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Purpose:

This activity is designed to approach the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child from a unique perspective. Using Marjane Satrapi's graphic novel, *Persepolis*, students will be reminded that the rights of children extend beyond physical protection alone. As the Convention reminds us, children must also be afforded access to education, free speech, and freedom from discrimination. Students will have the opportunity to explore Satrapi's novel in order to consider how the UN Convention could have changed what it meant to be a child in Iran during the Islamic Revolution.

Questions for Discussion:

How do we define childhood?



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Create a word bank of adjectives to describe this scene. How does this fit with your understanding of childhood?

What does the term “human rights” call to mind?

What do we mean by “human rights”? How are these rights violated?

Can we create a word bank of adjectives that describe these examples?

So, then, what does the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child encompass?

View the photo essay on Rights of the Child at the following URL:

<http://www.unicef.org/photoessays/30048.html>

Why is it important to have a specific UN Convention designed to protect children?

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Divide the class into small groups. Offer each group 3 or 4 articles from the Convention. Each group should paraphrase the articles, and each group member should write a paragraph linking the articles to the images and word banks that were discussed earlier.

Day 2: *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi

Introduce Chapter 1- “The Veil”.

How would you describe Satrapi’s childhood?

What articles from the Convention may be applied here? (Abbreviations from UNICEF.org)

~~Article 2: Children must be treated “ ... without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of ... race, color, sex, language, religion ...”

~~Articles 12-14: “... the child who is capable of forming his or her own views [has] the right to express those views [and] the right to freedom of ... thought, conscience and religion.

~~Article 16: “No child shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy ... nor to unlawful attacks on his or her honor and reputation.”

~~Articles 28 & 29: State signatories must “recognize the right of the child to education ... [that develops] the child’s personality, talents and mental and physical abilities.”

~~Article 30: Children of “ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities ... shall not be denied the right to enjoy his or her own culture ... religion or ... language.”

Divide the class into groups of 3 or 4. Assign each group a few chapters from *Persepolis*, and ask the groups to relate the terms of the Convention to their chapters. Are the main points of each Convention article ignored or do they appear to be applied?

The next phase of this assignment could be:

- **A formal paper analyzing the Convention in relation to Satrapi’s novel and the Iranian Revolution**
- **A creative project that allows the students to rewrite part of the novel to “fit” the standards of the Convention**
- **Class presentations**

THE VEIL

THIS IS ME WHEN I WAS 10 YEARS OLD. THIS WAS IN 1980.



AND THIS IS A CLASS PHOTO. I'M SITTING ON THE FAR LEFT SO YOU DON'T SEE ME. FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: GOLNAZ, MAHSHID, NARINE, MINNA.



IN 1979 A REVOLUTION TOOK PLACE. IT WAS LATER CALLED "THE ISLAMIC REVOLUTION".



THEN CAME 1980: THE YEAR IT BECAME OBLIGATORY TO WEAR THE VEIL AT SCHOOL.



WE DIDN'T REALLY LIKE TO WEAR THE VEIL, ESPECIALLY SINCE WE DIDN'T UNDERSTAND WHY WE HAD TO.



