

Shaping Australia as an even better place to grow up

Stage 3 (Years 5-6) Lesson Plan

Learning about child rights through
creative exploration and expression



What does UNICEF do?

UNICEF is the world's largest children's charity working to protect children, globally and here in Australia. We help children realise their full potential by providing access to clean water, lifesaving vaccines, quality education and health care. We ensure every child is safe and protected from harm and we're always there during times of emergency.

UNICEF and Child Rights

In 1989 something incredible happened. After talking and learning from the experts, governments from all around the world (including Australia) sat down and agreed on 54 different rights that every child under 18 years old should have to live a safe, healthy and happy life. They made a promise to every child to protect and fulfil their rights, in what is now known as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Making sure children know their rights — and working to ensure these rights are upheld — factors into everything UNICEF does.

For many children and young people, Australia is a great country to grow up in. But sadly, not everyone has this experience. Our work aims to create a better future for all children and young people in Australia by ensuring children's rights extend to every child, no matter their gender, religion, culture or ethnicity.

Protecting a child's rights is everyone's responsibility, including children, parents, carers and governments. Our child rights-focused school resources are designed to help teachers have these important conversations with their students and to hear their views.



Activity Overview

Students will understand the significance of the United Nations (UN) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. They will explore how these rights help make Australia an even better place for every child to grow up, and identify areas for improvement. Students will engage with these concepts through discussion, quizzes, video analysis, and personal storytelling in letter writing.

Mapped Curricula Outcomes in Appendix at the back.

Materials Needed



Convention on the Rights of the Child Poster: Provided in this lesson plan for each student. [View poster](#)



Quiz: “Who’s Right? Child Rights Quiz”. Provided in this lesson plan for each student.



Video: [Taking climate action for the future](#) (2:04 mins)
(Please preview video clips before class to ensure appropriateness.)



Screen/board: For displaying answers



Computer/TV: For showing the video



Letter Template: Provided in this lesson plan for each student.



Writing Materials: Paper, pens, or computers

Lesson Structure

Activity 1: Generate Curiosity (Video Analysis & Discussion)

Procedure

① Watch the Video

- Show the [Taking climate action for the future](#) video: (2:04 mins)
- Guide the class through the *See, Think, Wonder* routine. Encourage students to share observations and thoughts.

See, Think, Wonder - Thinking Routine



See

What do you see, observe or notice?

I see...

I notice...

I recognise (icons, people, symbols)...

I identify (relevant characters or figures)...



Think

What do you think is happening?

I think this means...

It seems like...

This suggests to me...

It appears that...



Wonder

What does it make you wonder?

How might this impact...

Why did...

I'm curious about...

I wonder who is UNICEF?

(Adapted from: Project Zero's Thinking Routine Toolbox. Harvard Graduate School of Education 2022, <https://pz.harvard.edu/thinking-routines#IntroducingExploringIdeas>)

② Introduction to the United Nations & UNICEF

- Briefly explain the UN's role and introduce UNICEF. Highlight the Convention on the Rights of the Child and explain its importance in protecting children's rights.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), originally known as the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, was created by the United Nations General Assembly on 11 December 1946, to provide emergency food and healthcare to children and mothers in countries that had been devastated by World War II. In 1950, UNICEF's mandate was extended to address the long-term needs of children and women in developing countries everywhere. What mattered to UNICEF then was reaching every child in need and protecting children's rights to survive, thrive, and reach their full potential in the aftermath of years of war. Today, more than seven decades later, their mission remains the same. From vaccinating children in war zones to advocating for every child around the world and in Australia, UNICEF is always there – no matter what.

③ **Discussion on the Convention Poster** *(Provided in this lesson plan for each student).*

- Show or distribute the Convention on the Rights of the Child poster.
Explain that this poster represents an agreement by countries to protect children's rights, which are all equally important and cannot be taken away.
- Read through each right as a class.
- Which rights on the poster connect with the Climate Change video we watched?
 - #24, #27, #22, others...
- Ask students which rights they connect with most and discuss surprising elements.

Activity 2: Quiz on Children's Rights

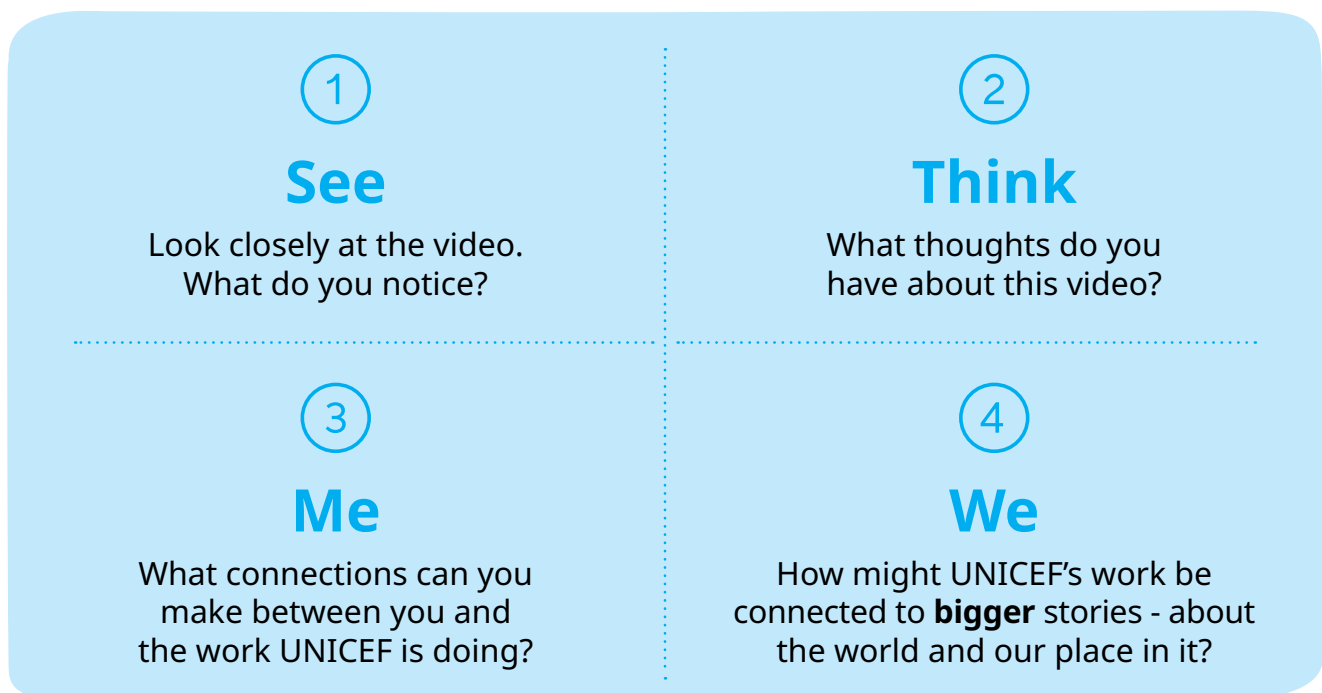
Procedure

① **Who's Right? Quiz** *(Provided in this lesson plan for each student).*

- Distribute quiz sheets or display the quiz on the screen (Who's Right? Child Rights Quiz).
- Have students work in pairs to complete the quiz. Review the answers as a class, focusing on key points about children's rights.

② **See, Think, Me, We" Thinking Routine**

- Re-watch the [Taking climate action for the future](#) video. (2:04 mins)
- Use the *See, Think, Me, We* routine to deepen understanding inviting students to make personal connections to the bigger picture.



(Adapted from: Project Zero's Thinking Routine Toolbox. Harvard Graduate School of Education 2022, <https://pz.harvard.edu/thinking-routines#IntroducingExploringIdeas>)

Teaching Points:

The **SEE** step focuses on observation. Encourage students to describe what they see without interpreting or giving opinions yet. You can deepen this by revisiting the “See, Think, Wonder” activity.

In the **THINK** step, students share their thoughts on the video. Guide them with questions like:

- What’s happening here?
- What might it mean?
- Why do you think that?

The **ME** step invites personal connections. Create a safe, trusting space by sharing your own response first. For larger groups, consider pairing students for this step.

The **WE** step encourages students to connect personal experiences to broader human themes. This can be challenging, so model your reflections to guide them.

Activity 3: A Letter of Hope

Objective

Students will write a personal letter sharing their experiences of growing up in Australia and their hopes for a better future for children and young people, linking it to one or more of the children’s rights outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Procedure

① Introduction to Personal Letter Writing:

Explain that students will be writing about their experiences of growing up in Australia, sharing how we can make Australia an even better place for every child. Emphasise the importance of children’s rights in shaping their letters.

Remind them of the key message from the video: *“We still have hope for our planet! Small actions by all can make a big difference.”*

② Linking to Children’s Rights:

Highlight some key rights that might be relevant to their stories, such as:

- Right to Education
- Right to Play
- Right to Health
- Right to be Heard

Encourage students to think about how their experiences and hopes for the future align with one or more of these rights.

③ Choosing an Audience:

Students can address their letters to UNICEF, their local council, or another organisation that advocates for children's rights (see #5. below).

④ Organising student thoughts: Concept / Mindmap Activity

Depending on how much familiarity students have with concept maps, you may need to demonstrate making a concept/mind map with the whole class.

Example below



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Engage the class in a discussion and use these guiding questions to help them construct their concept/mindmap to assist in pulling their ideas together for their letter:

- **Personal Experiences:**
What special memory or experience shaped their view of Australia? How does this relate to one of their rights as a child?
- **Enjoyment of Growing Up in Australia:**
What are their favourite places, activities, or traditions? How do these connect to their rights, such as the right to play or education?

- **Challenges and Improvements:**
Are there areas in which they feel their rights could be better supported in Australia? How can life for children be improved?
- **Future Vision:**
Imagine Australia in the future—what changes would they like to see in relation to children’s rights? How would their recommendations help protect or promote these rights in the future?

5 Who Can Help: Authentic Audience

Prompt students to consider who can assist in making their recommendations a reality. Which organisations or individuals can support children’s rights in Australia?

Local Government Officials: Children can send their ideas to their local mayor or city council members, who can influence community-level changes.

State Education Department: Suggestions related to schools, learning environments, and educational programs can be directed to the state department of education.

Federal Politicians: Writing to Members of Parliament or Senators can help bring their recommendations to a national level.

Environmental Organisations: Ideas about improving natural spaces and wildlife conservation can be shared with organisations like the Australian Conservation Foundation or local environmental groups.

Children’s Advocacy Groups: Groups such as UNICEF and the Australian Child Rights Taskforce can help amplify their voices and push for policies that benefit children.

School Principals and Teachers: Sharing their ideas with school leaders can lead to immediate changes in their own educational environment.

Community Groups: Engaging with local community groups or neighbourhood associations can help children participate in grassroots efforts to improve their areas.

6 Writing Time: UNICEF template *(Use the UNICEF Letter Template provided in this lesson plan for the final draft)*

Provide writing materials and guide students to use descriptive language to paint a vivid picture of their experiences and emotions. Remind them to refer to the children’s rights they feel are most important as they craft their letters.

Letter Structure Template:

Provide a simple structure to help organise their thoughts based on their concept/ mindmap activity:

- **Beginning:** Introduce themselves, their life in Australia, and the right(s) they feel most connected to.
- **Middle:** Describe their experiences, joys, and challenges growing up, linking these to the selected rights.
- **End:** Share their recommendations for improving life for children in Australia, and mention who they believe can help make these changes.

Activity 4: Sharing

Procedure

① Exploring Different Experiences and Recommendations:

- **Encourage** students to listen carefully to their classmates' stories and reflect on the diversity of experiences shared.
- **Link to Right 13:** Sharing Thoughts Freely – Discuss how children have the right to express what they learn, think, and feel through talking, writing, drawing, or other means, as long as it does not harm others. Highlight how this right allows them to advocate for themselves and others.
- **Discuss** common themes and challenges. What are the shared joys, difficulties, and hopes for the future?
- **Lead** a class discussion on how they, as young Australians, can contribute to making Australia an even better place to grow up, linking back to their letters and the recommendations made.

② Assessment Criteria:

- **Participation:** Observe students' engagement during discussions and their willingness to share ideas.
- **Understanding:** Gauge students' understanding through their responses to questions and quizzes on children's rights.
- **Written Letters:** Evaluate whether students have successfully identified personal experiences and made thoughtful recommendations for improving life for children in Australia.

③ Follow-up Activity:

- **Class Book or Display:** Compile all the students' letters into a class book or display them in a common area to share their ideas and recommendations with the school community.
- **Authentic Audience:** Encourage students to share their letters and what they've learned with organisations or individuals who can support children's rights in Australia.



More Teacher Resources and Lesson plans are available on UNICEF Australia's website unicef.org.au/teacher-resources

Share with us!

We would love to see your student's work from these activities as hearing and seeing young people's views is very powerful in the work we do when urging decision makers to create change. Simply scan or take pictures of your student's work and email them, along with your name, class and school to submit@unicef.org.au Thank you!



Appendix: Alignment to Curriculum

	NSW Curriculum	Australian Curriculum Version 9
Target Audience:	Stage 3	Years 5 and 6
Syllabus Area:	English	English
Sub-topic:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral language and communication • Creating written texts • Handwriting and digital transcription 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interacting with others • Analysing, interpreting and evaluating • Creating texts
Syllabus Outcomes / Content Descriptors:	<p>A student</p> <p>EN3-OLC-01 Communicates to wide audiences with social and cultural awareness, by interacting and presenting, and by analysing and evaluating for understanding.</p> <p>EN3-CWT-01 Plans, creates and revises written texts for multiple purposes and audiences through selection of text features, sentence-level grammar, punctuation and word-level language.</p> <p>EN3-HANDW-01 Sustains a legible, fluent and automatic handwriting style.</p>	<p>Year 5 students</p> <p>AC9E5LY02 Use appropriate interaction skills including paraphrasing and questioning to clarify meaning, make connections to own experience, and present and justify an opinion or idea.</p> <p>AC9E5LY05 Use comprehension strategies such as visualising, predicting, connecting, summarising, monitoring and questioning to build literal and inferred meaning to evaluate information and ideas.</p> <p>AC9E5LY06 Plan, create, edit and publish written and multimodal texts whose purposes may be imaginative, informative and persuasive, developing ideas using visual features, text structure appropriate to the topic and purpose, text connectives, expanded noun groups, specialist and technical vocabulary, and punctuation including dialogue punctuation.</p> <p>Year 6 students</p> <p>AC9E6LY02 Use interaction skills and awareness of formality when paraphrasing, questioning, clarifying and interrogating ideas, developing and supporting arguments, and sharing and evaluating information, experiences and opinions.</p>

**Syllabus
Outcomes
/ Content
Descriptors:**

AC9E6LY05

Use comprehension strategies such as visualising, predicting, connecting, summarising, monitoring and questioning to build literal and inferred meaning, and to connect and compare content from a variety of sources.

AC9E6LY06

Plan, create, edit and publish written and multimodal texts whose purposes may be imaginative, informative and persuasive, using paragraphs, a variety of complex sentences, expanded verb groups, tense, topic-specific and vivid vocabulary, punctuation, spelling and visual features.

**Links to General
Capabilities:**

Literacy

- Speaking and listening
- Interacting
- Reading and viewing
- Understanding texts
- Listening
- Writing
- Creating texts

Personal and Social capability

- Social management
- Communication

Critical and Creative Thinking

- Inquiring
- Identify, process and evaluate information
- Generating
- Create possibilities

**Learning
Intention:**

We are learning how to

- Share our personal experiences of growing up in Australia and connect them to our right to express our thoughts freely.
- Understand the importance of storytelling and how our stories can help others see what it's like to grow up in Australia.
- Make recommendations for improving life for children in Australia based on our experiences and the ideas we hear from our classmates.

Success Criteria:

- I can clearly describe my personal experiences and connect them to the right to share my thoughts freely.
- I can explain why storytelling is important and how my story helps others understand what it's like to grow up in Australia.
- I can suggest practical ideas for making Australia an even better place for children, based on my experiences and what I learned from my classmates.

Who's right?

Child rights quiz

- 1a.** The UN recognises any young person below the age of 18 as a child under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. T
 F
- 1b.** Once a young person passes the age of 18, they have new human rights that are just for adults. T
 F
- 2a.** The rights that each child has are determined by the government where they live. These rights can change as governments change. T
 F
- 2b.** Children's rights, as stated in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, are timeless and do not change. T
 F
- 3a.** The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child was written 35 years ago. Because it has not been changed it is becoming less relevant and important for children in modern times. T
 F
- 3b.** The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child was written 35 years ago. Although it has not changed since then, it is a living document which continues to adapt itself to the new realities that children face. T
 F
- 4a.** Children's rights in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child are linked with responsibilities and can be taken away if a responsibility has not been met. T
 F
- 4b.** Children's rights, like all human rights, are unconditional. T
 F
- 5a.** Children have a right to know information that is important for their health and well-being. T
 F
- 5b.** Children should be protected from information about their health and well-being because it might frighten them. T
 F
- 6a.** The government must listen to the voice of a child and take the opinion of a young person seriously even if they are not old enough to vote. T
 F
- 6b.** Governments must only consider the opinions of children if the opinion is shared and expressed by their parents who are old enough to vote. T
 F
- 7a.** All children in Australia are guaranteed the right to use the internet to access information because information is a right for children. T
 F
- 7b.** Having access to information is a right for children, and governments should encourage the media to provide information that children can understand. T
 F
- 8a.** Australia has signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and this makes the articles part of Australian law. T
 F
- 8b.** The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is not part of Australian law, which means legally it has no power. T
 F
- 9a.** All children have the rights to be loved, to be happy and to have friends. T
 F
- 9b.** The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is about the conditions, resources, protections and freedoms that a child needs to grow up feeling happy and loved. T
 F
- 10a.** Health, education and free speech are the most important rights, while the other rights in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child are not as important. T
 F
- 10b.** All of the rights in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child are connected, and no right is more important than another right. T
 F

Answer sheet and discussion notes

1a. TRUE 1b. FALSE

The Convention considers anyone below the age of 18 a child. Article 1 defines a child, and everyone under the age of 18 has all the rights listed in the Convention.

.....

2a. FALSE 2b. TRUE

The lives of children may look different in every country, but children's rights outlined in the Convention apply to all children no matter where they live. The only country that has not ratified the Convention is the USA, yet children's rights are still recognised in the law there.

.....

3a. FALSE 3b. TRUE

The Convention took years to develop before it was adopted by the UN in 1989. While what is written in the Convention hasn't changed, the Convention as a whole is a living document that adapts to the new realities that children face in modern times. There are regular reviews, called General Comments, that are used to share information and good practice about how governments should implement different rights, and three optional protocols have been added.

.....

4a. FALSE 4b. TRUE

Rights are not linked to responsibilities. Children's rights, like all human rights, are unconditional. This means there are no conditions attached to rights. Rights can never be a reward for the fulfilment of a responsibility and they can never be taken away because a responsibility hasn't been met.

.....

5a. TRUE 5b. FALSE

Article 17 says that children have the right to receive information that is important to their well-being. It also says that adults should help children find and understand the information that they need. Article 24 says that children have the right to access the information they need to stay well.

.....

6a. TRUE 6b. FALSE

The Convention protects a child's freedom of expression. According to Article 13, every child must be free to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them and to have their views considered and taken seriously, as long as they are within the law.

.....

7a. FALSE 7b. TRUE

Having access to information is a right, however having access to the internet to get this information is not a guaranteed right. Article 17 says that every child has the right to reliable information from a variety of sources, and governments should encourage the media to provide information that children can understand.

.....

8a. FALSE 8b. TRUE

Australia signed and ratified the Convention in 1990, but it is not part of Australian law and is not upheld in a court of law. Australia and other countries that have ratified the Convention are periodically reviewed by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child to ensure governments are upholding the rights of their children. Australia's next periodic review is currently scheduled for 2026.

.....

9a. FALSE 9b. TRUE

Being loved, being happy and having friends are all very important for children, but these are not rights that are listed in the Convention's 54 articles. Feelings cannot be a legal requirement, therefore the articles in the Convention help provide the conditions, resources, protections and freedoms that a child needs to grow up feeling happy and loved. Article 15, for example, ensures children the right to meet with their friends.

.....

10a. FALSE 10b. TRUE

Health, education and free speech are very important rights, however no right is more important than another. A key aspect of the Convention is that it must be considered as a whole and all rights are connected.

.....



The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Just like adults, children have rights too!
No matter who you are or where you live, these rights belong to every child in the world.

#1

Every child under the age of 18 has all of these rights

#2

You have the right to be treated fairly by everyone

#3

Adults should do what's best for you



#4

Governments should support these rights

#5

Your family will help you with your rights

#6

You have the right to live and grow



#7

You have the right to have a name, to belong to a country and know your family

#8

You have the right to have your own identity

#9

You have the right to live with your family unless it isn't safe

#10

You have the right to see your parents if they live in another country

#11

You have the right to be protected from kidnapping

#12-13

You have the right to share your ideas and be listened to on things that impact you

#14

You have the right to think for yourself



#15

You have the right to choose your friends

#16

You have the right to privacy

#17

You have the right to access safe and reliable information

#18

Your parents or guardians should always consider what is best for you

#19

You should be cared for and protected from harm

#20-21

You have the right to be cared for if you do not live with your parents

#22

You have the right to help and protection if you are a refugee

#23

You have the right to special help if you need it

#24

You have the right to care when you are sick and to live in a healthy environment

#25

If you can't live at home, where you live should be checked regularly to see if it's the best place to be

#26

Governments should provide support if you need it to keep you healthy and safe

#27

You have the right to food, clothes to wear and a safe place to live

#28

You have the right to go to school and to learn



#29

You have the right to learn to be the best you can

#30

You have the right to share your culture, language and religion

#31

You have the right to play and rest



#32

You have the right to not do unsafe work

#33

You have the right to be kept safe from dangerous things

#34

You have the right to never be hurt by others

#35

You can not be kidnapped or sold

#36

You have the right not to be exploited

#37

You have the right to be treated fairly, even if you break the law

#38

You have the right to be protected during war




#39

You have the right to special help if you are hurt by war

#40

If you break the law, you have the right to access legal help

#41

You should enjoy the protection of any Australian law that protects you better than these rights

#42

You have the right to know your rights



#43-54

Governments, the United Nations and organisations must work together to make sure your rights are protected