

Unit 2: Democracy and the Rule of Law



Lesson 2: Why do we need laws?

This lesson relates to democracy and the rule of law. It requires pupils to explore different laws and consider the punishments for breaking those laws.

Planning

<p>Prior Learning</p>	<p>Pupils should have gained prior knowledge and understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • democracy; • the two main types of democracy – direct and representative; • the key features of democracy; and • individual and social responsibility.
<p>Learning Outcomes</p>	<p>Pupils will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discuss the meaning of democracy; • explain with justification why laws are important in a democratic society; and • demonstrate understanding of different laws in Northern Ireland.
<p>Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities Focus</p>	<p>Pupils will have opportunities to develop the following:</p> <p>Working with Others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect the views and opinions of others and reach agreements using negotiation and compromise • Listen actively and share ideas and opinions <p>Thinking, Problem Solving and Decision Making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make and justify decisions • Offer solutions and weigh up options.
<p>Attitudes and Dispositions</p>	<p>Pupils will be encouraged to develop the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity/Moral Courage • Openness to new ideas.
<p>Resources</p>	<p>Animation: <i>Democracy and the Rule of Law</i></p> <p>Unit 2: Lesson 2 Resource A – Law cards Unit 2: Lesson 2 Resource B – Punishment cards</p>

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Active Citizenship



Suggested teaching and learning strategies

Launch

Lead a class discussion, using prompt questions and effective questioning techniques:

1. **What is democracy?**
2. **Why are laws important in a democracy?**
3. **Do people think some laws are not important? Why?**

You may now wish to show the animation *Democracy and the Rule of Law*.

Possible answers and discussion points:

1. *Democracy is a system where a country is governed by the whole population, typically through elected representatives.*
2. *To maintain law and order; to keep people safe; to stop people from committing crimes*
3. **No** – *all laws are equally important.*
Yes – *some people may feel that some laws are outdated in modern society.*

Activities

Activity 1: Are some laws more important than others?

- Ask your pupils to work in groups. Give out a set of ten law cards from **Resource A** to each group, using the blank boxes to add more laws if you wish.
- Challenge your pupils to agree a rank order for the laws from least to most important. You may wish to set a time limit for this, to help them focus on making a decision quickly.
- Ask each group to nominate one person to share their group's response.
- Encourage your pupils to discuss and justify their reasoning.

Activity 2: Does the punishment fit the crime?

- Give out sets of ten punishment cards from **Resource B**. If you have added any laws of your own in Activity 1, use the blank boxes to add the corresponding punishments.
- Ask your pupils to match the punishment cards to the law cards.

Activity 3: Class discussion

- Encourage the pupils to debate their ideas. You may wish to ask prompt questions:
 - Are the punishments for breaking the laws fair? Are any of them unfair? Why?
 - Are there any punishments you would change? Why?

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Possible answers and discussion points:

'Bigamy should not require a sentence of seven years, as it should be up to people to decide if they wish to marry more than one person.'

'I would increase the maximum prison sentence for drink driving, as this could stop people from doing it.'

Debrief

Discuss the following:

- 1. How did you find the card ranking activity?**
- 2. Was it easy to agree about ranking the laws? Why?**
- 3. How did you reach agreement?**
- 4. What were the least and most important laws? Why?**

The card ranking activity encourages debate, and pupils need to identify how best to get their points across. Encourage your pupils to provide reasons to back their personal views where possible.

Possible answers and discussion points:

- 1. It's not a straightforward task; there are many different sides to an argument, and there are no right or wrong answers.*
- 2. **Yes** – we shared lots of the same opinions.
No – some people shouted out or took over the task. (In this case you may wish to discuss how this is not effective debating, to help prepare for future debating tasks.)*
- 3. We voted in our group; everyone listened to each other's ideas.*
- 4. (Pupils' own answers)*

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Unit 2: Lesson 2 Resource A

Law cards



It is illegal to drink and drive in Northern Ireland.

It is illegal to commit murder in Northern Ireland.

It is illegal to commit piracy (illegal downloading music and movies) in Northern Ireland.

It is illegal to produce and supply drugs in Northern Ireland.

It is illegal to commit bigamy (marry more than one person at the same time) in Northern Ireland.

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Unit 2: Lesson 2 Resource A

Law cards



It is illegal for a person to encourage another into prostitution in Northern Ireland.

It is illegal to commit burglary in Northern Ireland.

It is illegal to litter in Northern Ireland.

It is illegal to commit fraud (deceiving someone to get his or her money) in Northern Ireland.

It is illegal to break the speed limit in Northern Ireland.

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Unit 2: Lesson 2 Resource A Law cards



A large rectangular area defined by a dashed yellow border, intended for students to write their law cards. The area is currently blank.

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Active Citizenship



Unit 2: Lesson 2 Resource B

Punishment cards



Maximum sentence is 7 years.

Encouraging someone into prostitution

Maximum sentence is 10 years.

Burglary

Maximum fine is £2,500 or 1 year in jail.

Speeding

Maximum sentence is 7 years.

Bigamy

Maximum sentence is 10 years.

Fraud



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Active Citizenship



Unit 2: Lesson 2 Resource B Punishment cards



Maximum sentence is life.

Selling drugs

Maximum sentence 6 months and an unlimited fine.

Drink driving

Maximum sentence is life.

Murder

Maximum sentence is 7 years.

Piracy

Maximum fine of £2,500.

Littering



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Unit 2: Lesson 2 Resource B Punishment cards

A large rectangular area defined by a dashed yellow border, intended for writing. A small yellow scissors icon is positioned at the top right corner of the dashed box, indicating where to cut out the cards.