

UNIT 5
RULES AND LAW
Primary level

The basis of living together

5.1 Why do we need rules and laws?

What kinds of rules are necessary for learning, living and playing together in school?

5.2 What happens if ... ?

Not sticking to the rules has consequences

5.3 Our new school rules

Designing a joint agreement

5.4 A campaign for our new school rules

Evaluating the new rules and presenting them

Unit 5: Key concept – “Rules and law” (for primary level)
Background information for teachers: agreement on the basis of democratic principles – our new school rules

For the past several years, there has been discussion about the question of democratic principles. What is a democracy in today’s understanding? Are there good and bad democracies? Is it enough if a state has a democratic constitution? Many groups and parties call themselves democratic or include the word “democracy” in their names. What does this indicate? What does this mean to the members of these groups?

Basically, it is clear that democracy cannot be imposed. A democracy needs a legal framework, a constitution and various agreements in order to function. It will only be effective if the people feel the need to participate in their society. Participation can take different forms and be in various areas; it is also realised differently in different states. Basically, democracy means that people make the laws by which they themselves want to live. Ideally, as many people as possible participate in such processes. What do we want to regulate? Who has to stick to these rules? Why do we need this or that rule? How do we deal with violations of rules and laws?

In this unit, the students not only get to learn about an important principle of democracy, but they are also given practical experience of it. Experience shows that students become more aware and more responsible if they are integrated into the process of decision making. A group of people living and spending time together develop rules that govern their living together. Children and adolescents spend more time in school than anywhere else. In this unit it becomes clear that school is a place of learning in which many people with very different needs “live” and learn together, and that this living together has to be regulated in some way. Conflicts – which are completely natural – have to be solved, and the interests of different minorities have to be protected.

Democracy is often confused with the idea that everybody can do what he or she wants to. Individuals stand up for their needs because this is their idea of freedom. Such a concept does not fit with the principle of democracy. Democracy is based on the idea that rules and laws are made through participative processes, which are transparent for everyone. These rules and laws can also be changed. These principles are the subject of the following unit.

The aim of education for democratic citizenship is to support the development of competences in three areas. This unit has the following competence profile:

Competence in ...		
... political analysis and judgment	... the use of methods	... political decision making and action
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Toolbox support

In this unit the following tools from the students' toolbox will be used. The teacher must decide if some or all of the students need additional preparation in order to work with these tools.

- 0 Researching in libraries
- 0 Researching on the Internet
- 0 Carrying out interviews and surveys
- 0 Interpreting images
- x Mind maps
- 0 Creating posters
- 0 Holding exhibitions
- x Planning and giving presentations
- 0 Preparing overhead transparencies or a PowerPoint presentation
- 0 Writing newspaper articles
- x Putting on performances
- x Holding debates

UNIT 5: Rules and law

The basis of living together

Agreement on the basis of democratic principles – our new school rules

Lesson title	Learning objectives	Student tasks	Resources	Methods
Lesson 1: Why do we need rules and laws?	The students reflect on their personal attitudes and beliefs regarding existing rules. They discuss the importance of having rules for living and working together. They develop an understanding of the necessity for rules.	The students participate in a simulation game and experience the function of rules. They list and share ideas about the necessity for rules. The students match the school rules to their rights and responsibilities in school.	Softballs, flipchart, pencils, handout, list of school rules.	Group work, plenary discussion, pair work.
Lesson 2: What happens if ...?	The students discuss the consequences of lawbreaking. They reflect on the school rules in relation to the principles of fairness, equality, participation and respect.	The students practise role plays in which school rules are broken. They analyse the existing school rules and discuss and record the real and possible consequences of breaking them. They indicate what they would like to change in the school rules, why they would change them and how.	Stickers, pencils, flipchart, the list of school rules for each group, a version of the school rules written in large letters on the flipchart or blackboard.	Role plays in groups, plenary discussion, group work.
Lesson 3: Our new school rules	The students learn how to work on a common set of rules which is binding for everybody in the school. They discuss realistic ways of integrating it into the daily life of the school.	The students reach an agreement on the rules which have been accepted by the majority and discuss possibilities for integrating the opinion of the minority.	Flipchart, pencils, voting cards, the list of school rules on the flipchart or blackboard, slips of paper.	Group work, plenary discussion.
Lesson 4: A campaign for our new school rules	The students understand important criteria for good laws. They learn how to campaign for new school rules.	The students collect different criteria for good rules. They test their new school rules according to these various criteria. They write down the final agreement and sign it. They present their agreement to the other classes in the school.	Flipchart, handout, paper, pencils, copy of the agreement for other classes, the results of the brainstorming session from lesson 1.	Pair work, plenary discussion, presentations to other classes.

Lesson 1

Why do we need rules and laws?

What kinds of rules are necessary for learning, living and playing together in school?

Learning objectives	The students reflect on their personal attitudes and beliefs regarding existing rules. They discuss the importance of having rules for living and working together. They develop an understanding of the necessity for rules.
Student tasks	The students participate in a simulation game and experience the function of rules. They list and share ideas about the necessity for rules. The students match the school rules to their rights and responsibilities in school.
Resources	Soft balls, flipchart, pencils, list of school rules.
Methods	Group work, plenary discussion, pair work.

Lesson description

The class plays the game “guess my rules”. The teacher divides the class into two teams and explains to the students that they will play a game and must guess the rules.

Explanation:

- each team can score a goal by putting the ball through the space marked at their scoring end;
- only the teacher knows the rules;
- the teacher will not explain the rules and the students cannot ask what they are;
- when they break a rule, the students have to sit down;
- the aim of the game is for the students to score a goal without breaking the rules; the students’ task is to work out what the rules are so that they don’t break them.

The rules are:

- everyone can play the game;
- only boys can kick the balls;
- students whose given name starts with the letter “A” cannot run;
- no-one is allowed to move with the ball;
- violence is permitted.

For the first two minutes of the game, it is played using only the first two rules. Then the teacher includes the other rules and the whole game lasts for about five minutes.

Once the game has finished, the teacher gathers the students and discusses the following points with them:

- What did you think about the game? Was it good? Bad? Fair?
- How did you know that there were some rules?
- How did you feel about not knowing what the rules were?

The teacher engages the students in a brainstorming session and records their answers on the flipchart or blackboard. The key question is “Why do we need rules in school?” Depending on the answers

given by the students, the teacher might write something on the flipchart or blackboard. The major criteria in terms of “equality”, “participation”, “fairness” and “respect” should be on the blackboard at the end of the session. The teacher keeps the results of the brainstorming session, which will be used in lesson 4.

There can only be rules in school if students also have rights and responsibilities. The students are given the task of listing their rights and responsibilities in school and then matching them to the school rules. The students work in pairs and write down their rights, responsibilities and rules on the handout. They display their handouts on the flipchart or blackboard.

Once all the handouts have been displayed, all the students have a look at the display and can ask their classmates questions.

Lesson 2

What happens if ...?

Not sticking to the rules has consequences

Learning objectives	The students discuss the consequences of lawbreaking. They reflect on the school rules in relation to the principles of fairness, equality, participation and respect.
Student tasks	The students practise role plays in which school rules are broken. They analyse the existing school rules and discuss and record the real and possible consequences of breaking them. They indicate what they would like to change in the school rules, why they would change them and how.
Resources	Stickers, pencils, flipchart, the list of school rules for each group, a version of the school rules written in large letters on the flipchart or blackboard.
Methods	Role plays in groups, plenary discussion, group work.

Lesson description

The students form groups of four. They act out role play situations in which school rules are broken. The groups discuss the rules before they start to play. The role plays can be:

- playing football;
- bad behaviour in the classroom;
- playing computer games;
- bad behaviour in the school playground;
- talking during class;
- fighting with others;
- etc.

For each broken rule, the students record the consequences or – if there are none – the possible consequences. The groups then take their notes and return to the plenary session.

In a plenary session, the following questions are discussed:

- How do rules support our rights and responsibilities and help us to live together safely, justly and well?
- Why do we need rules?
- How do we all know what the rules are?
- Are the rules fair to everyone?
- Are there situations when the rules change?
- Who should make the rules and why?
- What happens if we do not follow the rules?

After the discussion, the students return into their groups of four. They discuss whether they want to change something in the existing school rules. They come to a conclusion as a group and indicate the change(s) they wish to make by sticking their suggestions onto the version of the school rules written on the flipchart or blackboard.

Lesson 3

Our new school rules

Designing a joint agreement

Learning objectives	The students learn how to work on a common set of rules which is binding for everybody in the school. They discuss realistic ways of integrating it into the daily life of the school.
Student tasks	The students reach an agreement on the rules which have been accepted by the majority and discuss possibilities for integrating the opinion of the minority.
Resources	Flipchart, pencils, voting cards, the list of school rules on the flipchart or blackboard, slips of paper.
Methods	Group work, plenary discussion.

Lesson description

The students sit in a circle in front of the flipchart or blackboard on which the school rules are written in large letters. The stickers showing what the different groups would like to change in the rules are still on the board. A discussion is started by the teacher.

- What do the students think about the suggested changes?
- Do they agree with the suggestions?
- How many agree? The majority?
- What happens to the minority? Can a compromise be found?

The students return into their groups of four. They work on one rule that will be changed and try to reformulate it. They write it on a slip of paper and stick it onto the flipchart or blackboard.

Once all new suggestions have been stuck on the flipchart or blackboard, it is time for the students to vote. All students should take out their voting cards. Each rule will be read out by the teacher. The students vote using their cards, indicating their acceptance, refusal or abstention.

Items that are not accepted by the majority should be re-discussed.

At the end of the process, the new school rules should be written out on a piece of paper.

Lesson 4

A campaign for our new school rules

Evaluating the new rules and presenting them

Learning objectives	The students understand important criteria for good laws. They learn how to campaign for new school rules.
Student tasks	The students collect different criteria for good rules. They test their new school rules according to these various criteria. They write down the final agreement and sign it. They present their agreement to the other classes in the school.
Resources	Flipchart, handout, paper, pencils, copy of the agreement for other classes, the results of the brainstorming session from lesson 1.
Methods	Pair work, plenary discussion, presentations to other classes.

Lesson description

The teacher presents the results of the brainstorming session from lesson 1 (criteria for rules). Students are given the task of testing their new school rules according to these criteria. They work in pairs and fill in the handout.

The students return into a plenary session and present the results of their analysis. Are there any major changes in the school rules? If so, these changes also have to be made in the agreement.

The new school rules are copied for presentation to other classes.

The teacher divides the students into groups of four. The groups should go to different classes and present the new school rules.

It is important to clarify the process beforehand. What will the students in the other classes have to do? Should they evaluate the new school rules? What happens next?

The groups practise their presentation of the new school rules, including giving reasons why the old rules were changed. Then they go to other classes and make their presentations.

After the presentations, a short debriefing takes place in a plenary session.