

## Lesson 2: Our School Rules



**Grade Level:** K-5

**Lesson Objective:** Students will understand the purpose of school rules and relate them to the idea of establishing “justice” in the Preamble of the U.S. Constitution.

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### Focus Skills:

**Engaging in Civil Discourse** Students collaborate to create a “Classroom Constitution,” practicing communication, listening, and respectful negotiation to establish shared agreements.

**Analyzing Civic Engagement** Students reflect on how following rules contributes to a positive learning environment and fairness, examining their role in upholding shared practices and values.

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### Materials Needed:

- Chart paper or whiteboard and markers
  - Simplified version of the Preamble
  - “Why We Have Rules” text (provided)
  - Drawing paper and crayons/markers
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## Lesson Outline

### Introduction (5 minutes)

- **Discussion Prompt:** “What are rules and why do we have them?”
- **Engage:** Encourage students to share examples of school rules and discuss how they keep everyone safe and promote respect.

### Reading Time (10 minutes)

- Read the story *Why We Have Rules* aloud.

#### **“Why We Have Rules”**

*“In our school, we have rules that help us all stay safe, learn, and work well together. Rules are like gentle reminders that tell us what’s okay and what isn’t. For example, when we raise our hand, we show respect to our classmates and teachers. Walking, instead of running, in the hallways helps keep us and our friends safe. And when we share things like toys, supplies, or even a seat with a friend, we learn kindness and the importance of helping one another. These school rules may seem small, but they make a big difference in helping everyone feel comfortable and ready to learn. Just like these rules, there are laws outside of school that help keep our neighborhoods and communities peaceful and fair!”*

- **Discussion Questions:**

1. What is one school rule that helps everyone?
2. If you could add or change a rule, what would it be?

### Constitution Connection (10 minutes)

- **Introduce the Constitution:**
  - Introduce the Constitution as a framework that helps us decide how to create and enforce fair rules and laws.
  - Discuss how the Constitution sets out principles like fairness, justice, and working together, which are important in creating rules for the country and the classroom.
  - Focus on **how rules are made** and the importance of everyone having a say in the process.
  - Show the simplified Preamble: **“We the People... establish justice...”**
- **Focus on “Establish justice”**
  - Discuss how justice means fairness and how school rules help create a fair environment.

#### Example: Resolving Conflicts Fairly

- *Scenario:* "If two students both want to sit in the same spot, our rule is to take turns or use 'rock, paper, scissors' to decide fairly."
- *Connection to the Preamble:* This rule reflects the idea of **establishing justice** by ensuring fairness in decision-making. It helps resolve disagreements peacefully so everyone feels respected and included.

#### Example: Keeping the Classroom Quiet During Work Time

- *Scenario:* "We have a rule that says everyone must work quietly during independent reading or writing time."
- *Connection to the Preamble:* This supports the idea of **ensuring domestic tranquility** by creating a calm and peaceful environment where everyone can focus. It shows how following rules helps maintain harmony for the group.

### ACTIVITY: Creating a “Classroom Framework for Rules” (15 minutes)

Tell students that just like the people who created our country’s Constitution, they will create a classroom framework for how the class will decide on and agree to rules:

- **Step 1:** Discuss as a class how new rules should be made. Should everyone get to share ideas? Should the class vote?
- **Step 2:** Create a short “Classroom Framework for Rules” that outlines how the class will decide on, enforce, and update rules.
- **Step 3:** Use this process to brainstorm and vote on initial classroom rules, documenting them as the “Classroom Constitution.”
  - **Younger Students (K-1):** Focus on visual aids and simpler language about fairness.
  - **Older Students (4-5):** Discuss concepts like majority votes, fairness for everyone, and responsibility.
- **Final Step:** Students can draw a picture of one classroom rule in action.

## **Closing and Reflection (5 minutes)**

- **Reflection Prompt:** Why is it important to have a fair process for making rules?
  - Encourage students to share how they felt about having a say in creating the rules.
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## **Extensions**

Over the week, celebrate students who follow the “Classroom Constitution” with small acknowledgments or “good citizen” stickers to reinforce positive behavior and adherence to classroom rules.

Examples of small acknowledgements:

1. “I noticed [Student’s Name] was really kind by sharing their supplies today. Great job following our Classroom Constitution!”
2. At the end of the day, announce a few “Good Citizens of the Day” and share what they did to earn it.

## **Suggested Booklist: Our School Rules**

- We Share This School by Dan Saks
- We Are a Class by Rob Sanders
- The Noisy Classroom by Angela Shante