

Lesson 1: Rules and Laws

Focus Questions:

What is a law and why do laws exist? Who makes our laws?

Activity # 1 No-Rules Pass the Ball

On the playground, have students play a game of No-Rules Pass the Ball.

Game 1

1. Divide the class into two equal teams.
2. Give each team a ball. (It doesn't matter how teams are arranged or who gets a ball.)
3. Tell the students to begin.
4. When they become frustrated, ask: "What's wrong?" When they mention that they do not know the rules or what to do with the ball, tell them to suggest rules.
5. Write the rules on the board, no matter how ridiculous. (Make sure the list is long.)

Game 2

1. Review the rules from Game 1
2. Give the ball to each team.
3. Tell the students to begin play.
4. As they become frustrated with too many rules, ask, "What's wrong?"
5. Discuss the problem of too many rules.

Game 3

1. List the following rules on the board:
 - Form a straight line.
 - Pass the ball from the front to the back of the line by handing it over the shoulder.
 - The first team to pass the ball to the back person is the winner.
2. Tell the students to play the game.
3. Before either team can finish, stop the game. Tell them there is another rule. (Make up a rule and add it to the list. Example: Jump up and down when passing the ball.)
4. Keep repeating #3 until students are frustrated.
5. Ask, "What's wrong?"
6. Discuss the problems caused by changing the rules after play has started.

Debrief

Discuss that rules must be clear, known by the players, and unchanged during a game in order to be fair. Discuss how rules make the activity enjoyable rather than confusing because participants know how to behave. Students should be ready to admit that rules are necessary for an orderly game and draw the conclusion that rules would have made the game better. You can ask students to suggest possible rules for making the game run more smoothly. The extension for this concept is that rules (laws) are also necessary for an orderly society.

Activity # 2 Who Makes the Rules?

Materials needed: A copy for each student of *Who Makes the Rules?* (Handout #1.1); large copy of the Handout #1.1 displayed with a document camera, an overhead transparency or on chart paper.

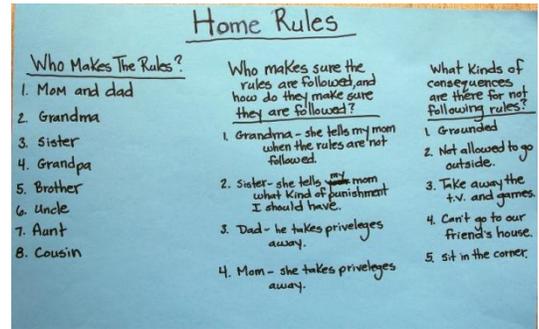
Lesson 1

Procedure:

Step 1: Explain to students that classrooms and schools have rules that we must follow in order to be happy and safe. At home, we also have rules to follow.

Provide each student with a copy of the chart *Who Makes the Rules* (Handout #1.1). Refer students to the column titled "Family." Ask the following questions and record responses on the chart.

- Who makes the rules in the home?
- Who enforces the rules?
- Who determines if the rules are fair? Who punishes wrongdoers? What kinds of consequences are there for not following the rules?



	Who makes the rules?	Who enforces the rules?	Who determines if the rules are fair? Who punishes the wrongdoers?
Family	Answers will vary	Answers will vary	Answers will vary
Classroom	Teachers (and students)	Teachers	Teachers (and students)
School	Teachers, students (sometimes), principal, school board, state government, and the Federal government.	Teachers, (student council) principal, school board	State court and federal court

Step 2: Continue by discussing rules in the classroom. Who makes these rules? Who enforces them? Who determines if the rules are fair? Who punishes the wrong-doers? What are the consequences for not following a rule? Record student's ideas on the chart, *Who Makes the Rules?*

Step 3: Discuss the rules at school. Who makes these rules? Who enforces them? Who determines if the rules are fair? Who punishes the wrong-doers? What are the consequences of not following a rule? Record student's ideas on the chart, *Who Makes the Rules?*



Activity # 3 Who Makes the Laws?

Materials needed: *Who Makes the Rules* chart (Handout #1.1) begun during Activity #2.

Procedure:

Step 1: Just like we have rules at home, in our classroom and in our school, our community has a set of rules or laws. For example, traffic laws help people travel safely on the streets. Without traffic laws, many people might be hurt in accidents.

The local government has a structure for deciding who makes the laws, who enforces the laws, and who determines whether the laws are fair. Define a *government* as the group of citizens that runs a community, a state, or a country.

Lesson 1

The branches of government are called:

- **Legislative Branch:** makes the laws
- **Executive Branch:** enforces the laws
- **Judicial Branch:** determines if the laws are fair and punishes the wrong-doers

The City, the county, the state (California), and our national or federal (the United States of America) government each have different branches of government where people make the laws, enforce the laws, and determine if the laws are fair.

Record the following information on Handout #1.1 under the topic **Who Makes the Laws?**

	Who Makes the Laws? Legislative Branch	Who Enforces the Laws? Executive Branch	Who Determines if the Laws are Fair? Judicial Branch
Local community	Members of the City Council . They are elected by the citizens. The City Council meets at City Hall.	The mayor is the leader of the city's government. The mayor is elected by the citizens of the community. The mayor works at City Hall. Some cities also have a City Manager.	Superior Court Judges decide whether a person has broken the law. They also decide the consequences for someone who has broken the law. Judges work at the courthouse.

Step 2: Our country, the United States of America, also has a government and a set of rules or laws. The Branches of the United States Government are the Legislative Branch which makes the laws; the Executive Branch which enforces the laws; and, the Judicial Branch determines if the laws are fair and punishes the wrong-doers.

	Who Makes the Laws? Legislative Branch	Who Enforces the Laws? Executive Branch	Who Determines if the Laws are Fair? Judicial Branch
United States of America	Legislature: Congress <u>Senate</u> (50 senators – 2 per state/ 6 year terms) <u>House of Representatives</u> (435 members – 53 from California/2 year terms)	President – elected every 4 years for a maximum of 2 terms	Supreme Court- appointed by the President for life; confirmed by the Senate

Explain that the three branches of the government are all equal, with no one branch being more important than the other. To make laws, all three branches have to agree. (In later grades, students will learn about our government's system of checks and balances).

Activity # 4 Reading about Our Government

Materials needed: For each student, a copy of Harcourt's *Reflections*. If not available, any state-adopted textbook may be used.

Textbook Connection: Read correlated sections in the social studies textbook related to the branches of government. For example, in Harcourt's *Reflections*, read Unit 4, Lesson 1 *Rules and Laws* pages 252 to 255 and Lesson 3 *The U.S. Constitution* pages 258-263. Consider writing a constitution for your classroom based on the U.S. Constitution.

Assessment:

- Complete the chart, *Who Makes the Rules? Who Makes the Laws?* (Handout #1.1)

Who Makes the Rules?

	Who Makes the Rules?	Who Enforces the Rules?	Who determines if the rules are fair? Who punishes the wrongdoers?
Family			
Classroom			
School			

Who Makes the Laws?

	Who Makes the Laws? Legislative Branch	Who Enforces the Laws? Executive Branch	Who Determines if the Laws are Fair? Who punishes the wrongdoers? Judicial Branch
Local community			
United States of America			