

## Maggie's Civics Corner

### Lesson #4 – Rules vs. Laws II



#### Maggie says ...

*In these difficult times, as our nation and the world pull together, it is more important than ever to understand our role as a citizen.*

**Today's lesson continues the discussion about RULES vs. 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, and four members have been assigned to your team. You and two other 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 their parents work and it is their responsibility to look after their younger sibling after school. The rule in the fourth member's house is that no one is allowed to visit when the parents are not home. The other members of your group want to go to the 4th member's home. What would you do? Why?

**Activity:** Imagine that you have a new gym teacher in your school, and it is her first day. She wants everyone in her gym classes to feel good about participating in all the activities, so she tries to make sure that her gym provides a safe and welcoming environment for all. The teacher posts the following rule: **No touching in gym class**, believing it will help to eliminate the 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?

Turn the page to find a **Follow-up Activity & Civics Resources** on page two.

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**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. Therefore, she suggested including a rule about this as one of her five key school rules:

### **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. What do you think? Do you agree? Consider some of the possible exceptions we've noted below. Think about each one and decide for yourself if Mrs. Beret's rule is a good rule for this circumstance.

1. Bobby's family is very religious. He always wears a type of hat to keep his head covered for religious reasons.
2. The gym teacher is instructing his classes about 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 backward in class.
4. It is freezing outside and not warm in the school building either. As a result, 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 hat like the Cat-in-the-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.

**Civics Resources:** Check out The Rendell Center's [Literature Based Mock Trial Handbook](#) for additional activities on rules vs. laws.