

Maggie's Civics Corner

Lesson #5 - Writing Rules



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 is about WRITING RULES. The adults in my life have lots of rules to follow. But sometimes their rules don't work and they need to rethink and rewrite them. They have some rules about where I can sit when I am in the house. Now

that we are in the house more than usual, that is a rule that they are rethinking. I wish I could tell them that I should be able to sit anywhere I want! I think the couch would be a good location for a nap.

Sticky Situation: Sometimes rules at school change. Imagine that the elementary school principals in your community have decided to explore new rules for students in the lunchroom. For example, they are considering having only one meal option for lunch each day. The principals believe this would allow the lunch line to move faster and, therefore, allow them to add extra lunch periods to keep the number of students in the lunchroom down in any one period. What do you think of this idea? Do you think having only one meal option for school lunch is a good idea? Be prepared to explain your answer.

Other important changes will likely come about as the principals explore new rules for their schools. Is there a rule you think needs to be added/enforced at your school? What is it and why do you think such a rule is needed?

Activity: Rules need to be clear, concise, easy to understand, and not in conflict with other existing rules. Think about the principal's new rule in the scenario below. Do you think this is a good rule? Why or why not? Do you think there are too many exceptions to the rule and, therefore, the rule needs to be rewritten?

Your principal wants to only offer students healthy foods at school. To accomplish this, they have decided there should be no sweets or unhealthy treats available to students during the school day or for school-sponsored activities after-school. To accomplish this, the principal has drafted a rule that reads:

ONLY HEALTHY FOODS CAN BE SERVED IN SCHOOL OR AT SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Now, on the next page, read the following possible exceptions to the principal's new rule. Decide which statements you think should be exceptions to this new rule. Then decide if you think the principal's rule is a good rule or one that needs to be rewritten. Be prepared to explain your reason(s).

Continued

1. Your school is having a dance on a Friday night and plans to serve cookies and snacks throughout the event.
2. The tradition in your school has always been to allow students to bring in a cake or cookies for their birthdays.
3. To raise money for the school, parents have been holding bake sales once a month for many years.
4. The Student Council wants to buy a climbing wall for the gym. They have decided that a candy sale is a good way to raise money for this piece of equipment.
5. The grade 3 - 8 teachers are planning whole-day trips for their students. They think that having snacks like pretzels or cookies will make the bus ride up and back to their destinations more enjoyable.

If you thought the rule needed to be rewritten, write what you think the rule should state.

My new rule:
