

Lesson 3
Me and my role
What should a country expect of its citizens?

Learning objective	The students learn about the duties of citizens in a democratic society.
Student tasks	The students consider the kinds of responsibilities that citizens have and how they can be encouraged to take their responsibilities more seriously.
Resources	Set of discussion cards (student handout 9.2), large piece of paper and marker pens for each group of 4-6 students.
Method	Presentations, small group work and whole class discussion.

Information box

Citizens in a democratic society should expect to be granted certain rights such as civil rights, political rights, social rights, cultural rights and environmental rights. What these rights should be is a matter of debate. So is the question of the responsibilities that go with these rights. Some people think that citizens should just have one responsibility – to obey the law. Others think that society requires citizens to have a much wider range of responsibilities.

The lesson

The teacher begins the lesson by dividing the students into groups of 4-6 and giving each group a set of discussion cards (student handout 9.2). Each of the cards contains a suggested citizen's duty.

The teacher asks the groups to sort out the cards into three categories – depending on whether they think the suggested duty on the card should apply to:

1. ALL citizens;
2. SOME citizens; or
3. NO citizens.

The teacher asks the students to present their decisions to the class as a whole and to explain the thinking behind them.

The students return to their groups and are given large pieces of paper and marker pens. The teacher tells the groups that their task is to draw up a “citizens’ charter”. They should divide up their large piece of paper into two columns. In the first column they should write what they think every citizen in their country should be able to expect from their country (under the heading “RIGHTS”), and in the second, what citizens should be expected to do in return for this (under the heading “RESPONSIBILITIES”).

When they have finished, the groups should present their ideas to the rest of the class, and give the other students an opportunity to question them about their work.

Finally, the teacher should ask the class as a whole:

- Do you think the citizens in your country always carry out their responsibilities as citizens as they should? Why or why not?
- What sorts of things do you think could be done to encourage people to take their responsibilities as citizens more seriously?
- Do you think that citizens should have some of their rights taken away if they do not carry out their responsibilities as citizens properly? Why or why not?

For homework, students should conduct a survey of family and friends, asking them what they think the responsibilities of a citizen should be. They should present their findings to their class at the beginning of the next lesson.