

Play by the Rules

Chapter 1: Rule of Law

Objectives: The student will be able to

- Define and evaluate the “Rule of Law”;
- Explain the difference between criminal and civil law;
- Describe the various roles in the courtroom; and
- Describe constitutional due process rights for juveniles.

Alabama Course of Study, Seventh Grade Civics: Objectives 3, 4, 5, 9 and 12

Character Education: Citizenship, cooperation, diligence, patience, respect for others, self-control and sportsmanship

Materials: *Play by the Rules* book, **Worksheets 1-1 and 1-2 (Batter-Up Questions)**

Method(s): Cooperative activity, directed reading and brainstorming

Activities: Choose one of the following activities as an “ice breaker”:

Game Without Rules:

1. Place students in groups of four or five.
2. Any object can be used for the game (*e.g.*, pencil, ball, balled-up paper, etc.). Give an object to each group. Inform the students that they are going to play a game; however, do not tell them the purpose of the game or the rules of the game.
3. Tell the students to begin passing the object around their group.
4. After students begin to play, interrupt the game at intervals giving one of the following directions:
 - a. Pass to the person on your right.
 - b. Pass it to the person on your left with your right hand.
 - c. Pass the object with your eyes closed.
5. Continue this process until it is obvious that the students are frustrated by the constant changing of the rules of the game.
6. Stop the game. Ask the students how they like playing the game without knowing the rules or constantly adding new rules. Help the students understand that they had difficulties because of the after-the-fact, arbitrary way the rules were given as they played the game.
7. Tell students to remain in their groups for the next activity.

Deserted Island:

1. Read the following aloud and ask the students to follow your directions.

Close your eyes. Imagine that you are in a life raft in the middle of the ocean. Begin swaying from side to side as if the waves are moving you. You have all survived a ship wreck but are stranded in a life raft in the middle of nowhere. Smell the salt water and feel the sun burning your shoulders. **[Teacher should suddenly make a loud noise.]** The life raft has run ashore on an island.

Open your eyes. You are on a deserted island and have nothing but the clothes on your back and what the island has to offer. There are no governments or laws to control how you live.

2. Ask each group to take 10 minutes and determine how they will live together on the island, addressing the following questions:
 - a. What are the advantages of living on the deserted island?
 - b. What are the disadvantages?
 - c. What rights do you have on this island?
 - d. Who is going to be the leader and how will he or she be chosen?
 - e. Will there be rules or laws?
 - f. What three rules or laws would you first implement?
3. Ask one person from each group to present his or her group's plan for survival on the island, addressing each of the above questions.
4. Record students' answers on the board or an overhead and discuss similarities and differences from each group.

Directed Reading:

1. Read aloud the introductory paragraph on p. 1. After reading the paragraph, ask the students:
 - a. What is the "Rule of Law"? *Everyone, including government officials, must respect and obey the law.*
 - b. Why is it important for government officials to follow the same laws as average citizens? *Accept reasonable answers. We must know that our leaders are trustworthy and we hold them to a high standard.*
2. Ask the students to silently read pp. 1-4.
3. Look at the cartoon on p. 2.
 - a. What are the three branches of government? *Executive, legislative and judicial*

4. Look at the cartoons on p. 3.
 - a. Which cartoon demonstrates a civil law? *Top* A criminal law? *Bottom*
 - b. Give examples of a criminal law and a civil law.
Criminal law: Robbery, theft, assault, murder, etc. (pp. 15-22)
Civil law: Contracts, defamation, negligence, intentional tort, etc. (pp. 55-57)
 - c. How do you decide what is criminal and what is civil?
Criminal law relates to actions that affect society (e.g., robbery). Civil law relates to the way you interact with other individuals (e.g., contracts). (p. 3)
5. The Code of Alabama is a book of all of the laws of Alabama. What are the other levels of law that we must obey? *Federal and local law (p. 2)*
6. Read pp. 5-7 paying attention to the different courtroom roles or jobs.
 - a. Who can name a courtroom role and describe its duties? (Prompt until all roles are named and described.) *Roles: judge, jury, defendant, plaintiff, witness, attorney, prosecuting attorney, defense attorney, plaintiff's attorney, attorney general, etc. (pp. 5-6)*
7. Read pp. 7-8 about "Legal Rights."

In re Gault Case Study: Do Juveniles Have Rights?

1. Read aloud the *In re Gault* case (**Worksheet 1-1**) to the students.
2. As you read the case, ask students to raise their hands when they hear something they think is unfair.
3. Write the "unfair" actions on the board as you read through the case. Use the answer key to guide the students through the list.
4. Read the U.S. Supreme Court decision.
5. Discuss due process rights.

Evaluation: Observation, feedback/questioning, accuracy of activities and Scoreboard (for Scoreboard directions see "Assessment.")

Outside Resource Person (ORP): The following ORPs might be utilized: local judge, attorney, law enforcement officer or school resource officer (SRO).

Taking Home the Law: Students will take home **Worksheet 1-2** (Batter-Up Questions) and begin working on it with their parents or guardians. This worksheet will serve as a review for the Posttest. Tell the students to work on it as you study each chapter and have it completed by the end of the program.

Extra Innings: TG p. 132