
MAN OF INSPIRATION

Human Rights through the Life and Work of Vaclav Havel

TEACHER'S MANUAL

LESSON 6: THE CITIZEN (1989 – 2011)

VACLAV HAVEL LIBRARY

ABOUT THE E-LEARNING COURSE

The objective of this e-learning course is to show young people, taking Vaclav Havel as an example, that it is meaningful to fight for human rights, an issue which is always topical in any historical period. A series of six lessons presents Vaclav Havel to young people born after 1989 as a man who, despite many obstacles, spent his entire life fighting for freedom and human rights, both during the totalitarian period in Czechoslovakia and as a democratic president and subsequently also a citizen. The last lesson also points out the topic of civil society and civic responsibility in connection with the building of a new democratic state after 1989. The lessons will also present the most important events in the Czechoslovak history of the latter half of the 20th century, which are clearer for younger students to imagine due to their link to the destiny of Vaclav Havel. The objective of the course is not only to reflect on the life of a specific historical figure, but also to raise awareness of the need to constantly fight for freedom and human rights whatever the era.

The course is divided up into six lessons which provide a chronological overview of the life of Vaclav Havel. The videos combine spoken word with archival materials. The lessons are shot with a dynamic YouTube-like editing style to attract the attention of the young generation. The presenters of the Czech lessons are a journalist and a dancer. Both presenters, with their image and personal commentaries, will make the topic appeal to students, will help them to understand the story of Vaclav Havel's life, including how it overlaps into the modern day. Thanks to photographs by well-known Czech photographers and attractive archival materials, this course will also appeal to students through its visuals and will get the atmosphere of the time across to them.

Each lesson is based on a video accompanied by other additional materials. Each lesson contains a:

- Video lesson
- Manual for teachers showing how to work with the lesson during the class
- Worksheet for students
- Sample test
- Photo gallery of selected pictures and documents

Teachers may use the whole course or a selection of lessons. Their guides are native speakers (from the UK and the USA) and although this version is primarily designed for foreign viewers, the English lessons can also be used as complementary materials in English classes.

VIDEO LESSON

One video lesson lasts 10–12 minutes.

RECOMMENDED AGE

15 – 20

EDUCATIONAL AREAS

The course can be used in teaching history and social sciences at secondary schools and first-year university classes.

TOPICS – LESSON 6

- Václav Havel 1989 – 2011
- History 1989–2011: the Velvet Revolution, the building up of a new state, visits by prominent foreign figures in the 1990s
- Other topics: civil society, citizens' responsibility, civil society institutions, non-profit organisations

OBJECTIVES

- Understand the concepts of civil society and citizens' responsibility
- Imagine the atmosphere of the years immediately following 1989 as reflected by the emerging civil society
- Understand that everyone is a citizen and should take a pro-active interest in the country in which they live
- Understand that everyone may take a pro-active role in the world around them and start with small things in their immediate vicinity

ANNOTATION TO LESSON 6

The objective of this lesson is to show the steps taken by Vaclav Havel in domestic politics after his election as President in 1989 and follow his efforts to build a civil society in the newly established democratic state.

Students should learn about the concept of civil society and what are the rights and duties of each citizen. They will also learn that Vaclav Havel saw that the guarantee of enduring democracy lay in a functional civil society in which people are interested in the world around them, try to improve it and are not indifferent to it. This does not mean solely an involvement in politics (and Vaclav Havel considered political parties also to form part of the civil society that elects its representatives) but also participating in various initiatives, non-profit organisations, charity institutions or simply involvement in the world around oneself.

During the lesson students should learn about several specific cases of supporting the development of a civil society, Vaclav Havel's efforts to open up Prague Castle to the public, the post-revolutionary atmosphere in which various prominent figures, such as Prince Charles and Martina Navratilova, tried to help Czechoslovakia, the establishment of the first non-profit organisations, such as the Olga Havel Committee of Good Will, as well as Havel's civic activities after his active political career ended.

PEDAGOGICAL USE OF LESSON 6

Each lesson contains a few moments where Vaclav Havel's story is put into the context of today's world the students live in. These are marked with the symbol "V", either containing a definition or showing the present importance of the topic.

In Lesson 6 this is the topic itself – the need to develop society from below, from citizens and their activities and interest in the world around them. Students' understanding of this is helped by the presenters and the examples shown in the lesson. This is not limited solely to Vaclav Havel's life – the students may, for instance, organise a film show at school or draw attention to bullying. To act in a civil manner means not being indifferent, being sensitive and interested in the society which surrounds one. It does not matter if one is a politician, an ordinary citizen or a student. This lesson should enable the students to see specific activities under the notion of the civil society and to personalise the term so that it is no longer merely a phrase but one whose substance is understood by young people.

Teachers can show the gradual emergence of a democratic society after the events of 1989. Students should thus be able to learn that this does not happen overnight and that it is a never-ending process. Subsequently the teachers and students may discuss the contemporary situation in the civil society, the existence of non-profit organisations, how the student feel, whether they are involved in some activities and why, or why they cannot be. They can take examples of the figures who are socially involved, be it people well known in the media or people around them, in their town or region. The worksheet is also focused on such activities.

VIEWING THE VIDEO LESSON

The lesson can be watched with students in class or, depending on the students' skills and technical resources, the video can be sent to be viewed for the first time as homework. This allows more time for discussion in class, returning to focus on just certain selected moments in the video lesson. Every video lesson is approximately 10 minutes long, allowing teachers enough time to discuss the topics or use the lesson as an introduction to a specific topic to be viewed from different perspectives during the class.

TIPS FOR EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES AFTER WATCHING THE VIDEO LESSON

The following tips for educational activities show different methods for working with students after watching the video and what topics to focus on.

- The activities in the worksheet directly relate to the video lesson being viewed. They are intended to repeat the key terms and enable students to understand the historical consequences in the framework of time, although some activities are also focused on the present world.
- Another option for working with the students after the video lesson is to read and interpret the samples from texts by Vaclav Havel pertaining to the period contained in the lesson. English version of the address for The Sonning Prize can be found [here](#).
- A short test is available for each lesson.

THE LIFE STORY OF VACLAV HAVEL

The worksheet contains six activities to summarise with students the content presented in Lesson 6. The worksheet includes questions to prompt discussion aimed at understanding the lesson. The subsequent activities are focused on creating a definition of the term 'civil society' and learning about the institutions that work in the civil society. The objective is for the students to understand that these institutions, whether they are non-profit organisations, charities, public benefit organisations or interest groups, are just as important for the functioning of society as political parties are. Citizens should take an interest in the world around them and join together to achieve changes. It could be small things such as a local nature protection initiative, an interest group that seeks to promote a cycling track in the town, a school film initiative, etc.

The following activity encourages students to identify an issue around them (school/town) and try to think how they could contribute to the solution. Again, these could be small specific examples (renovating school's sports ground, improving the range of culture available in their school/town, promoting sports, etc.).

The next activity should show the students that there are pro-active people around them who strive to solve problems or draw attention to them, and who could be seen as inspiration. They could be well-known figures and their charity projects, various benefit groups on social media or an example from the local area.

Another activity is a mini-survey to determine the school's current needs. As part of this activity, students will learn to conduct a survey, i.e. divide up the tasks so that a sufficient number of respondents is addressed, and then prepare the results in an understandable form that can be presented to others.

The next activity works with the timeline and should provide a summary of the key historical events from all 6 lessons. The activity is not about getting exact dates (the students can use the internet to find them in the second part) but about understanding the sequence of events and how they are related.

The last activity is focused on the interpretation of photographs accompanying this lesson, which are available [here](#).

There are six activities, to be selected at the discretion of the teacher. Time needed: 5–10 minutes per activity.

TEST

Short test enabling students to memorise the key moments of the lesson.

Time needed: 5 minutes.

ELECTRONIC ARCHIVES OF THE VACLAV HAVEL LIBRARY

Students and teachers may use the electronic archive to find more information. The Vaclav Havel Library collects, digitises and provides access to written materials, photographs, sound recordings, works and other materials pertaining to Vaclav Havel.

Access to the database of archival materials of KVH is free and available [after registration](#).