration of rights is to formally list the things the government either must do for its citizens or may not do to its citizens. Sometimes a bill of rights or declaration of rights lists the duties of the government also.

5. **Explain that the rights** contained in constitutions can be classified into several categories. To help students focus on what kinds of rights are contained in their country's constitution, set up this framework of four topic areas or classification categories on the board or docu-camera:

Liberty	Security	Cultural	Group
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6. **Pass out Handout 1** (Classification of Rights). Ask a student volunteer to read the description of the Liberty category. Discuss any vocabulary unfamiliar to the students. Ask the students to look in their constitutions for an example of rights that might fall under the Liberty category. Verify their examples or explain why they are incorrect.
7. **After four or five examples**, move onto the Security category. Follow the same procedures described in step 6. Then, move to the Cultural category and Group category.
8. **When you and the teacher** feel the students have a solid understanding of the categories, pass out Handout 2 (Classification of Rights Work Sheet). Ask each country group to classify their list of rights from the constitution of their country. Tell them to use Handout 1 as a guide. Encourage the students by revealing there are no "bright lines" for the classification of rights, but it is helpful to consider the various classifications to compare constitutions.
9. **Point out to the students** that some of our constitutions include duties and responsibilities of citizens in addition to rights. For example, the Chinese Constitution includes almost as many duties as rights. While the U.S. Constitution does not specifically state what duties and responsibilities are expected of its citizens, it implies certain duties. For example, the right of free speech implies the duty to refrain from shouting "fire" in a crowded theater. Ask the students to list duties they find in their country group's constitution. Check to make sure the students understand the

assigned task.

10. **Circulate around the groups;** encourage students and discuss with them their choices of duties.
11. **Bring the class back together.** Ask for observations from the various groups. Put the responses on the board or docu-camera. Use the framework of the four classification categories, and draw a chart with the classification categories along the top and countries along the left side. Record some of the rights and duties from the groups' lists. It is more important for students to be able to identify the various similarities and dissimilarities among the countries than it is for them to correctly categorize the rights. Check to see if the students can identify similarities or differences among the constitutions.

	Liberty	Security	Cultural	Group	Duties
Canada					
China					
Mexico					
Philippines					
United States					

Inform students that merely because rights exist on paper, in a constitution, does not insure that they will be enforced or provided in society. If there is not an independent judiciary, a regulated police or a means for controlling government corruption and fraud, these rights may be denied in reality.

HANDOUT 1

Classification of Rights

Liberty Category

The Liberty category consists of **civil rights** and **political rights**.

Civil rights are personal rights that exist between the individual and the government. Civil rights are limits on the government's power over the individual. The civil right to life means that the government should not kill the individual. Other examples of civil rights include freedom of speech, freedom from torture, right to a fair trial, the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty, freedom of movement within one's own country, and the right to leave and enter one's own country.

Political rights are those rights of citizens to form and administer government. For example, the right to vote and elect the government is a political right.

Security Category

The Security category consists of **economic rights** and **social rights**.

Economic rights have to do with money and government benefits. For example, the right to be supported after retirement is an economic right.

Social rights have to do with health and relations to family members. For example, the right to practice family planning is a social right.

Cultural Category

Cultural rights have to do with education, appropriate information, recreation and leisure, and artistic and cultural experiences. For example, the right to receive an education is a cultural right.

Group Category

Group rights protect a certain group within the population, such as Native American peoples or women.

HANDOUT 2

Classification of Rights Worksheet

Using the following chart, classify the rights in your country's constitution into the categories listed. Your country may not have rights in every category. For example, some countries may only have two or three types of rights. On the second page, list the duties in your country's constitution also.

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>LIBERTY</u></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>SECURITY</u></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>CULTURAL</u></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>GROUP</u></p>

Classification of Rights Worksheet

List the duties described by your constitution.

DUTIES