

*Module 2: 1977*

*Activity 3: Charter 77*

**Compelling question:** How can citizens hold a government accountable for its international obligations?

**Overview:** Teachers might use and adapt this activity as a standalone exercise or in conjunction with other Module 2 activities. Also, we encourage you to explore Modules 1, 3, and 4 to design a comprehensive exploration of the 68, 77, 89 project.

As you design your students' learning experiences we suggest:

- Utilize the background resources for Module 2
- Previewing the selected primary and secondary resources
- Explore the instructional supports and selected vocabulary
- Adapt the lesson plans and performance assessments we provided for this activity

**Focus:** In this activity, students will explore the history, text and involvement of artists and creative sector in Charter 77.

## Primary and Secondary Resources for this Activity

### Oral History:

1. [Gabriel Levicky](#) - In this 1.5 minute clip titled “Charter 77” Gabriel discusses the repercussions of and his reasons for signing Charter 77.
2. [Vit Horejs](#) - In this 1.5 minute clip titled “Charter 77” Vit says his mother had problems with the authorities concerning Charter 77.

### Socialism Realised:

3. [Losers and Usurpers](#) - This article shows the propaganda techniques that were used to take aim at dissent. The official newspaper of the Communist Party uses stereotypes and envy to denounce opponents of the one-party state, who had written a petition called Charter 77.

### Core Resources:

4. [Normalization and Dissidents](#) - After the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the five Warsaw Pact countries in 1968, a regime known as the Normalisation regime was gradually created. The social liberalisation and political and cultural relaxation of the 1960s were slowly replaced with purges and protection.
5. [Text of Charter 77](#) - Charter 77 was a civic document demanding human rights protections in communist Czechoslovakia signed by 242 writers, artists, intellectuals, and activists in 1977.

## Support Resources

[Graphic Organizers](#): Create free, custom made graphic organizers including T-Charts, Venn Diagrams, Frayer Models and much more.

[Historical Thinking Prompts](#): The chart helps demonstrate historical thinking and has sentence frames to support the development of these skills.

[Document Analysis Organizers](#): Use these worksheets — for photos, written documents, artifacts, posters, maps, cartoons, videos, and sound recordings — to teach your students the process of document analysis.

[Harvard’s Project Zero Thinking Routines](#): A routine can be thought of as any procedure, process, or pattern of action that is used facilitate the accomplishment of specific goals or tasks. Explore this collection and use them with the activities.

[Socratic Seminar/Discussion Stems](#): A handout of prompts and scaffolds for students.

[Rubric Maker](#): Easy to use, quick and free rubric tool maker.

Key Vocabulary for this activity:

1. **Regime**: A government, especially an authoritarian one.
2. **Purge**: An abrupt or violent removal of a group of people from an organization or place.
3. **Dissidents**: A person who opposes official policy, especially that of an authoritarian state.
4. **Bourgeoisie**: The middle class in a society, typically with reference to its materialistic values and normal attitudes.
5. **Usurpers**: Someone who takes a position of power or importance illegally or by force.

### Suggested strategies and assessments for this activity

**Compelling question**: How can citizens hold a government accountable for its international obligations?

#### **Instructional Strategy A**: Town Hall Circle

This teaching strategy mimics the process of a town hall meeting, where community members take the floor to share their perspective on a topic of concern. Using this format, students have the opportunity to share their different perspectives by tapping into and out of the group conversation. Students often come away from this experience with a greater appreciation for how our perspective can limit the facts we have at our disposal and the opinions we hold. By listening to others' ideas,

students broaden their understanding of the world in which they live. ([Full details can be found here](#)).

**Class 1: Preparation** - Students engage with the 5 resources provided in this activity. Utilize the questions and commentary provided with the resources as well as the support items provided. As students engage with the resources, remind them that they should be looking for evidence to answer the compelling question.

**Class 2: Town Hall Square** - The teacher facilitates the activity described above. We suggest the teacher or students utilize a twitter # (that you design for the class) to tweet highlights of the discussion. This allows students to review the exchange in the future. ([How to use a twitter # hashtag](#))

Be sure to remind them that they should be looking for evidence to answer the compelling question.

---

### **Instructional Strategy B: Gallery Walk**

During a gallery walk, students explore multiple texts or images that are placed around the room. You can use this strategy when you want to have students examine multiple historical documents. ([Full details can be found here](#)).

**Class 1: Gallery Walk** - Arrange your class so that the documents are spread throughout the room in 5 stations. Have the video clips set-up on devices or provide the link for students to use their own. At each document have a large post it or index cards so that students write their main take away from the source concerning the compelling question.

Arrange the class into groups so that they are clustered around each resource evenly. After 10-12 minutes, have students rotate to the next resource and repeat until all resources have been engaged with. An option is to have you or another teacher/librarian be at a 6th station to provide background knowledge about the time period

**Class 2: Performance Assessment** - This class invites students to organize their information from gallery walk and present it in the assessment format you use (suggestions below). By giving them class time to work on the assessment, you can troubleshoot, check in with students, and they can collaborate.

**Suggested Performance Assessments:** Now that students have engaged with the documents and have shared their insights with their classmates, it is time for them to collect their thoughts and answer the compelling question. It is important to connect the historical content to the present. In this sense, the historical content informs students about the past and apply that knowledge to the present.

Your decision on what students should produce will relate to the skills you think they should develop to succeed in the future.

- 1) Create a presentation that compares Charter 77 with similar historical documents. The presentation should demonstrate their conclusion about the compelling question utilizing the sources in this activity and their understanding of the present.
- 2) Write an essay that answers the compelling question.

Create a charter similar to Charter 77 that addresses issues in their community, state, nation. Student work should address Charter 77 as an inspiring document.