

## Lesson 1

### Responsibility

Students discuss the basics of responsibility

Learning objectives	The students think about responsibility as a term that is connected with people, objects or tasks.
Student tasks	The students collect and analyse newspapers and magazines that are read in their communities. They create a poster on which to record their results.
Resources	Handout.
Methods	Group work.

#### Information box

Responsibility as a concept has its roots in the political contexts of the 18th and 19th centuries, when the concern was with responsible action and the principles of representative government. In 20th-century philosophy, the emphasis was on the question of free will: was a person responsible for his or her actions or his or her character? The discussion concentrated more on the individual person.

As a result, today it is difficult to understand the concept of collective responsibility, which is an issue that has acquired a new urgency in contemporary politics. This is also because many everyday issues concerning responsibility – questions of mutual accountability, defining a person's sphere of responsibility, or judging a person to be sufficiently responsible for a particular role, for example – have to be taken into account.

## Lesson description

The students sit on their chairs in a circle. The teacher puts a flipchart or large piece of paper with the heading "Taking responsibility for ..." in the middle of the circle. Around it, the teacher places pictures taken from magazines showing for example:

- pet 1;
- pet 2;
- pet 3;
- groups of people;
- a single person;
- a single child;
- a lake/a river;
- food;
- furniture;
- a heart;
- rubbish.

Next, the teacher randomly places word cards on the floor. These have the names of the items shown in the pictures written on them.

Once the students have had time to look at the pictures, the teacher asks them to match them to the word cards. When they have completed this, the teacher asks the class to think about the following problem:

- What does it mean to take responsibility for something or someone?
- Think about a difficult experience. What was difficult about it? What did you like about it?

It is important that the teacher introduces the problem first and only then forms pairs of students to work together on it. Otherwise, the students' attention will be focused on the forming of pairs and not on solving the problem.

The students discuss the problem in their pairs for a few minutes and then present their opinions to the whole class. Not all students will have an opportunity to give their opinions, but it should be possible for most to do so as long as care is taken that it is not always the same students who come to the front of the class.

After a short discussion, the students are given the task to think about different professions and how taking responsibility for a particular job or position can be organised:

- taking responsibility for oneself;
- taking responsibility for others;
- taking responsibility for things.

The teacher gives one student the task of writing the list of professions or jobs on the flipchart or blackboard.

In the last quarter of an hour of the lesson, the students are given the task to produce a short text (in the same pairs) and to finish this text for homework.

Task:

“Choose a profession or job from the list. Perhaps you already know someone who does this job. If you wish, you can also choose a job or profession that is not on the list. Write a short text about this job and about the responsibilities of the person doing the job:

- Describe the work that has to be done by the holder of this job.
- For whom or what does he or she have to take responsibility?
- If the person does not take responsibility, what consequences does it have for the country, the family, the school or the community?
- What could be difficult for the person doing this job?

The texts should be written so that they can be hung up in the classroom. It might be helpful to attach a drawing or an illustration, a collage or a photo to each text, thereby creating a ‘poster’.