

Are You Old Enough?

Student Workbook

Answer
Key

Name: _____





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IMPORTANT NOTICE

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Activity Overview

This workbook presents the different responsibilities, freedoms and protections that you already have or will have at different ages. Exercises and scenarios invite you to reflect on what could happen to you, make hypotheses about what the law says, and then find out what the law actually provides.

Prior Knowledge

Do you know any of the responsibilities, freedoms and protections that apply to children? At what age do they begin to apply? Write down one or more examples.

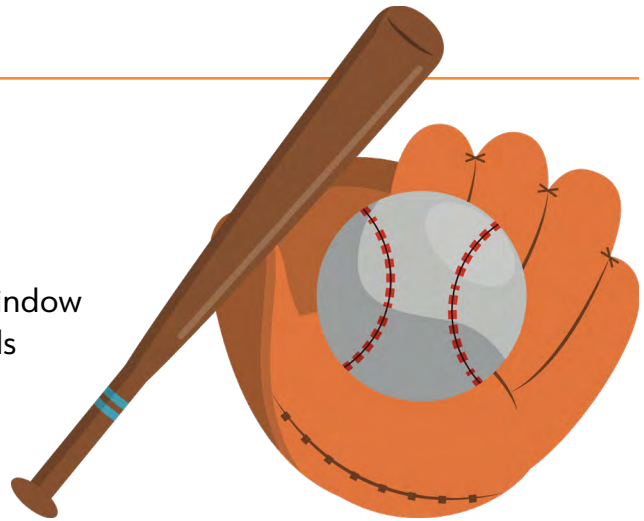
Responsibilities

Scenario 1: The Broken Window

Maxime, 10 years old, broke his neighbour's window while playing baseball. His neighbour demands that he be reimbursed for his new window.

Who will pay to replace the window?

Hypothesis:



What the law says:

- *Maxime could be held responsible for the damage and may have to pay for the cost of replacing the window. Civil liability applies from around age 7, when a child is able to understand the difference between right and wrong.*
- *The neighbour could also sue Maxime's parents to get reimbursed for the cost.*

For more information on this topic, see the Éducaloi article "[Legal Responsibility of Parents](#)."

Civil liability

Around age 7 , children can be held responsible for the damage they cause. Example: A 9-year-old could be sued if they break or damage property that doesn't belong to them.

Scenario 2: A Very Bad Day

Leah, 12 years old, is having a very bad day at school. She's really at the end of her rope. After school, Marie makes fun of her. Leah loses her temper and punches her in the face, breaking her nose. Marie's parents are furious.

What can Marie's parents do in this situation?



Hypothesis:

What the law says:

- *Marie's parents could file a police complaint for physical assault. Criminal responsibility applies starting at age 12.*
- *They could also take Leah and/or her parents to civil court (civil liability). For example, they could ask to be reimbursed for medical expenses they paid to treat Marie or ask compensation for the pain she experienced.*

Criminal responsibility

Starting at age 12, children can be charged with a crime. Examples include theft, physical assault or sexual assault, drug possession or drug dealing, etc.

Scenario 3: The Red Light

Rosa, 13 years old, is walking to school. She realizes she might be late. There are no cars coming so she decides to run across the street against a red light. She's stopped by the police.

What possible consequence(s) can Rosa face?

Hypothesis:



What the law says:

- *A person who crosses the street against a red light can be fined \$15 to \$30, even if there were no cars in sight. Children can receive a fine starting age 14. Since Rosa is 13, she will not be given a fine, but she could be given a police warning. The police could also inform her parents of the situation. For more information on this topic, see the Éducaloi article "[Teenagers: Tickets and Fines](#)."*

The fine

A fine is also called a “statement of offence” or a “ticket.” It states the amount of money to pay for breaking a rule. Children can receive a fine starting at 14 years old.



Fine : A document that the police give to a person who broke a regulation or a law.

Majority

When a person reaches the age of majority, they have all the responsibilities and freedoms of an adult. The age of majority is 18.



Majority : The legal age at which a person is considered an adult under the law

Summary

Complete the missing terms under the following images:



Around
age 7

civil

liability



At age 12

Criminal

responsibility



At age 14

Can receive
fin

es



At age 18

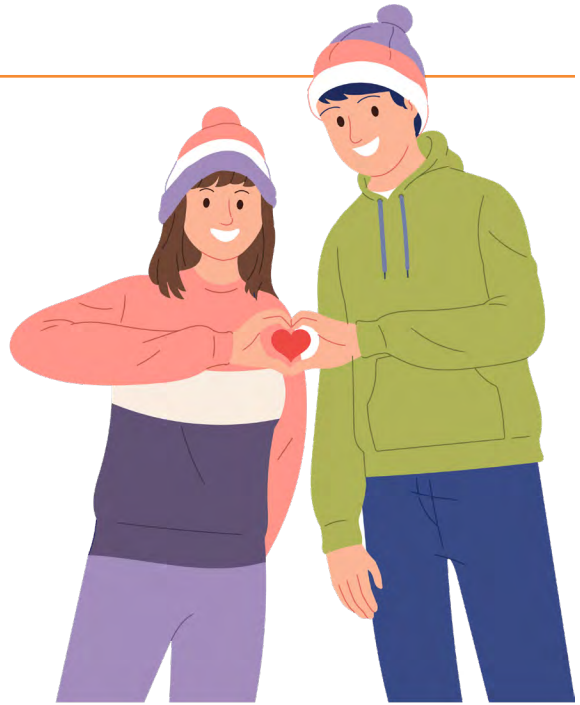
Age of

majority

Freedoms

Scenario 4: First Love

Mira is 12 years old. She is in love with her neighbour Romeo, who's 16. They've been dating for a few weeks. Recently, Romeo suggested that Mira sleep over at his place because his parents will be away for two weeks for work. When Mira's parents learn of the relationship, they strongly disapprove. They think Mira is too young to date a 16-year-old and sleep over at his place! Can Mira and Romeo do what they want anyway?



Hypothesis: _____

What the law says:

- *Consent is never valid for young people under 12.*
- *When the younger partner is 12 or 13 years old, the age difference must be less than 2 years for them to engage in sexual activities (kissing, caressing or sexual relations).*
- *When the younger partner is 14 or 15 years old, the age difference must be less than 5 years for them to engage in sexual activities.*
- *If the age difference under the law is not respected, the older person can be charged with a crime, even if there's consent.*
- *Consent is not valid if there's a relationship of power, for example, between a tutor or a coach and their student.*

For more information on this topic, see the Éducaloi article "[Sexual Consent of Teenagers](#)."

Consent

Consent is a very broad concept that applies to many situations. For example, a person can consent to health care or to engaging in sexual activities (kissing, caressing or sexual relations) with someone else.



Consent: Agreement given by a person to an action or a plan.

Teens can consent to sexual activities with other teens of approximately the same age as of age 12. As of age 16, sexual consent is possible, regardless of the age difference between the partners.

Scenario 5: A New Name

Seth Abdou is 14 years old and wants to change his name to Ronaldo Abdou. It's always been his dream to have the same first name as his favourite soccer player!

Does he have the right to do this?

Hypothesis: _____



What the law says:

- *A person can only request a name change for a serious reason. For example, someone can request a name change if their name is too difficult to write or if it's ridiculed.*

Seth will probably not be allowed to change his name because he doesn't have a serious reason to do so.

- *Even if he were an adult, the same principle would apply.*

For more information on this topic, see the Éducaloi article "[Le changement de nom.](#)"

Consent to care

As of 14 years of age, a minor can consent on their own to care that is essential to their health. Examples include receiving a blood transfusion or having a medical procedure like getting an abortion.

If the young person spends more than 12 hours in a health or social services facility, their parents will be informed.

If the care in question is not essential to their health and poses a serious risk to their health, or could have serious and permanent effects, the parents' consent is required. For example: cosmetic surgery.

Driving

As of the age of 16, a person can receive a licence and start driving. As a driver, they must follow the rules found in the Highway Safety Code, as must anyone on a bicycle or walking along a public road.

Summary

Complete the missing terms under the following images:



At age 12

Sexual consent
with other
teens



At age 14

Consent to
care



At age 16

Driving



At age 18

Age of
majority

Protections

There are several laws that protect children, such as the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* and the *Youth Protection Act*.

Convention on the Rights of the Child

This convention is an international document dating back to 1989. It sets out more than 50 rights that must be respected for all children around the world. More than 195 countries have signed the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, including Canada.

To learn more, see the article by UNICEF Canada, "[The Convention on the Rights of the Child in Child-Friendly Language](#)."

Youth Protection Act

This law protects minors (under 18 years of age). It allows the Director of Youth Protection (DYP) to intervene when a child's not safe or when their development is at risk.

Anyone can report a problematic situation involving a child to the Director of Youth Protection.



Scenario 6: An Agonizing Choice

Ines is 13 years old and her parents are separating. Her mother wants to move to Saint-Jérôme. She'd like Ines to stay with her every second week, but her father would prefer she spend as much time as possible with him in Longueuil, close to her best friends and cousins. Ines would prefer to stay in Longueuil.

Who will decide where Ines lives?
Where will she live?



Hypothesis: _____

What the law says:

- *If the parents can't come to an agreement, a judge will have to decide where Ines lives. The judge will make this decision based on Ines's best interest, taking her views into account.*
- *Under Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, children have the right to give their views on matters affecting them, such as how much time Ines wants to spend with her parents. In Quebec, for example, Ines could choose to speak directly with her parents, talk to the professionals involved in her parents' separation, or even speak directly with a judge.*

To learn more about the importance of the child's opinion during decisions regarding custody, see Éducaloi's article "[Choosing Which Parent to Live With.](#)"

Scenario 7: A Friend's Distress

You notice that your classmate, Mallory, is increasingly unhappy since her mother's new boyfriend moved in with them.

When Mallory spends the week at her mother's house, she never seems to want to go home. She's always been well-behaved but now she goes out of her way to get detentions after school so that her mother has to come pick her up! You've also noticed that her new stepfather always wants to be alone with Mallory. He's even told you to go home even though you shortly after her mother left the house while you were there to hang out with Mallory. You're worried about your friend.



What can you do?

Hypothesis: _____

What the law says:

- *You could tell your parents or an adult at school about the situation. The adult at school will have to report it to the DYP because they are required to take action.*
- *Under Article 19 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, children must be protected from violence and mistreatment.*
- *The DYP can intervene when a child is not safe or when their development is at risk. For example, the DYP can make an agreement with the parents or ask a judge to order certain people not to have contact with the child or require the parents or child to attend therapy.*

For more information on this topic, see the following Éducaloi articles: "[How to Report a Situation to the DYP \(Director of Youth Protection\)](#)" and "[The Role of the Director of Youth Protection \(DYP\)](#)."

Summary

Complete the following statements describing different protections set out for children.

- The **Convention on the Rights of the Child** was signed by many countries, including Canada. It sets out the principles upon which to act in the best interest of children.
- The **Youth Protection Act** protects minors (under 18 years of age). It allows the Director of Youth Protection (DYP) to intervene when a child is not safe or when their development is at risk.
- The **Education Act** states that all children in Quebec are required to go to school from age 6 to 16. All children must be treated fairly at school.
- The **Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms** protects all Quebecers, children and adults alike. Among other things, it guarantees the right to life and security, freedom of expression, and protection against discrimination.



Hypothesis Game

For each situation, make a hypothesis on the age at which the law or regulations start to apply. Then, write the correct answer provided by your teacher.

Situations	Hypothesis of age	Correct answer
1) I can get a criminal record. <i>For someone under 18, we generally talk about a "record" or "youth record." Minors don't usually get a criminal record unless they were punished as adults.</i>		18 years old
2) I can get married. <i>Explanation: You have to be at least 16 years old to get married. However, if someone is 16 or 17 at the time of marriage, the court must authorize the marriage.</i>		16 years old
3) I could be fined if I don't wear my seatbelt. <i>Explanation: Children can receive fines as of 14. The driver must also ensure that passengers under 16 are wearing their seatbelts. Otherwise, they could also be fined.</i>		14 years old

Situations	Hypothesis of age	Correct answer
4) I can consent on my own to getting a tattoo. <i>Explanation: A tattoo can be considered as care that isn't essential to your health. If you're 14 to 17 years old, most judges believe you can make this decision on your own if you fully understand the consequences and if the procedure doesn't pose serious health risks. However, a tattoo parlour can refuse to tattoo you if you're under 18.</i>		14 years old
5) I can ride an e-bike. <i>Explanation: Riding an e-bike is currently reserved for people 18 years of age or over, except in certain exceptional circumstances.</i> _____ _____ _____		18 years old

Review Exercise: True or False?

For each statement, check whether it's true or false.

Statement	True	False
1) A parent can be held responsible for damage caused by their child. <i>Explanation: Parents are responsible for caring for, supervising and raising their child. Unless parents can prove that they were not at fault in carrying out these responsibilities, they can be held responsible for their child's actions.</i>	X	
2) A person can be held responsible for damage their dog causes to a neighbour's fence. <i>Explanation: Pet owners are responsible for their pet's actions. This is the case even if their pet was in someone else's care at the time of the incident or if the animal escaped.</i>	X	
3) The parent of a 12-year-old child who doesn't wear their seatbelt in the car can be fined. <i>Explanation: Children can be fined as of the age of 14. The driver must also ensure that passengers under 16 years of age are wearing their seatbelts. Otherwise, they could also be fined.</i>	X	



Statement	True	False
4) It's impossible to lose demerit points before getting a driver's licence, like if a person is stopped by the police for not wearing a seat belt while riding as a passenger in a car. <i>Explanation: It's possible to lose demerit points before getting a driver's licence. The points are entered in the person's driving record and could prevent them from getting a licence for a certain period of time.</i>		X
5) A cyclist who fails to respect a traffic light will lose points on their driver's licence. <i>Explanation: If the Highway Safety Code is violated, cyclists can be fined, but they don't lose demerit points. For example, there's a fine of \$80 to \$100 for failing to respect a traffic light.</i>		X
6) Someone riding an e-bike without a helmet can be fined. <i>Explanation: Wearing a helmet is mandatory when riding an e-bike. Someone riding without a helmet can be fined between \$60 and \$100.</i>	X	
7) A 16-year-old who engages in sexual activities with a 13-year-old can be charged with sexual assault. <i>Explanation: The sexual consent of a 12- or 13-year-old is only valid if the other person is less than 2 years older than them. Sexual activities without valid consent can be considered sexual assault.</i>	X	



Statement	True	False
8) A 12-year-old can engage in sexual activities with their 14-year-old mentor if they both agree. <i>Explanation: Before the age of 18, a teen cannot give valid consent when there is a power imbalance in the relationship. A mentor, teacher or sports coach may be in a position of authority or trust. Judges assess each situation individually to decide whether someone abused their position.</i>		X

Conclusion

- 1) Which responsibility or freedom are you most looking forward to having? Why? At what age will you get it?

- 2) Which protection do you consider the most important? Why?

- 3) Which scenario surprised you the most? Why?
