

Unit 9 (Primary school, Class 9)
Why must we obey rules?

A Lesson plan

	Key questions/lesson topics	Main activity	Resources
Preparation	The pupils collect information on a case in which a school rule has been broken and then enforced.	Individual work: collection of information.	Standardised fact sheet.
Lesson 1	A pupil in trouble (case study)	Group work: analysing a case.	Worksheet for a case study.
Lesson 2	Why does a school have rules?	Group work: reviewing the school rules through a children's rights lens. Homework: which rules govern our daily lives?	Flipchart and worksheet: "Why does a school have rules?", copies of the school rules, worksheet: "Which rules should we obey during the day?".
Lesson 3	Where do we need rules in life?	Group work: Who "invents" and who enforces informal rules?	
Lesson 4	Who should set up laws? (Rules for setting up laws)	Group work: Which rules ensure that laws are fair?	
Extension	Follow-up discussion with the school principal or pedagogical adviser.		

B Background and educational objectives

An important principle running through all our units on children's rights is "learning from experience - learning by example". This also applies to school rules and laws generally. School is life, and can be seen as a small image of society. School rules function in a similar way as laws do in the political community, which is to serve the community and to protect human rights.

Examined more closely, parallels - but also differences - between the rules at school and the laws of the political community become apparent:

Parallels:

- No community can survive without an agreement among its members to obey laws.
- Laws protect the weak. Laws are instruments to implement human and children's rights.
- Laws need to be enforced, but this should be the exception. They will only work if they are generally understood and accepted. Therefore laws need to be fair.

Differences between school and the political community:

- Making and enforcing laws is an exercise of power. Power must be subject to control. Laws therefore need to adhere to the principles of human rights, and the power to make laws and to enforce them needs to be divided and controlled in a democratic community. In the case of the political community, there are exact rules as to which body is entitled to make a law.

- Within the school community, the responsibility for defining school rules and enforcing them rests with the school principal and the staff. However (as with laws in the community), school rules should be open for discussion in the light of children's rights, and pupils need to understand and appreciate the need for school rules.

Pedagogical approach: The lessons follow a pattern of expanding concentric circles. Lesson 1 looks at a specific incident of a rule at school being enforced after it has been violated. Lesson 2 deals with the question of which purpose school rules serve, and offers the answer that school serves certain rights of the child, and school rules are important tools for a school to function well. Lesson 3 moves beyond the horizon of school experience and looks at rules in other spheres of life. Lesson 4 finally draws a line from rules to laws, and asks who should have the power to impose laws that we all are expected to obey.



C Key questions for reflection on Unit 9

Experiencing children's rights	Getting to know children's rights	Implementing children's rights
Teacher		
In what way have the principles of children's rights been observed in the classroom and school community?	What do the children know now about children's rights?	Learning how to take action outside school: What have the pupils learned for their future lives?
The pupils learn how to face the experience of an unequal distribution of power. They make use of their rights, but find out that there are limits to what they can achieve.	Children's rights are part of state law and as such binding for everyone. In spite of this, they have not been fully implemented anywhere in the world.	For the pupils, this experience is important, as it will help them as adult citizens in civil society to cope with difficulties in negotiations or political defeats.
Pupils		
How did I experience children's rights in class?	What have I learned about children's rights?	What kind of action am I able to take now?
I have learned to go through the difficult process of negotiating rights and duties. I have learned how to cope with frustration and defeat.	I know that rights and duties are both essential for living together. I also know that children's rights are a part of this framework.	I can discuss rights and duties, making use of my knowledge. I can negotiate and discuss with representatives of authorities, and I can both argue and listen to them.

D Procedure

Preparation for lesson 1

About a week before the first lesson, the teacher gives the pupils the following task: Collect information on a recent case in which school rules have been broken and a pupil has been reprimanded or punished (if possible, it should be based on a case from our school or community, but other examples are allowed). Make notes using this brief set of standardised questions:

Lesson 1: A pupil in trouble (case study)

Introduction (the pupils sit at tables arranged for group work): Some pupils report on their research on the case in question. The class should decide on a case, that they would like to study in more depth (if possible, a case from the immediate social environment, so that pupils understand the context already and do not have to learn about this).

Breaking school rules: key questions

1. What has happened?
2. Who is involved?
3. Which punishment - if any - has been given?

Discussion: Now the class should try to identify the problem underlying the case in question. This makes it necessary to recur to a school rule and interpret it. The teacher invites the pupils to come forward with their comments (possibly after having made notes first). Depending on the case, their views may diverge, or they may agree (for example, "It was quite right to do something", or, "I think this punishment is rather unfair/too tough"). Finally, the teacher asks a pupil to sum up the comments that have been made.

Summary by the teacher: If we scratch away at the surface of such a case, quite often, some pretty complex issues present themselves. These have to be examined in more detail in order to understand the case in all its aspects.

The teacher hands out the following worksheet, which is to be used as a basis of discussing and working on the chosen case (in groups of approx. four pupils).

Case study: a pupil in trouble at our school	
1. What has happened?	
2. Who has discovered or reported the case?	
3. Who is involved?	
4. What is the problem? (Why was it necessary to protect work and life at school?)	
5. Which school rule(s) apply in this case?	
6. Which punishment, if any, has been given?	
7. What effect does the punishment have on the culprit and on the other students?	
8. ...	

Of course, the worksheet may be modified or extended in the plenary if necessary.

The groups choose a spokesperson and possibly further roles (time keeper etc.). Then the group members discuss the case and note all their ideas down on the hand-outs provided. In particular, they discuss questions 4 and 7, because they address the core issue surrounding the problem.

For the remaining time: Each group decides on the form and contents of their answers to questions 4 and 7 for their chosen spokesperson to present to the class during the next lesson.

Lesson 2: Why does a school have rules? (duration: approx. 1 ½ lessons)

Presentations, then discussion on last lesson's task: A spokesperson from each group presents the answers to questions 4 and 7. After this, a discussion is held.

Stimulus:

- What do the groups agree on? Where do the opinions differ?
- What did I like? What do I agree with? What didn't bother me? What did I find unacceptable? Why?

In general, the pupils' findings (supported by the teacher) should be: We all enjoy basic human and civil rights that must also be respected in school. To enable school to uphold these rights, certain conditions need to be observed. The teacher or a pupil might sum up this idea as follows: A school is a place where many people, both young and

old, meet and work together. This needs to be organised, which requires rules, including the one that lessons should begin and end on time with everyone, including the teacher, present in the classroom. In addition to this, school is directly responsible for some of the most important children’s rights: first and foremost, the right to education.

Input and discussion focussing on the right to education: Where has this right been laid down?

Discussion that can be supported by the teacher giving a brief lecture on the rights of the child and their relevance for school life. The following worksheet can be used, which can also be enlarged e.g. on a flipchart or on the projector:

Why does a school have rules?	
Rights of children and adolescents (1989 Convention)	Which rules at our school protect these rights?
Article 13: Freedom of expression	
Article 14: Freedom of thought, conscience and religion	
Article 24: Protection of health	
Article 28: Right to education, including access to higher education and measures to ensure regular attendance at school	
Article 31: Right of the child to rest and leisure	
Article 33: Protection from narcotic drugs	
Article 37: Protection against cruel treatment	

Input and discussion on the theme “Observing school rules from the perspective of children’s rights: Why does a school have rules?”

The teacher writes this theme on the board: “Why does a school have rules?” He or she distributes a copy of the school or class rules, a felt tip pen and a piece of flip chart paper. The teacher then explains the task:

- Form groups of four. At first, each person will work on his or her own. Read the school rules. Try, wherever possible, to make connections between the school rules and children’s rights.
- Then work as a team. Exchange your ideas and try to decide on which school rule correlates to which children’s right. Write your results down.

- Take the worksheet “Why does a school have rules?” and link the articles of the children’s rights convention to the correlating rules of your school or class.
- Elect two spokespeople to present your results to the class.

The pupils present their results in class. The teacher insists on sound reasoning, both in the presentation and in any discussion that may arise.

In the last five minutes of the lesson, the teacher draws the attention of the class to the topic of the lesson, the question on the board: Why does a school have rules? (The pupils may be expected to sum up the result of the lesson with an answer such as: “School serves the right of every child

and adolescent to be educated,” or: “School rules are there to ensure that school runs smoothly and effectively to perform its purpose,” etc.)

Task 1, possibly as the conclusion of this lesson: Write a summary of what you have learned in a few sentences a) on the theme “(A school) without

rules...” and b) on the question “Why does school have rules?”.

Task 2 (Homework, to be copied as a worksheet separately or on the back of the previous worksheet):

A whole day of rules

Choose a weekday. On this day, write a diary and note down all the rules you had to follow (even all unwritten rules).

Look at all the rules that tell you how you have to behave or what you have to do, e.g.:

- when you are at home with your family;
- when you meet up with friends;
- when you buy something in a shop;
- when you walk through town;
- etc.

Think about which rules have been written down as formal rules, and which rules exist as unwritten, informal ones. For example, school rules are formal. Rules that tell us how to behave at table or when we are together with our family or friends are informal.

Lesson plans Unit 9

Time	Rule	formal/informal
...		
07.00		
08.00		
09.00		
10.00		
11.00		
12.00		
13.00		
14.00		
15.00		
16.00		
17.00		
18.00		
19.00		
20.00		
21.00		
22.00		
...		

Lesson 3: Who makes rules in life?

The teacher asks pupils, as experts, to read examples from their homework (see above), including examples of both formal and informal rules.

The teacher then selects two examples and writes them on the board by filling in a table that has already been prepared, e.g.:

Type of rule	Contents	Set up by ...	Enforced by ...
Formal rule (e.g. a law):	You must not cross the road when the traffic light is red.		
Informal rule	You must not belch at the table.		

The teacher invites the pupils to voice their thoughts on the two empty columns as well as on the sanctions they think would be needed in the case of a rule being broken. (The traffic rule - in fact a law - will prove quite straightforward: it is set by the Ministry of Traffic (draft) and parliament (legislation), enforced by the police and, if necessary, the law courts (e.g. with fines). More difficult (but perhaps more interesting for the sake of discussion) are the unwritten rules e.g. not to belch at the table; the sanctions here are specific to family and culture. The teacher should give the pupils the opportunity to act as experts by asking many pupils to participate in the plenary discussion. The information is then added to the table.

The pupils form groups of four or five. Task: Share your examples of informal rules on your worksheets and find out how these rules are enforced and how breaking these rules is sanctioned. In addition: Are there rules that are specific to gender, norms or even laws?

The results are gathered together in the plenary session. Possible points to focus on during the discussion:

- Type and ranking of unwritten rules within the peer group (with examples)
- Who defines or modifies unwritten rules and sanctions in the case of a law being broken?
- Gender specific unwritten rules
- Which possibilities do we have to define or modify rules? When and where can we have a say?

Lesson 4: Who should be allowed to set up laws? (Rules for setting up laws)

The lesson is opened with a review of the last lesson's findings, where the pupils had looked at informal rules and laws. In this lesson, they now take a closer look at how laws should be made.

Stimulus: The teacher gives the following "example" of a law (written or projected on the board):

§1 All men born in April need not pay taxes.

Discussion: The pupils may comment freely, prompted if necessary by a few open questions. Their ideas might focus on points such as these:

- This law is unjust, as it is a violation of the principle of non-discrimination.
- It discriminates against various groups (all women, not only women born in April).
- It serves the interests of a small group of people, namely men born in April.
- Laws must serve the good of all. Therefore such laws must be prevented.
- Unjust laws will cause conflict in a community and may even destroy it.

Pupils form groups of four or five. Task: The pupils should discuss which rules and principles are necessary to offer protection against unfair legislation. Agree on no more than three key elements for a subsequent presentation.

Presentation, discussion, comparison in the plenary session.

Who actually makes the laws in our country? Gathering of pupils' prior knowledge; summarising input/short presentation by the teacher. Main issues: The constitution encompasses human rights, including the principles of equality and personal liberty. It also contains a section that defines who may set up laws; in most states this is a body of representatives who pass laws by majority vote. These representatives must stand for election and

are therefore subject to control by the citizens. Some laws are set up by direct vote at the ballot box.

Possibly a concluding discussion with a review of what has been learned in this unit and a look at the future prospects of living as a young adult in a society shaped by norms and laws.