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Your World

bethechange

KEY TOPICS FOR **CULTURE**
AND **CITIZENSHIP** FROM **A** TO **Z**

CLIMATE ACTION
FOOTPRINT
ACTIVISM
DEMOCRACY
LAW & JUSTICE
INNOVATION
TECHNOLOGY & AI
OCEANS & WATER
NATURE
MIGRATION
EDUCATION
SOCIAL MEDIA
WELL-BEING
JOBS
YOUTH

* Agenda 2030
* Life skills for the future
* Digital competence
* INVALSI practice

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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LANG LINGUE E FUTURO

A Activism

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

EXPLORE THE TOPIC

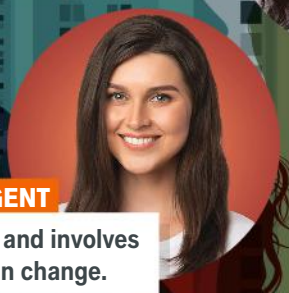
WARM UP

A better world needs activists

No one can do everything. But everyone can do something. As part of a growing movement of people across the world who want to end extreme poverty and promote actions to prevent climate change, all kinds of activists are needed. Here are the four main types of activists.

REBEL
believes in 'group actions' and 'mass attention'.

CITIZEN
has a vision of a better society and defends it against those in power.



SOCIAL CHANGE AGENT
educates, convinces and involves ordinary citizens in change.

REFORMER
uses laws and policies to promote reforms.

1 Look at the infographic and think about your own experience. Then answer the following questions.

1 What are the two main objectives of all activists?
2 What is the final goal of all activists?
3 What field of activism has seen the participation of young people all over the world in recent years?
4 What kind of 'activist' could you be?

2 **VOCABULARY** Match the English words with their definitions.

1 rebel	a rules that people in a particular country or area must obey
2 laws	b a large crowd
3 policies	c someone who opposes or fights against people in authority
4 mass	d courses of action that have been officially agreed and chosen

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YOUR MAPS VIDEO

002

WHAT IS ACTIVISM?

The word 'activism' as we understand it today is only about 100 years old and derives from the verb 'to act'. An activist is someone who is active in **campaigning for change**[1], normally on political or social issues. Activism refers to the methods used by activists in order to **bring about**[2] change. When we talk about human rights, activism means defending these rights wherever they are **threatened**[3] or violated. Human rights activism is thus about working to eliminate injustice, abusive treatment, violence or discrimination. Activists are ready to assist and demonstrate solidarity with the **struggles**[4] of other people, fighting to ensure that they are treated with respect and dignity. They help to make progress towards a more humane, egalitarian society, which respects everyone's rights. Effective activists possess persistence, creativity, **commitment**[5], and often courage, but above all a **belief**[6] in human beings and in human rights.

They believe that a world where every citizen's human rights are respected is a possibility, and they want to make it happen.

Glossary

1 **campaigning for change**: promuovere il cambiamento
2 **bring about**: realizzare
3 **threatened**: minacciati
4 **struggles**: lotte
5 **commitment**: impegno
6 **belief**: fiducia

3 **READING** **Read the text and say if the following statements are True (T) or False (F). Correct the false ones.**

1 The word 'activism' came into common use in the 21st century. T F
2 Activists want to make positive changes on economic and religious issues. T F
3 In the field of human rights, activism fights against injustice, abuse, violence and discrimination. T F
4 Activists believe in the possibility of a world in which human rights are respected. T F

4 **ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION** **Answer the following questions.**

1 The word 'rights' appears six times in the text above. Can you name some basic human rights?
2 What examples of the failure to respect human rights are given in the article?
3 What elements in the article suggest that activists are positive and optimistic people?
4 Do you share this optimism? Why (not)?

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17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

003

1 Do you want to be an activist? Just take action!

School students can become involved in forms of action and become 'activists'. All over the world millions of students have some form of 'Human Rights Education' as part of their syllabus. We can identify this in Italy in what is called 'Educazione Civica'. Taking action goes beyond schoolwork, however; it seeks to achieve a result that benefits not just the students but also the wider community.

We can think of a number of simple, practical examples:

- a visit to a local homeless shelter, or asylum centre, can help to break down barriers or prejudices and be a source of comfort to those being visited;
- a letter to the press from young people, **pointing out**[1] racist or intolerant attitudes, can alert the media to the views of young people, and may make journalists question their own ideas;
- a photo exhibition in the local community showing the impact of pollution on a neighbourhood can open others' eyes, and may help to start a movement to **tackle**[2] environmental problems.

Each of these actions has a purpose and an impact that goes beyond the group. What is more, practical actions can have a benefit for others – and yourself – and encourage us to believe that things can change if we **engage**[3] in changing them.

Glossary
1 **pointing out**: segnalando, facendo notare
2 **tackle**: affrontare
3 **engage**: ci impegniamo

1 **READING** **Read Text 1 and Text 2 and answer the following questions.**

Text 1

1 What two subjects can benefit from students' activism?
2 Which example offers a way to overcome prejudices?
3 According to the text, what issue could be addressed through a photo exhibition?
   a ☐ Local pollution.
   b ☐ Racism.
   c ☐ Human rights defence.

Text 2

1 What's the UN definition for 'youth'?
2 What percentage of the world's population are 'young'?
3 What is the significance of 12th August?

2 **ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION** **Answer the following questions.**

Text 1

1 Which two adjectives in the text describe the examples of activities? What do you think this suggests?
2 What positive message is found at the end of the text?
3 Can you think of one or more examples of initiatives you could take in your community?

Text 2

1 What qualities describe young people who wish to make change happen?
2 In which two issues can young people make important contributions according to the text?
3 In your opinion, why is young people's participation so important?

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004

2 Youth activism and the United Nations

The United Nations defines 'youth' as persons between the ages of 15 and 24. According to the World Youth Report (2018) there are 1.2 billion young people in the world, representing 16% of the global population. Young people have the creativity, potential and capacity to make change happen – for themselves, for their communities and for the rest of the world.

Through UNESCO, the United Nations encourages **youth-led**[1] initiatives. It has created Youth Spaces, which aim to encourage young people, support their action, promote partnerships and to ensure that young people's ambitions and ideas are recognised and visible. Great importance is given to young people's contribution to peacebuilding and the prevention of extremism. In 1999 the General Assembly of the United Nations chose 12th August as International Youth Day, recognising the need to see young activists as important partners in global efforts to promote peace and oppose extremism.

Glossary
1 **youth-led**: giovanili
2 **from all walks of life**: di ogni estrazione sociale

According to Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO, "Giving young people **from all walks of life**[2] the opportunity to truly be active participants in the social and political life of their societies [...] means ensuring that we are building a world that is truly for them."

3 **COMPARING PERSPECTIVES** **Google "Amy and Ella Meek" and read about the two girls on the Earth.Org website. Then go to your digital component and answer the questions.**

4 **LISTENING** 005 **Listen to the biography of Scarlett Westbrook, a young English activist, and complete the text with one word or a number for each gap.**

Scarlett first became interested in climate issues when she was nine years old.
This was in [1]..... , one year before the United Nations Climate Change conference in [2]..... . Adults didn't take her seriously, so she decided to do an Advanced-Level exam in [3]..... and Politics. Scarlett taught herself and passed the exam when she was 13.
She was the [4]..... person ever to take the exam.
She helped to organise school climate [5]..... and started writing for *The Independent* as a political commentator.
She has met about [6]..... Members of Parliament in the last three years and has contributed to seven party [7]..... . Thanks to her pressure, in November 2021 the UK Government announced that climate education will be introduced into [8]..... schools.
Scarlett thinks that if young people could [9]..... there would be a more representative government. She believes that her story shows that [10]..... does not equal experience.

5 **DEBATE** **Life Skills** **Debate the following 'motion' in two teams: Proposition team vs Opposition team.**

"We believe that young people do not have the knowledge and experience to contribute to the major issues that affect the world today. Their responsibility is to study and acquire the knowledge and competences that they will need as adults. They should leave decision-making to the experts."

Consider your own ideas and experience. You might use some of these expressions:

urgency • future belongs to young people • ideals • practical solutions • passion • enthusiasm • experience • clear thinking

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MEET A ROLE MODEL

006

Alicia Keys (1981-)

INTERNATIONAL SINGER – HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL AMBASSADOR OF CONSCIENCE

> "For reminding us never to underestimate how far passion and creativity can take us in fighting injustice."

Alicia Keys was born in New York in 1981.
After graduating from the Professional Performing Arts School at the age of 16, she started writing her own music. She published her first album, *Songs in A Minor*, in 2001: the album was a major hit and sold more than 6 million copies in the United States and more than 12 million copies abroad. The success of her first album transformed Alicia into a world star in the international music industry and one of the most influential black artists of all time.
She was among the world's 100 most influential people in 2005 and 2017.
In addition, Alicia is highly acclaimed for her humanitarian work. In the last few years, she has participated in various philanthropic events and has worked as an activist for the defence of human rights. She was awarded Ambassador of Conscience for her activism by Amnesty International. She has also co-founded and works as the Global Ambassador of Keep a Child Alive, a non-profit HIV/AIDS-fighting organisation.

007

World issue
TAKING PLANETARY ACTION

Glossary
1 **scourges**: flagelli
2 **face up to**: affrontano

In 2015 the United Nations produced a plan called 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
This fifteen-year programme consists of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
The SDGs are an urgent call for action and need the involvement of all countries. The agenda recognises that the elimination of the **scourges**[1] of poverty, hunger and conflict must be accompanied by strategies that improve health and education, that tackle discrimination and all forms of inequality, that encourage economic growth and **face up to**[2] the urgent issues of climate change. This courageous and ambitious initiative can only be achieved if all the nations in the world are willing to work and take action together in a global partnership.

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1 **READING** **Read all the texts and say if the following statements are True (T) or False (F).**

1 Alicia Keys developed her passion for music in 1981. T F
2 She chose to study Performing Arts. T F
3 Her first album was not welcomed with enthusiasm because it was considered too commercial. T F
4 She collaborates with many philanthropic institutions such as Amnesty International. T F
5 The 2030 Agenda requires the participation of all nations. T F
6 The main objective of the 2030 Agenda is to eliminate individual initiatives. T F

2 **YouTube** **Watch the video *Alicia Keys Awarded the Ambassador of Conscience Award From Amnesty International*. Then complete the following statements with the given words.**

engagement • inequalitiy • powerful • unfairness • desire • everyday

1 Alicia says that, as an activist, she recognises in the world ..... and ..... .
2 ..... people has a part to play in changing the world.
3 The artist says that now she feels a level of ..... and a strong ..... to speak up.
4 According to the artist, it's important for people to know how ..... they are.

3 **ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION** **Use the Internet to find the lyrics of the song *Underdog* by Alicia Keys. Then answer the questions.**

Alicia Keys dedicates this song to the 'underdog', (or 'loser'), someone who is at a disadvantage in a given situation. She mentions several types of 'underdogs', such as the homeless, women whose rights are repressed by authoritarian regimes, single mothers with financial problems.
She uses her music to give 'voice' to those who struggle in life.

1 What is the one thing that people should never give up chasing?
2 What is the key to making sure that we can fulfil our dreams?
3 What example of human rights violation does Alicia Keys mention in her song?

4 **WRITING** **Is music a powerful instrument to inspire people to become human rights activists? How? Write a short paragraph (max. 200 words) illustrating your point of view.**

5 **LITERARY LINK** **Use the Internet to read the poem *The Hill We Climb* by Amanda Gorman. What do you think about it? Discuss in class.**

Amanda Gorman (1998-) is a young American poet from Los Angeles, California.
She composed and recited *The Hill We Climb* at Joe Biden's inauguration in January 2021. The poem is a powerful call to action focusing on themes of **hope**, **unity**, **healing**, and **resilience**.

6 **#BETHECHANGE** **Life Skills**

Identify an artist who is using their art (music, painting, sculpture, digital art, etc.) to promote human rights. Identify their most meaningful piece of art and explain why it shows that art can be an instrument to inspire activism. Then organise a Gallery Walk in which you and your classmates share your findings.