



Thinking About Rules and Laws Information Sheet

It is important for students to learn about rules and laws, about how challenging it is to write a rule or law, and about the differences between rules and laws. Below is a brief description of the similarities and differences between rules and laws. In addition, there are activities to follow that help our youngest citizens better understand these concepts and, therefore, better understand our judicial system. After discussing the difference between rules and laws, choose one of the activities that follow (No Hats in the Classroom, No Food in the Classroom, or No Animals in the Library) to help students better understand the challenges of writing a clear and easy to follow rule. This might also be a good time to review and reflect on your classroom or school rules.

RULES	LAWS
The rules in our homes, classrooms, and schools help to guide behavior.	The laws in our communities, states, and nation help to guide behavior.
Rules are everywhere.	Laws are everywhere.
Rules describe acceptable behavior.	Laws describe acceptable behavior.
Rules help us keep order in our homes, classrooms, and schools.	Laws help to keep order in our communities, states, and nation.
Rules keep us safe.	Laws keep us safe.
Rules define our responsibility in our homes, classrooms and schools.	Laws define our responsibility in our communities, states, and nation.
Rules are made by parents/guardians, teachers, principals, other adults in our lives, and students.	Laws for our local community are made by local elected officials and laws for our country are made by the Congress of the United States.
Rules are what we follow in our own homes, classrooms, and schools.	Laws are rules that everyone must follow.



Thinking About Rules and Laws Activity Sheet

Directions: Below is a list of statements that can be identified as either a rule or a law. Read each statement carefully and decide if you think it is a rule or a law. * Circle your answer. Be prepared to share and support your answers. When finished the examples below, try having students make up examples of their own. (*This activity can also be done out loud with the whole class.)

Statement	Rule or Law?	
1. Students must use a hall pass when leaving their classroom.	Rule	Law
2. Passengers in a car must wear seatbelts.	Rule	Law
3. Cars must come to a full stop at a STOP sign.	Rule	Law
4. Students may not bring cell phones to school.	Rule	Law
5. Students who ride the bus to school cannot talk in a loud voice on the bus.	Rule	Law
6. Students going on a Field Trip must have a signed permission slip in order to go.	Rule	Law
7. People who own dogs must clean up after their dog or receive a fine.	Rule	Law
8. Students cannot run in the hall in school.	Rule	Law
9. Students cannot wear hats in the classroom.	Rule	Law
10. A person must be 18 years old to vote in the presidential election.	Rule	Law

Add some questions of your own or invite the students to add a few...