

Maggie's Civics Corner

Lesson #1 – All About 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 RULES. As a dog, I have to follow a lot of rules: No jumping on people. No sitting on the furniture. No scaring my neighbors with loud barking.

Sticky Situation: Being an active citizen means you take a stand and take action to support that stand. For example, you might think there should be new foods for lunch in the school cafeteria and, therefore, you make a proposal to present to your principal. In what way(s) are you an active citizen?

Activity: Maggie shared that she has to be mindful of her barking. She knows she should not bark late at night and possibly wake her family and even her neighbors. With the current rules about staying in our own houses, we have some new rules we might want to put in place about making noise. What rules would you suggest if the adults in your house have to “work from home”? What rules do you have in your classroom?

Civics Resources: The ultimate rule or set of rules for our nation is the Constitution. Check out this [We The Civics Kids lesson](#), featuring Maggie's Mom, Judge Marjorie O. Rendell.

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Lesson #2 – More 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 continues the discussion about MORE RULES.

Rules are very important. Sometimes I am not that good and keeping them. I am not supposed to jump up on people, but I love visitors and sometimes I just get so excited when people come to the house that I jump on the visitor. I am also not supposed to beg at the dinner table. That is very hard for me because I love snacks.

Sticky Situation: There is a rule at Bell Avenue School, a K to 8 school, that students are not permitted to ride their bicycles to school. The rule has been in place for many years. Your community leaders are considering bike lanes so that the rules can be changed. You and your friends think that it is time for the rule to be changed, but you and your friends do not want to wait until the change occurs. You start to ride your bikes to school even though it is against the rules. What do you think would happen if everybody did that?

Activity: Have a conversation about the fact that rules are everywhere. There are rules in our homes, rules in school, rules on the street, rules in stores, there are rules everywhere. Have students give examples of rules in each of the places listed above. Then ask each student to do some research to learn who created each rule.

Civics Resources: Watch the [Schoolhouse Rock video I'm Just a Bill](#) to learn more about how a bill becomes a law.



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Lesson #3 – Rules vs. Laws



Maggie says ...

*During the difficult times of the COVID pandemic, several **rules** were put in place to keep people safe and healthy. One rule was that students could no longer attend school in their school buildings – learning had to take place at home. Also, during this time, **laws** were made in our country to keep people safe and healthy. **But what is the difference between a rule and a law?***

Today's lesson asks us to think about RULES vs. LAWS. Rules are very important, and laws are very important. But what makes them different? Who makes rules and who makes laws? I know that I am supposed to be on a leash when I go outside to play on the sidewalks. But is that a rule or a law? Let's find out the difference together.

Sticky Situation: At your school, your principal made a new rule that learning must happen at the home. Now that you are learning at home, your parent or guardian might have put rules in place to help you learn while at home. Rules are behaviors that must be followed in certain places, and they are made to help you can make the right choices for yourself and those around you. Rules are enforced by families, schools, and people in positions of authority. Rules have consequences if they are not followed.

DISCUSSION QUESTION

Name one rule in place at your home.

What is the consequence or what happens if you do not follow that rule?

Our Government is making laws to help people during this difficult time with COVID. One of the laws the government is working on seeks to help people who cannot work right now because businesses have closed. Laws are a system of rules created by governments; they are voted on and publicly enforced by police and courts.

DISCUSSION QUESTION

What is one law that helps you and your family to stay safe?

What is the consequence, or what happens, if someone breaks that law?

Continued

Activity: This two-part activity is designed to help you better understand the difference between rules and laws.

PART 1 Have a conversation about the difference between rules and laws.

Focus on who creates a rule versus who creates a law.

PART 2 Identify which statement below is a rule and which statement is a law.

Circle only one answer.

<i>Use your quiet inside voice</i>	RULE	LAW
<i>Wear your seatbelt in the car</i>	RULE	LAW
<i>Keep your dog on a leash</i>	RULE	LAW
<i>Wash your hands for 30 seconds</i>	RULE	LAW
<i>Do not steal from the store</i>	RULE	LAW
<i>Throw your trash away</i>	RULE	LAW

Civics Resources: Check out this video lesson from Learn Bright about [Laws & Rules for Kids: What is the Difference Between a Rule & Law?](#)

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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.

Continued

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](https://rendellcenter.org) for additional activities on rules vs. laws.

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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:

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Lesson #6 – The Constitution



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 the U.S. Constitution. Dogs are great at following rules. Our parents set rules, the dog park has rules, and even the games we play have rules. The Government has to follow rules too, which are set out in the U. S. Constitution. It

lays out how the Government is structured, what it is allowed to do, and the rights of American citizens. The Constitution is “the supreme law of the land,” which means all other laws that the federal and state governments make must follow the Constitution.

Preamble Practice: The Constitution begins with three famous words – “We the People.” These kick off the “Preamble” to the Constitution, which is a fancy name for the paragraph that introduces the Constitution and its main goals. Read the *Preamble* below to get an idea of the purpose of the Constitution. Can you memorize it?!

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Activity: Constitutions should include the rules that are the most important to that country. For example, the United States Constitution establishes that we will have three branches of government, we will not have a King, and citizens have the right to vote.

Now make up your own country – mine is called Maggie Land! What would the constitution of your own country include? Do your citizens have the right to vote? Do you have a King or Queen who is in charge? What kind of Government do you have – elected? appointed? As you develop your Constitution be sure to support (include) the reason for your wording.

Civics Resources: To learn more about the Constitution, take a look at this [interview with my mom, Judge Marjorie O. Rendell](#)

Or check out this [Schoolhouse Rock cartoon about the Preamble](#)

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Lesson #7 – Bill of Rights



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 the BILL OF RIGHTS. In Maggie's Corner, we've learned about following Rules and how the Constitution is America's most important set of Rules. But the Constitution also includes something called "The Bill of Rights,"

which is a list of things we are allowed to do! A few years after the Constitution was ratified, the Government wanted to add even more rights for citizens. These are called the Amendments, and the Bill of Rights includes the first ten. For example, the First Amendment protects our right to speak – or in my case, to bark!

Amendments 1-10: Read each of the following Amendments. As you do, think about and make a note of why each is important.

1. Congress cannot make laws prohibiting free speech, religion, news reporting, assembling, or petitioning the Government.
2. Citizens have the right to own certain weapons.
3. Soldiers cannot live in a citizen's home unless the citizen gives permission.
4. The Government and police cannot search or seize property without a reason.
5. People cannot be convicted of the same crime twice; no person can be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law; and the Government cannot take property without compensating the owner.
6. People accused of crimes have the right to a speedy and public trial with a jury.
7. People in civil cases, for example when someone sues a business, have the right to a jury trial.
8. The Government cannot inflict cruel and unusual punishment on people.
9. People reserve rights even if they are not necessarily listed in the Constitution.
10. Powers not mentioned in the Constitution are reserved for the States.

Sticky Situation: The Constitution does not mention education, meaning there is currently no constitutional right to go to school at the federal level. Imagine your state decides to close all of its schools. You and your friends are upset because you love learning new things and playing with classmates! Propose an Amendment to the Constitution that makes education a right.

Civics Resources: Check out this 3-minute video, which provides a guide to the [Bill of Rights](#) using cartoons.

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Lesson #8 – Free Speech



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 FREEDOM OF SPEECH. I love to bark and share my voice. Did you know that the Constitution allows us to speak and express ourselves, even if we have different opinions than our neighbors? This is important because it lets us share our ideas and make changes in the community!

Sticky Situation: Imagine that your school wants to make the school week 6 days instead of 5 days. That means you get one less day of the weekend! You want to tell your teacher that you think the school week should be 5 days. Are you allowed to respectfully tell your teacher about your opinion?

Instead of telling the teacher, you decide to wear a shirt that says, "School should be 5 days." Is this still free speech, even though you did not speak it out loud?

Activity: The Supreme Court said students have the right to free speech while they are at school as long as it is not disruptive. The landmark court case is *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District*, where students were allowed to wear armbands protesting a war because it expressed their opinion and was not disruptive.

Activity: Think of something you believe. Maybe you believe that vanilla ice cream is better than chocolate ice cream, or that dogs are better than cats. (*We all know that last one is true!*) Practice free speech by explaining to a friend or family member why your opinion is right. Then let them explain to you why they think their own opinion is right. Even if you disagree with each other, you both practiced your right to share your ideas!

Civics Resources: Learn more about the First Amendment and the forms of expression it protects –

[The Annenberg Guide to the United States Constitution – The First Amendment](#)

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Lesson #9 – Protesting



Maggie says ...

One of the great things about living in America is that the Constitution gives you the right to protest. If you don't like something that the Government is doing, you can say that you don't like it and you can ask the Government to change it – that's called protesting.

Today's lesson is about PROTESTING. When we go to our local dog park, I still have to be on a leash even when we're inside the park because that's the rule that our community dog park. I don't like this rule very much – I think it's okay for dogs to be without a leash when they are inside the dog park. I want to tell my local government officials what I think, and I want to ask them to change the rules. I want to protest this rule! They might not end up changing the rule, but either way, I want to make my voice heard and talk to people about this issue. And, of course, I will be respectful of others in my words and actions.

Sticky Situation: Imagine that the School Board of your district has decided that your school day will start one hour earlier than it does right now. How do you feel about this change? If you don't like this change, what could you do to protest it and make your voice heard? Who might you talk for guidance and support? Your parents? A teacher? The principal? The superintendent? The School Board? In what ways could you protest? What things might you do? What do you think is the best way to get a message across to a lot of people? Finally, what would you do to help people with differing opinions to understand your position on this issue? How would you tell them that it makes you feel?

Activity: Watch a news program on television or go online and search for “protests” to learn about and gain a better understanding of demonstrations that have taken place throughout history in our country. Now select just one of those that you identified to research further and uncover – Who is protesting? Why are they protesting? Was society for or against the demonstrators? How did it show this? Did the protests result in any change? When you finish the exercise, share what you have learned with a friend or family member and ask them what they think about protesting, in general, and the demonstration you shared with them.

“We adopt the means of nonviolence because our end is a community at peace with itself. We will try to persuade with our words, but if our words fail, we will try to persuade with our acts.” – Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Civics Resources: To learn more about different types of protesting, visit:

[TeachRock – Protest as Event \(Lesson\)](#)

[CivicsRenewalNetwork.org – Competing Voices of the Civil Rights Movement](#)

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Lesson #10 – Tax & Spend



Maggie says ...

To accomplish great things, we must not only act, but also dream; not only plan, but also believe.

Today's lesson is about TAXES & SPENDING. I love bringing joy to the community. Every year my friends and I work on different initiatives to help puppies in the community who need help finding shelter, getting food, and staying in good health.

However, acquiring the necessary supplies for all of this is expensive. So, my dog friends and I decided we would each put a small amount of our money into a shared bag at the beginning of every year. You may have heard people wondering why they have to pay taxes as citizens. Some may have asked, "Where are my tax dollars going?" "How are my tax dollars being spent?"

Sticky Situation: Dogs, like people, experience difficult times in their lives. I love to see all dogs treated well, staying healthy and happy. To help dogs who are in trouble in my community, a few dogs who were chosen by our dog community to make decisions on behalf of the puppies in our community have decided to collect resources and money from all dogs so that the community as a whole can help the less fortunate. They tell us that if every dog pays a small percentage of their money, then the puppy community will have enough money to help all the sick dogs see the veterinarian (the dog doctor), help the lonely dogs find companionship, and help maintain nice playing grounds and facilities so ALL of the dogs in our community can have fun.

Do you think this ability to ask every dog in the community to pay some money to help the puppy community that is in need is a good thing or a bad thing? Be prepared to support your answer. And if you think this ability is good, how much money do you think should be collected?

Activity: Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution authorizes Congress to collect taxes to promote the *General Welfare of the United States*. The 16th Amendment to the Constitution gave Congress the power to lay and collect taxes on people's incomes. Do you think Congress' power to collect taxes from citizens helps to improve people's lives and well-being? If yes,

Do you think this power to collect taxes from people can help a country to improve the lives and well-being of the people who live there? If you were to make a list of things that you prefer that "tax money" be spent on, what would be the top 5 priorities on your list?

Civics Resources: This video may better help you to understand [the power to tax and spend](#).