

RULE OF LAW LESSON: USING THE MEDIA TO TEACH THE RULE OF LAW

Description:

Students will use a variety of media documents to discuss the rule of law and its relationship to good citizenship. The teacher and visiting lawyer will guide the discussion.

Virginia SOLs covered:

CE.1a, c, g – The student will (TSW) develop the social studies skills citizenship requires, including the ability to (a) examine and interpret primary and secondary source documents; ... (c) analyze political cartoons, pictures, and other graphic media; ... (g) select and defend positions in writing, discussion, and debate.

CE.2a – TSW will demonstrate knowledge of the foundations of American constitutional government by explaining the fundamental principles of the ... rule of law....

Objectives:

1. To use a variety of media – newspaper articles, songs, art, cartoons, *etc.* – as exemplars of the concept of the rule of law.
2. To use concrete models or examples to illustrate an abstract concept.
3. To develop a consensus definition of the rule of law.
5. To engage the visiting lawyer in a dialogue that focuses on the importance of the rule of law in their daily lives.

Suggested Grade Levels:

Civics and Economics, seventh and eighth grades

Materials Needed:

1. Student-supplied exemplars
2. VBA video and projector equipment
3. Rule of Law Posters

Time:

One class period

Procedure:

1. Ask students to find and bring to class on the day the lawyer visits a current newspaper article, magazine article, song, cartoon, or work of art that they feel illustrates the rule of law.
3. Invite students to explain their reasons for selecting their exemplar with the class and the visiting lawyer. Use these explanations as a springboard for discussing the rule of law and as preparation for viewing the video. Encourage students to share personal experiences or to use current events to support their explanations and further the discussion.

4. After the discussion, view the VBA video and discuss its content as it applies to the students' responses.

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."

5. Allow time for the lawyer to summarize the lessons learned from the class activity.

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