



RULE OF LAW LESSON: RULE OF LAW BANNERS

Description: Students will work individually to create a “Rule of Law” banner expressing the values, principles, and ideas important to the concept of the “rule of law.”

Standard of Learning CE.2a

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the foundation of American constitutional government by explaining the fundamental principle of the rule of law.

Objectives:

To discuss the concept of the rule of law as it relates to daily life and all citizens.

"To demonstrate how following the rule of law leads to an orderly society where all people may enjoy their rights." (Missouri Rule of Law Lesson Plan)

Suggested grade levels: Civics and Economics 7th and 8th

Materials needed: Crayons, markers, construction paper, tape

Time: One-two class periods

Procedures:

- Write the phrase “Rule of Law” on the white/chalk board.
- Ask students to brainstorm associations with the phrase, record the words and phrases that are generated from the class on the board, and connect them to create a web.
 - Discuss the web with the students and agree on a definition along these lines: The rule of law is the universal ideal by which the rights of individuals and the collective rights of community are equally recognized by consent under a set of core principles which, through government, are guaranteed and protected.
- Distribute crayons, markers, and construction paper to each student.
- Ask students to write their name on the banner and any symbols (words or pictures) that represent the values, principles, and ideas that are important to the concept of the rule of law. Encourage them to use words or drawings that represent the rule of law as a timeless, universal ideal, not just in America, but universally.
- After they have created their banners, ask students to pass the banners to their neighbors and keep doing so until everyone has had a chance to see every banner.
- Have students post their banners around the room then watch “The Law Rules” video.
 - Video Points to Remember:

- We are a nation of laws ... not a nation of people.
 - Everyone is treated fairly and equally under the same set of laws. The laws allow people to enjoy a peaceful existence with others. Our laws are based on the Constitution and protected by the courts. No one is above the law ... no one is below the law.
 - The “rule of law” is like the rules of the road ... you must follow the laws to protect the safety of all.
 - The “rule of law” is an agreement that everyone will play by the rules.
 - We are governed by rules that are in the best interest of our country ... not in the best interest of us personally.
 - In America, we follow the “rule of law.” We do not serve men or women; we serve “The Law.”
- Return to the student banners and ask them to identify those words and images that reflect the ideas learned from viewing the video. **Note: You may want to save steps 6 and 7 for the next day’s class.**

Note: The above lesson is adapted from “Cultural Banners” by Alan Shapiro and is available in its original version at www.teachablemoment.org/middle/culturalbanners.html.

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