



Rules, Rules, Rules

Game Activity and Classroom Constitution

Grades K-3

NGSSS Standards: Grade K: Standard 1 SS.K.C.1.1, SS.K.C.1.2; Grade 1: Standard 1 SS.1.C.1.1; Grade 2: Standard 1 SS.2.C.1.2, Standard 3 SS.2.C.3.2; Grade 3: Standard 1 SS.3.C.1.1, SS.3.C.1.3 Standard 3 SS.3.C.3.4

LESSON OVERVIEW:

This elementary lesson should be implemented at the beginning of the academic year to establish the importance of rules in a classroom environment as well as in our governmental system. A game format is utilized to allow students to learn about the importance of rules in an engaging way.

OBJECTIVES:

Students will be able to...

- Understand the need for rules, the rulemaking process, and the role of the student/citizen
- Understand the relationship between rules and laws and how citizens can establish laws in their communities, much like in a classroom to help them live together

MATERIALS:

- Candy or Erasers
- Paper
- Bulletin Board or White Board
- Journals

LESSON OUTLINE:

Part I: Developing the Activity/Getting Started

- Begin by telling students that you want them to play a new game to help them understand government and laws.
- Divide the class into three or four straight lines and give the first person in line a piece of candy, or another item.
- Then say, "Okay, everybody, let's play the candy game." Do not say anything else. The students will probably look confused and ask how to play the game. Continue this game using the directions outlined in the **Engaged Learning Activities** section. (ELA Activity I 1-8)
- Follow the directions outlined in the activities section to show students the need for rules.

Part II: Making Connections/Tests for Good Rules

- After playing the Candy Game with clear rules as outlined in the Engaged Learning Activities section, discuss that to play games together children need rules, and to work and live together, adults need to have rules/laws.
- Ask the students why people need rules in families, on playgrounds, on buses, in schools, neighborhoods, and communities. Have the students identify some rules they know.
- List the students' responses and review all to consolidate ideas. Be sure to keep this list posted.
- Ask students how they can tell if a rule is a good rule. List their responses and tie into the rules they developed for the Candy Game. Post responses and add others listed in "Tests for Good Rules" box, if not already included. An example of a "Test for Good Rules" box can be found under Engaged Learning Activities.
- Demonstrate how rules might not pass these tests. Give an example of a good rule and a bad rule. A bad rule example might be "Only boys can run in the hall by the rear exit if they are third in line and have lunch boxes." Why is this a bad rule?

Part III: Creating a Classroom Constitution/Rules to live by

- For a class that already has rules (written or unwritten), have the children begin by listing some of the rules. Then list any other rules the children believe the class needs. The group will then have two sets of rules "Rules We Have" and "Rules We May Need."
- For a class that has not established any rules, start them off by discussing and listing some potential rules on the board. The teacher should be actively involved in this lesson component.
- Talk over the rules together and write the rules on a chart for all to see. Guide students in testing their rules. See part two above.
- Let students know that laws are a lot like rules. Laws provide rules for life much like school rules provide structure for our classroom.
- Tell students that they will develop a classroom **constitution**. Ask students what they think a constitution is. A constitution is like a rulebook for government. It is a written plan to help establish and organize a government. In this exercise, you will draft a classroom constitution or a rulebook for the classroom. It will be different from the Constitution developed to establish our governments. That is because we are creating one for the classroom.
- For awareness purposes, you may post copies of the U.S. Constitution, and the Florida Constitution on a bulletin board. Title the bulletin board, "Rules we live by." Emphasize that the Florida Constitution is our state constitution and applies to Florida, while the U.S. Constitution applies to everyone in our country and sets up our federal government. Highlight the sections like the chapters of a book. Three branches of government are in both documents. The Articles in each document are like chapters in a book. Students will learn more about the Constitution as they advance through school.
- The students should now create sections in their Classroom Constitution to help them understand how their classroom will operate. The classroom constitution will apply to their class only. The teacher has the responsibility to veto any rule that he/she thinks is unsafe or disruptive to the school environment. Think about how your classroom is set up and how it operates. Create sections in your Classroom Constitution to help new students understand how your classroom works and the rules you live by. Sections may include a preamble, the role of the teacher, responsibilities of students, classroom rules, how rules can be added or changed, and more. Develop these sections into a classroom constitution.

- For a preamble, consider something like, “We the students in Mrs. Wesson’s first grade class...”. Then incorporate the sections and rules you have agreed upon. You can post and have everyone decide how to propose changes. Once it is finalized and everyone agrees, have students sign to demonstrate their commitment.

Part IV: The Relationship Between Rules and Laws

- Discuss with students that laws are a lot like rules and that citizens have a part in making laws just like they had a part in making the classroom rules. Laws will help us live together and help keep us safe. They can also help make sure we are treated fairly.
- Ask students if they know any laws. List some on the board such as seatbelts, stop signs, and speed limits.
- Discuss the following concepts and introduce the legislative branch
 - Because we have so many people in our communities, it is sometimes necessary to “elect” a few people to develop our community rules/laws for us. We vote for these people to help us make the rules/laws for our communities, state, and country.

Part V: Solving a Community Issue (The Citizen’s Role)

- Tell students that they will need to develop rules for a pretend park. What rules will be needed to keep the park safe, clean, and fun for the children in the community?
- Ask each child to draw the park and write/draw one rule for the park. Depending on the grade level, have students work together to discuss the rules they created. Discuss as a class.
- Conclude with praise about what good citizens the students have been and that all citizens have a responsibility to help develop and test rules. It is also the responsibility of citizens to follow the rules. Follow this with the Road Map to Government activity under Featured Lessons.

ENGAGED LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

Activities to be completed within each part.

Activity I: Candy Game Rules

1. Tell the first person in each line to pass the candy from the front to the back of the line. Tell the last person to bring the candy up to the first person in line.
2. After students begin to play, interrupt the game at intervals to give one of the following directions:
 - Oh, I forgot to tell you that you must pass the candy with your eyes closed.
 - Oh, you must pass the candy with your left hand.
 - Oh, everyone should be on his or her knees.
 - Oh, you are to come backwards to me when you bring the candy.
3. After each interruption, ask teams to begin again.
4. Stop to review problems with the students.
5. Note that they had difficulties because of the way that the rules were given. Lack of agreement about the rules and constant change of direction lead to confusion. Ask students, “What is the purpose of having a rule? Who must follow the rules? What happens if a rule is broken? What happens if a rule is not clear?”
6. Ask students, “How are rules made?” Write, “A rule should be clear and easy to follow,” on the board. Work with the group to develop a clear set of rules for the Candy Game. List the students’ suggestions, and then vote to select a few simple rules for the game.
7. Play the game again to demonstrate that clear rules and directions make for a good experience while playing together.
8. Let students know that rules for children are a lot like laws for adults.

Part II: Example of Tests for Good Rules Box

TESTS FOR GOOD RULES

- 1) The rule should be easy to follow.
- 2) The rule should be clear and easy to understand.
- 3) The rule should be fair.
- 4) The rule must be reasonable.
- 5) The rule must not go against another rule.
- 6) The rule should be necessary.
- 7) The rule should help create a better place to live and learn in school.

Part II: Follow Up Activity

Ask students if they have rules in their families. In their journals or as a homework assignment, ask students to write a sentence and/or draw a picture of one family rule. Have students talk with their parents about family rules. Develop a bulletin board with rules.

Part III: Follow Up Activity

Ask students to write or draw in their journals about what life would be like without rules and laws (chaos, confusion, etc...). Use the Road Map to Government activity in Featured Lessons to teach an introductory lesson on government.

Part IV: Extension Activity

Have students read the following scenario and/or read it to the class. Then put the students together in groups of three to finish the story. Depending on age and writing skills, this exercise may vary by grade level. Have students work together to continue writing the story or they can draw pages to represent what life might be like without rules. Finally, others may want to act out the dream. Be sure to share the work with all groups.

Callie did not like all the rules she had in her life. She had rules about making her bed in the morning and taking out the trash. She had rules about what time to go to bed and when to brush her teeth. Callie had rules at home, at school, and even with her friends on the playground. She had rules about what she could and could not eat and what she could and could not wear. She had rules about using a seatbelt when she was in a car and using a helmet when she was riding her bike. Callie had rules when she played soccer and rules when she went to a movie. Callie's life was filled with rules. Rules, rules, rules..... Callie wondered what life might be like without any rules. That night as she went to sleep, she smiled as she thought about how things would be different in her life without rules. As she dozed off, Callie entered a life without rules in her dream. When she woke up from her dream, Callie thought about her dream. What happened and how was life different?

Debrief and discuss what life would be like if there were no rules or laws for anyone to follow....

