

## TEACHER'S GUIDE

Program created by Just Choices  
in conjunction with Lifetime  
Learning Systems®, Inc.

The goal of this lesson plan and accompanying video is to encourage students to explore new ideas and reevaluate old ones while developing a strong understanding and appreciation of historical and contemporary social justice movements.

Students will learn how their everyday choices affect others in society and will be inspired to take on issues with passionate civic engagement.

The accompanying video and worksheets can be requested and downloaded at **JustChoices.com**.

"Just Choices" is a provocative program that can inspire high school students to become agents—a visual masterpiece that brings movements in an upbeat, accessible learning tool for the entire spectrum.

"'Just Choices' is a provocative program that captivates and inspires high school students to become positive change agents—a visual masterpiece that presents facts and social movements in an upbeat, 'hip' style, creating an enjoyable learning tool for teens, and a great resource for teachers across a spectrum of subjects! 'Just Choices' gets an A+ in my roll book!"  
—Jacqueline Domac, high school teacher, Los Angeles Unified School District Teacher of the Year (District D)

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## Dear Educators,

It is with great pleasure that we send you the enclosed educational program, Just Choices: Exploring Social Justice Today. As a high school teacher who is watching your students grow, learn, and change every day, you understand the importance of nurturing the development of today's teenagers. You want your students to become well-rounded citizens who feel empowered to help make the world a better place. This unique teaching tool, which includes a video, poster, and student activities, is designed to help you educate students about a crucial aspect of this nation's history—social justice movements. By examining a number of movements and causes, both past and present, students will gain a greater understanding of the role of the individual in creating social change. Ultimately, it is the goal of the program to aid you in helping students become productive, contributing members of their own communities.

The program is cross-curricular and designed to strengthen students' skills in language arts (specifically critical thinking), history, and civics. The starting point is the video, which depicts high school students researching a modern-day issue—the treatment of animals. As these students begin to understand what they can do to educate themselves and effect change, your students will come to see that they, too, can take an active role in civic affairs.

We hope that Just Choices will be useful for you and exciting and inspiring for your students.

**JUST CHOICES**  
exploring social justice today

### OBJECTIVES

- To educate students about past and present social justice movements
- To help students understand how their everyday choices affect others in society
- To raise students' awareness of, and encourage involvement in, community issues

### TARGET AUDIENCE

This program is designed for middle and high school students. It reinforces analytical thinking and reasoning, reading comprehension skills, and civic responsibility. It also meets the following U.S. National Standards for education:

#### LANGUAGE ARTS

- Students will ...
- Analyze techniques used to convey views or impressions
  - Use discussion with peers as a way of understanding information
  - Use a variety of criteria to evaluate the clarity and accuracy of information

#### CIVICS

- Students will ...
- Know and understand historical and contemporary examples of citizen movements seeking to expand liberty
  - Understand the decisions that lead citizens to become independent, active members of society

#### LIFE SKILLS: THINKING AND REASONING

- Students will ...
- Understand and apply the basic principles of presenting an argument
  - Understand and apply basic principles of logic and reasoning

### COMPONENTS

- Included with this educational program are the following components:
- This eight-page teachers' guide
  - Four dual-sided reproducible student-activity masters
  - One Just Choices video
  - One Just Choices wall poster
  - One teacher-response card

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Just Choices is designed to educate students about social justice movements and their effects on society. The goal of the program is to motivate students to become involved in a cause that they care about and to empower students to realize that they can make a positive difference in their communities if they choose to.

### JUST CHOICES: EXPLORING SOCIAL JUSTICE TODAY VIDEO

This video complements the Just Choices program as it teaches students about a modern-day social justice movement. The video documents the journeys of four high school students, Apryl, Angela, Richard, and Zach, as they investigate the roles and treatment of animals in society for a class project on social justice. As the students learn about the movement, its victories and struggles, and the role of animals in society, they realize that they can make a difference through the choices that they make.

### VIDEO EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

- Lead a group discussion with your class about the students in the video and the social justice topic that they researched. Prompt discussions with the following questions (remind students that there are no "right" or "wrong" answers to the questions below—they are discussion starters designed to encourage students to share opinions and listen respectfully to the views of their classmates):
- How did the video affect you? What did you learn from the video?
- If Apryl, Angela, Richard, and Zach presented their project in your class, what follow-up questions would you ask them? What else would you like to learn about their research topic?
- Do you think that the students were respectful of each others' opinions when deciding which social justice movement to work on? Why or why not? (Ask students to give specific examples.)
- Is tolerance important when discussing social issues? Why or why not?
- Which fact or issue mentioned in the video affected you the most? Why?
- What was your reaction to the factory-farm footage that depicted how animals are raised for food?
- The video touched on a variety of subjects relating to the treatment of animals. What information is needed to generate informed opinions on the following questions? How could you learn more about these issues?
  - Do you agree or disagree that animals have feelings?
  - What do you think is meant by "animal rights"? Should animals have rights?



- Do you agree or disagree that animals are killed humanely for their meat and fur?
- Do you think that it is necessary to use animals for research and experimentation?
- Do you think that animals should be used for entertainment purposes, such as in circuses?
- Do you think that people who have pets should be considered the animals' "owners"? If so, should owners have the right to treat pets in any manner they choose? Should pets be considered property?
- What are your thoughts on vegetarianism?
- Which of these topics would you choose to research and learn more about?
- Do you think that the treatment of animals is a viable and relevant social justice topic? Why or why not?
- What are your opinions about the four animal issues that were brought up in the video—animals used for food, clothing, entertainment, and experimentation? Do you think that treatment of animals in these situations should be improved?
- How do you think the students' topic compares to other social justice movements such as civil rights, women's rights, environmentalism, etc.?
- Ask students to analyze each character from the video—Apryl, Angela, Richard, and Zach—and the changes that they exhibited throughout the video. How did each character change? What influenced the changes that they made? Who made the biggest change? Who was most affected by the facts that they uncovered? Which character do students identify most with (if any)? Why?
- Direct students to research the environmental impact of the meat industry. Students can visit The Humane Society's Web site at [www.humaneteen.org/farms\\_as\\_factories](http://www.humaneteen.org/farms_as_factories) for more information. Have students answer the

following questions:

- How does the meat industry affect the environment?
- How much waste do industrial farms produce?
- How is the environmental impact regulated?
- How could the issues be addressed?
- Are there solutions to solving the waste problems?

#### JUST CHOICES WALL POSTER

The Just Choices wall poster encourages students to think about the ways in which their actions either perpetuate or help end discrimination. Hang the poster in a high-traffic area, such as the front of the classroom, the hallway, or the library.

Encourage students to visit the Web site on the poster, [www.JustChoices.com](http://www.JustChoices.com), to learn more about becoming an empathic and respectful student who can make a difference.

#### STUDENT ACTIVITIES

These four reproducible activities provide students with an overview of social justice movements, their effects on society, the changes that they have inspired, and their leaders, as well as why it is important to be a socially active and responsible citizen.

Before beginning the activities, ask students to name as many social justice movements as they can, and list them on the chalkboard. How many movements are still ongoing? Which issues directly affect your students? Are students currently involved in movements for change? How did they become involved? How does being involved make them feel? Do students feel that they can make a difference as part of a group effort for social change?

### Activity 1 The Road to Social Justice

**Objective:** To gauge students' knowledge of social justice movements

Social justice movements have made positive changes in society for women, people of color, the environment, and animals. Activity 1 is designed to assess students' knowledge of these movements and the effects that they have had on society. Use the quiz before beginning the lesson to gauge your students' knowledge of these issues, or instruct students to take the quiz at the end of the lesson to measure what they have learned.

After students have completed and corrected Activity 1, ask them what they learned from the quiz and whether they were surprised by any of the information. Use the information on the quiz to engage students in a discussion about social justice movements and their importance to society. Ask students to discuss what society would be like today if there had not been any social justice movements—what would that mean for women, animals, people of color, and the environment? Which current issues are students interested in learning more about? *Answers on pages 5-6.*

### Activity 2 Read Between the Lines: Facts vs. Opinions

**Objective:** To strengthen students' analytical and critical thinking skills while educating them on social justice issues in the media

Advocates may use persuasive writing to garner support for their cause, but journalists are supposed to be neutral when writing about news and social justice issues and should always use attributed sources and facts to explain their stories. However, they don't always do this. Activity 2 focuses on presenting two sides of a fictional story. Ask students to determine which article uses multiple sources and facts and which uses personal observations and opinions. Discuss with students why it may be difficult for reporters to remain impartial when writing a news story. *Answers on page 5.*

### Activity 3 Changing Minds, Changing Times

**Objective:** To educate students about the legal progress of social justice issues and the individuals who have had an impact on society through social causes

The rights of women and people of color have increased over the years because advocates have worked to pass laws recognizing their status in society. Activity 3 focuses on the legal progress that social justice movements have made throughout the years and the people who have led those movements.

Although changing local, state, and/or federal laws in order to help improve society may seem like a daunting challenge to students, it is important for them to realize that all it takes is just one person to make a difference. Activity 3 lists several advocates who each contributed their time and efforts to social justice movements. The activity directs students to research and write about a person from the list or a person of their choice, such as an activist in their area. After the activity is completed, ask students to present oral summaries of the advocates and then lead a class discussion about the ways in which one person can make a difference.

### Activity 4 What You Can Do

**Objective:** To motivate students to think about what they learned from the video and to empower them to make a difference for animals and society

Social advocates can be involved in their causes on every level—personally, locally, and nationally—from the eco-minded neighbor who recycles and rides a bicycle to work to the vegetarian who volunteers at a local animal shelter. Activity 4 asks students to think about being "everyday" advocates whose personal choices reflect their social beliefs and to contemplate broadening the scope of their activism.

In this activity, students are encouraged to think about what they learned from the video and are asked to write a personal commitment statement that reflects what they will do to become empathetic and concerned citizens for animals and society. Whether it's buying cruelty-free products or starting a peer counseling group at school, students can use the statement to better understand how they can make a difference if they choose to become involved.



## ANSWERS

### Activity 1 The Road to Social Justice

Answers

- b. When child-protection advocates in New York tried to have an abusive parent held responsible for her actions in 1873, laws to protect children from abuse were not yet in place. The ASPCA, which formed in 1866, stepped in and argued before a court that the child, who appeared unkempt and was barely clothed, was an animal who deserved at least the same rights as a dog on the street (the ASPCA had recently fought successfully to have animal-protection statutes passed in New York). The abusive parent was sentenced to one year in jail.
- c. Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring*, published in 1962, spurred the environmental-protection movement by educating the public about the dangers of pesticides and their detrimental effects on people, plants, animals, and water supplies.
- d. The Animal Welfare Act is the primary federal law protecting animals, yet it offers only limited protection. The Act excludes farmed animals, as well as birds, rats, and mice—the most commonly used animals in research—and does not prohibit any experiments, even if they are redundant or poorly designed. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is responsible for regulating and enforcing laws that pertain to slaughterhouses and the treatment of animals who are at or being transported to slaughterhouses.
- b. The 1896 Supreme Court decision in *Plessy vs. Ferguson* legalized school segregation with its "separate but equal" ruling. The law remained in place until the 1954 decision in *Brown vs. the Board of Education*, in which the Supreme Court overturned the "separate but equal" decision, ruling that it was unconstitutional. *Continued on next page.*

### Activity 1 cont'd

- c. Leonardo da Vinci, Mark Twain, Gandhi, and Albert Einstein all advocated for protection of animals. Gandhi said, "The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated."
- True. Speciesism is defined in the dictionary as "human intolerance or discrimination on the basis of species, especially as manifested by cruelty to or exploitation of animals."
- False. The women's rights movement continues today. Since the 1970s, women's rights advocates have worked to pass the Equal Rights Amendment, which focuses on equal pay for women and freedom from gender discrimination in the workplace.
- False. The Convention on the Rights of the Child is the most widely ratified treaty in the world, but it has not yet been signed by the United States or Somalia. Adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on November 20, 1989, the Convention promises children around the world the right to life, liberty, education, and health care. It provides protection to children in armed conflict, the justice system, protection from economic exploitation, and protection from torture and cruel, inhumane, or degrading treatment or punishment as well as many other fundamental protections.
- False. Although Sojourner Truth was primarily a women's rights advocate, Truth, Ida Wells Barnett, W.E.B. DuBois, and Medgar Evers are best known for working toward civil rights and equality for African-Americans.
- True. As a result of consumer-driven campaigns, there are now more than 500 "cruelty-free" companies that do not test their products on animals. The term "cruelty-free" refers to the production of products without the use of animal testing.



## ANSWERS

### Activity 2 Read Between the Lines: Facts vs. Opinions

Answers will vary.

- Article B
- Article A
- Article B contains statements from veterinarians, facts from a USDA report, and eyewitness accounts.
- No. Article A describes the circus as "spectacular" and the "best performance of all time," says that trainers "gently coaxed" elephants, and gives the opinion that animals looked "happy and healthy." The animal-protection paragraph is low in story. The animal-protection group is described as being "rowdy." It gives the opinion that local children would be unhappy if the circus stopped coming to town. There is a quote from ringleader Samantha Gibbons but no quote from the animal-protection group. The story does not express both sides of the issue. Article B uses attributed facts, but the focus of the story is on the animal-protection protest (lead paragraph).

## EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

- Direct students to read a newspaper, specifically the opinion/editorial pages, and identify social justice issues covered by the newspaper. Ask students to report on the stance that the paper took on the movement or cause and the facts that were used to support the article.
- People use different media to communicate messages to others. For hundreds of years, art, music, and literature have been used to educate society about social justice issues—Harriet Beecher Stowe brought the issue of slavery to light in her book *Uncle Tom's Cabin*; singers, such as Paul McCartney, voice their opinions through songs; and artist Sue Coe graphically illustrates the plight of animals in her paintings. Encourage students to voice their opinions about an issue that is relevant to them through a poem, drawing, or song. Ask students to share their work and explain its meaning and what influenced it.
- Divide students into groups of four, and direct them to choose a social justice topic to debate. Split the groups of four in half, and ask two students to discuss one side of the chosen issue and the other two to discuss the opposite point of view. After students have debated their issue for several minutes, stop them and ask them to switch sides in the debate and begin debating the opposite view. What did they learn by having to debate both sides of the issue? How did it affect their thoughts on the issues? Emphasize the importance of being respectful and tolerant when listening to others' opinions.
- Ask students to research the treatment of animals in our society (for clothing, food, entertainment, research, etc.). Ask, "Do animals deserve more protection than they currently receive? Should they be protected under the constitution?" Then instruct them to write a persuasive paragraph to support their answer.

