



Introduction to the Philosophy of Rights:

# All About Rules!

Teaching Guide

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### **IMPORTANT NOTICE**

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# Presentation of the Activity

## All About Rules!

<p>Description</p>	<p>Rules are an important part of society. From a young age, children are exposed to a series of rules on a daily basis. However, children and adults alike often question where these rules come from and whether they are fair.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Who makes the rules?</li><li>• What is our role in determining the rules and laws that govern our daily activities?</li><li>• Are they fair?</li><li>• Are all rules part of the law?</li></ul> <p>This teaching guide raises children’s awareness of law through a philosophy for children approach. In the concluding activity (optional), children work together to determine classroom rules. If they have a say in making the rules, they’ll be more willing to follow them and understand that the rules are applied democratically.</p>
<p>Duration</p>	<p>Approximately five periods of 45 to 60 minutes each</p>
<p>Target audience</p>	<p>Elementary Cycle One students (elementary grades 1 and 2)</p>
<p>Pedagogical objectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Raise students’ awareness of the law in their lives.</li><li>• Help students understand where rules come from.</li><li>• Help students realize that restrictions and responsibilities are subject to rights and freedoms.</li><li>• Establish classroom rules in a democratic manner, which helps ensure students follow them.</li><li>• Learn to speak in front of a large group.</li></ul>
<p>Subjects and subject-specific competencies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• English Language Arts, Competency 4: To use language to communicate and learn</li><li>• Social Sciences, Competency: To construct his/her representation of space, time and society</li><li>• Ethics and Religious Culture, Competency 1: Reflects on ethical questions</li><li>• Ethics and Religious Culture, Competency 3: Engages in dialogue</li></ul>

## Preparation

- Read **Philosophy for Children: An Introductory Guide**. It provides an overview of the basic principles and guidelines of this educational practice.
- Set up a space where students can sit in a circle to discuss the topics.
- Print a copy of each worksheet illustrating the locations (street, classroom and home) for each student.
- If you will be conducting the optional activity in which students determine classroom rules together, prepare a large sheet of poster board on which to write down the rules.

## Materials

- Teaching Guide
- *Philosophy for Children: An Introductory Guide*
- Worksheets (3) with illustrations of locations to distribute to students
- Notes sheet for teachers
- Large sheet of poster board for writing down the rules determined as a group



# Progression of Activities

## Periods 1 and 2

### Discussion activity

During periods 1 and 2, students will discuss rules in their daily lives based on the principles of philosophy for children. They will reflect on the following questions:

- What is a rule?
- Do rules apply to everyone in the same way?
- Do adults have to follow rules too?
- Are some rules more important than others?
- What is a right? Is it the same thing as a rule?
- Does everyone have the same rights?

## Periods 3 and 4

Periods 3 and 4 will focus on the following question: Are rules the same all over? Students draw a rule they must follow in each of the following three locations: in class, at home and on the street. Next, lead a discussion about the rules they have drawn. These activities allow you to explore in greater detail the differences between the rules based on location. You can use the following questions to help lead the discussion:

- Who decides the rules for each of these locations?
- What will happen if a rule isn't followed in each of these locations?
  - Immediate consequences for someone who doesn't follow this rule
  - Consequences to a group or to society if nobody follows this rule
- Would you like to live in a world without rules? Why or why not?

## Period 5

In this activity, students **determine classroom rules together**.

Students can use their drawings from the previous period as a basis for discussing the relative importance of each rule with respect to how well the class functions. Finally, the rules the students have determined are officially posted in the classroom.

# Activity 1: What Are Rules?

Duration: Two periods of 45 to 60 minutes

Before you begin, we recommend taking a few moments to explain the activities you will be doing with the children. If they understand the objective of the discussions (for example, writing or reviewing classroom rules), this will provide motivation and hold their interest.

The aim of this first activity is to prepare for what comes next. It is important for students as a group to reach a common definition of what a rule is and how they impact our daily lives. To do this, you can use the following questions to guide the discussion:

## 1. What is a rule?

Most children will probably say that rules are a series of restrictions aimed specifically at them. Children also tend to name rules they must follow at home or at school. If students name specific rules, you can ask them the following question:

*“What makes you think this is a rule?”*

This will help children progressively identify the criteria that define a rule.

## 2. Do rules apply to everyone in the same way?

Students will probably answer “no.” In their daily lives they often see that many rules apply only to children, or that rules don’t apply to everyone in the same way.

- Ask students to provide examples of rules that don’t apply in the same way to everyone (if you haven’t already done so). Here are some examples: bedtime, homework, being accompanied by an adult, etc.
- Ask students to provide reasons why these rules don’t apply to everyone in the same way.

During this discussion you’ll probably hear the famous phrase “But it’s not fair!” Ask them why they feel the rule isn’t fair.

## 3. Do adults have to follow rules too?

Of course they do! However, children will tell you that these rules are very different. They might mention the police for the first time during the discussion. Next, talk about how the rules adults must follow are different, using examples if possible.

#### 4. Are some rules more important than others?

Students might name rules that apply to adults since this was the topic of the previous discussion: rules of the road, not being allowed to steal things or hit others, etc. Students will probably name rules ensuring their safety. Ask students to rank the rules they identify in order of importance, and most importantly, to explain why one rule is more important than another. Then, survey students to determine whether they agree with the proposed ranking of the rules and to see if they can create categories of rules.

#### 5. What is a right? What is the purpose of a right? Is it the same thing as a rule?

Don't expect students to provide the dictionary definition of a right. They'll probably give answers like *"I have the right to ..."* You can encourage a more in-depth discussion by asking students the following questions:

*"Does everyone have this right?"*

*"Why is this right important?"*

*"Does this right lead to new rules that others must follow?"*

# Activity 2: The Rules in My Life

Duration: Approximately two periods

## Period 1: Instructions and drawings

In the previous activity we saw that there are many rules in our lives, and they're important! During this activity, students will explore the importance of place and context in how rules are applied.

The teacher can model the activity by providing examples from their own life and drawing them on the board. To ensure that a student doesn't simply copy the teacher's ideas, the teacher can provide examples that apply to adults. Examples: I must erase the board and close the windows before I leave the classroom at the end of the day. Or, when I drive, I must let pedestrians cross the street.

### Activity:

- 1.**  
Distribute the three worksheets (home, classroom and street) to each student (see appendixes). Select the ones with or without space to write down a sentence, depending on the students' level.
- 2.**  
Ask students to draw a picture illustrating a rule they must follow in each of these places.  
Examples: Going to bed at a certain time, raising their hand before speaking in class, crossing the street at a green light.  
If your students can, ask them to write a short sentence describing the rule.

## Period 2: Discussion and exchanges

### Activity:

- 1.**  
Ask students to share with the rest of the class the rules they have identified. Ask them why they think the rules are different depending on the place and the context.  
  
If there are any immigrant students in your class, you can ask them if these rules are different in their country of origin. Asking this question makes it clear that these students and their experiences are valued and provides the entire class with a broader vision of the diversity of rules and laws.

\* Students must keep their drawings on their desks for the next activity.





# Activity 3: Why Do Rules Exist?

Duration: Approximately 30 to 45 minutes

This activity is usually carried out during the same period as Activity 2. Students must keep their drawings on their desks. The teacher leads a discussion based on the following questions:

## 1. Who makes the rules for each of these places?

- Ask students to write down or draw a picture of the person(s) responsible for making the rules for each place.
- Next, ask students to share what they drew or wrote down for each place with the rest of the class.

Children will probably draw different people, especially about the rules that apply on the street. They might draw police officers or the prime minister. Some children might have no idea what to draw because they have never considered this question.

Feel free to lead a discussion on this topic.

## 2. What would happen if a rule isn't followed in each of these places?

### a. Immediate consequences for the person who doesn't follow the rule

During the discussion, and especially for the home and classroom locations, students will likely name practical consequences they have experienced for themselves or have been threatened with for not obeying a rule.

For the street, children might name consequences to adults involving police officers (for example, receiving a ticket, being placed under arrest or being sent to prison).

At this point, children should begin to distinguish between rules put into place by the adults who care for them versus laws that apply to all members of society, no matter where they are.

To help students distinguish between the law and rules, provide the following examples and ask them to tell you whether it's a rule or a law. You can also divide the examples into two categories on the board as students give their answers:

- You must wear a seatbelt (Law).
- You're not allowed to cheat at board games (Rule).
- You're not allowed to hit people (Law).
- You're not allowed to cut in front of others in line (Rule).
- You must do your homework (Rule).
- You're not allowed to steal from other people (Law).

Next, ask students to place their drawings into one of these two categories. Going to bed at 8 p.m., doing your homework, crossing the street at the corner ... are these rules or laws?

**b. Consequences on how the group or society functions – What would happen if nobody followed this rule?**

This is the toughest and most important question in the activity. Students must realize that rules exist for reasons other than to punish children who don't obey. Rules are present in the lives of everyone - for adults as well as children. Without rules, living in a group would be very difficult, or perhaps even impossible!

For example, have students imagine a city where nobody obeys the traffic lights, or where it's ok to steal from other people. To simplify this discussion, you can also begin with examples children find easier to relate to. What would the library or the schoolyard be like without any rules? Students will realize that while the application of rules and laws can be unpleasant at times, they are essential for society to function.

**3. Would you like to live in a world without rules? Why or why not?**

Considering the previous discussions, students should now understand the connection between the rules in their lives, their safety, and the exercise of their rights.

For students who answer yes, don't hesitate to ask them why they feel this way, and lead a discussion on this topic.

*\*If you wish to carry out Activity 4 (determining classroom rules as a group), students will need their drawings of classroom rules.*

## Activity 4: Classroom Rules

Duration: Approximately one period, from 60 to 75 minutes

Depending on what time of year you carry out this activity, you can create rules starting from scratch or modify rules that have been in place since the beginning of the school year. You can also make rules for library visits or field trips if none exist.

1. Ask students to set aside their drawings of their home and the street and focus on their drawing of the classroom.
2. Ask students to **name the rules** they illustrated in their classroom. Write these down on the board.
3. Next, ask students to explain **why this rule is important** and why all students should follow it.
4. It can also be worthwhile to ask students **about the consequences if everybody followed this rule**. In this way, we can counter the false perception that “consequence” is a synonym for “punishment” in all situations.

Some rules will be mentioned more than once in this activity, such as raising your hand before you speak. Draw or write each rule on the board only once.

5. Ask students whether they think an important rule was forgotten.
6. Ask students whether there’s a rule on the board they don’t agree with.

After the discussion, tell students that the rules on the board (the ones that remained on the board following the discussion) are now the classroom rules that apply to all students.

Write them down on a large sheet of coloured poster board and hang it in the class. Students can personalize the poster board by drawing pictures to illustrate the rules.

### UPDATING THE RULES DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR

We recommend setting aside some time during the school year to discuss the rules with the students.

- Are the rules still relevant?
- Are students still following the rules?
- Are there other rules that nobody thought about then but that might apply now?