

Rule of Law Lesson Plan: Defining the Rule of Law

Description

The teacher and visiting lawyer will guide students in defining the rule of law as the basis of a free and open society.

Virginia Standard of Learning CE.2a

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the foundation of American constitutional government by

a) explaining the fundamental principles of...the rule of law...

Objectives

1. To discuss the concept of the rule of law as it relates to daily life and all citizens.
2. To demonstrate how the rule of law is the foundation of a free and open society where all people possess certain rights and responsibilities.

Suggested Grade Levels

Civics and Economics 7th and 8th grades

Materials Needed

- Video and projection equipment
- Post-It notes
- White board
- Rule of Law Posters
 - “No man is above the law and no man is below it.” (Theodore Roosevelt)
 - Rule of Law=Rights + Responsibilities
 - The Law Rules

Time

One class period

Procedures:

1. Hand students one Post-It note as they enter the room.
2. Direct them to write a brief definition or example of “The Rule of Law”
3. When they finish students should place the notes on the board surrounding the “The Rule of Law” title.
4. Watch the video.
5. Following the video, read the definitions/examples and discuss their relevance. Move the notes to “Example” and “Non-example.”
6. Discuss the video as related to the definitions/examples.

Video Points to Remember:

- We are a nation of laws...not a nation of people.
- Everyone is treated fairly and equally under the same set of laws.
- The laws allow people to enjoy a peaceful existence with others.
- Our laws are based on the Constitution and protected by the courts.
- No one is above the law...no one is below the law.
- The 'rule of law' is like the rules of the road...you must follow the laws to protect the safety of all.
- The 'rule of law' is an agreement that everyone will play by the rules.
- We are governed by rules that are in the best interest of our country...not in the best interest of us personally.
- In America, we follow the 'rule of law.' We do not serve men or women, we serve 'The Law.'

7. Give students the wrap-up handout. Have students fill in their own examples and thoughts related to the three signs from the video. Students can share their examples with the class as time permits.