

Maggie's Civics Corner



LESSON 21

Today's lesson is about rules and laws. I have been thinking about some of the new rules that I have had to follow in my house. For example, when the grandchildren come over, I cannot jump on them. I never realized how hard it is to write a rule that is clear, easy to understand, and does not conflict with other rules. Let's try our hands (or paws) at thinking about and writing rules.

Sticky Situation: Assignments have been distributed for a group project. There are four members in your team. You and the other two group members consistently meet each week after school to work on the project. However, the fourth

member of your group is unable to attend all of the meetings because his/her parents work and it is his/her responsibility to look after his/her younger sibling. The rule in the fourth member's house is that no one is allowed over when the parents are not home. The other members of your group want to go to the 4th members home. What would you do? Why?

Activity: Imagine that you have a new gym teacher in your school. It is her first day at school and she wants everyone in her gym classes to feel good about participating in all the activities. To try to make sure that her gym provides a safe and welcoming environment, the teacher posts the following rule: **No touching in gym class.** She feels this rule will eliminate all pushing and shoving during classes that involve lots of movement. As she meets the first group, the new gym teacher shares her rules and announces that the first set of classes will be about square dancing. Then she asks her students to form circles of eight and to grab a partner. Oops!!! Is the teacher's rule about touching a good one? Why or why not? Can you think of a better way to state the rule and accomplish what the teacher has in mind?

Follow-up Activity: Now that you have tried your hand at writing a rule, practice with the following activity.

The new Principal, Bonnie Beret, arrived at the Caps-Off-To-Reading Elementary School. Her first task was to bring the staff together to create the perfect set of school rules. Mrs. Beret pondered how the staff might promote the act of respect they all spoke about. Finally, it seemed that she had arrived at the answer. Mrs. Beret's plan was simple. As she explained to her staff, taking one's hat off is a sign of respect. Her suggestion, therefore, was to have as one of her five key school rules:

1.

No Hats in the Classroom

The rule seemed clear and easy to understand. It also seemed like a rule for which there would be no exceptions. Mrs. Beret felt that her new rule was a perfect one. Do you? Consider the possible exceptions below. Decide for yourself if Mrs. Beret's rule is a good rule.

1. Bobby's family is very religious. He always wears a hat to keep his head covered for religious reasons.
2. The gym teacher is teaching his classes how to play lacrosse. Each member of the class is given a helmet to wear for protection.
3. Jared and his friends think it is very cool to wear baseball caps backwards in class.
4. It is freezing outside and not too warm in the school building. Therefore, some students keep their hats on during class to try to stay warm.
5. The librarian's read-aloud for the week is a Dr. Seuss book. Since she has a Cat-in-the-Hat hat, she decides to wear it for the lesson.
6. Randi needed chemotherapy. Because of the treatments, he lost a lot of his hair and wants to wear a hat to cover his near-bald head.
7. Tanisha is having a really bad hair day and decides to wear a scarf on her head to cover up her unruly hair.

Civic Resources: Check out some additional activities in our Literature Based Mock Trial Handbook which can be found on our website at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0Bw8T5fEOI3YsSFpOazJwdDJaU2s/view>

