

Rule of Law

Ruling Rulers since 1215

Benchmark: SS.7.C.1.9 Define the rule of law and recognize its influence on the development of the American legal, political, and governmental systems.

Clarifications/Objectives:

- Students will distinguish between the characteristics of a society that operates under the rule of law and one that does not.
- Students will assess the importance of the rule of law in protecting citizens from arbitrary and abusive uses of government power.
- Students will evaluate the impact of the rule of law on governmental officials and institutions (accountability to the law, fair procedures, decisions based on the law, consistent application, enforcement of the law, and transparency of institutions).

Time: One to two class periods

Materials:

- Rule of Law PowerPoint
- Handout A: Principles of Rule of Law
- World Justice Project's Rule of Law Country Profiles (available in separate PDF)
- Handout B: Rule in Reality
- Computer
- Projector

Lesson Preparation

- Review all handouts and PowerPoints
- Print and review the PowerPoint in "notes view". The PowerPoint includes notes to guide the lesson.
- Review the [World Justice Project's Rule of Law Index](#)
- Prepare the Rule in Reality Activity based on the appropriate number of students.

Lesson Overview

Warm Up Question: What is the Rule of Law? *Students should have already been exposed to Rule of Law under standard SS.7.C.1.2 when discussing Magna Carta.*

Review the concept of Rule of Law with the students. The Rule of Law is the concept that no one is above the law, everyone must follow the law, the law applies to everyone, and that we are a country of laws, not of men. Discuss the last point with the students. This concept is intended to reiterate that all are beholden to the law and it is the laws that make our country function.

Distribute Handout A Briefly discuss each of the principles of the Rule of Law, focusing on the words in bold. Discuss the concepts on the bottom of the page.

Accountability to the law	Leaders are bound by the law and have a responsibility to follow them
Fair procedures	The way laws are carried out are fair (trials, investigations, searches, etc.)
Decisions based on the law	Decisions are made based on the law, not on popular opinion or because of some other outside pressure (media, money, politics, popularity)
Consistent application	Laws are made known and are applied to everyone in the same way
Enforcement of the law	The way laws are carried out are fair and efficient
Transparency of institutions	Actions of government and laws are made known to the public; open government

Next, the students will need to match the concepts in the box to the correct principle on their handout. The PowerPoint will debrief this activity. Put an emphasis on the fact that the Rule of Law impacts both our government official and institutions.

Explain the following visual to the students. *People set up governments to protect our basic rights. Placed under the rule of law, liberty, protection, equality, stability, and accountability are able to grow. If the Rule of Law is overshadowed, those things disappear and tyranny, or abuse government, is able to take hold.*

Rule in Reality Activity The country profiles provided represent the top 15 and bottom 15 of the World Justice Project’s Rule of Law Index. This index ranks countries by their adherence to the Rule of Law. To prepare for this activity, make sure there are enough country profiles for each student to have a county and make sure that each country has a match (A matches with A, B matches with B, etc.). The County Profiles are labeled alphabetically so the students can find their match (A matches with A, B matches with B, etc.). Once in pairs, the students will represent a country with a high score for the index and a country with a low score for the index.

Using Handout B, have students answer questions about their countries and compare and contrast the two countries. Have students briefly discuss some of the key similarities and differences between their countries including:

- Which branch of government was rated the highest for maintaining the rule of law? The lowest?
- Which fundamental right was the most upheld? The least?

Check for Understanding The final slide will include a question from the End of Course Exam Item Specifications book. Have the students independently write down their answer and ask student to explain how they made their decision.

The Principles of Rule of Law

Directions: Read and simplify each of the principles of the Rule of Law below. Then, read the phrases (concepts) in the box at the bottom of the table. Match the concept to the principle it most closely aligns with. Phrases may be used more than once.

Principles	Concepts
1. The government and its officials and agents as well as individuals and private entities are accountable under the law .	
In your own words:	
2. The laws are clear, publicized, stable, and just ; are applied evenly ; and protect fundamental rights , including the security of persons and property.	
In your own words:	
3. The process by which the laws are enacted, administered, and enforced is accessible, fair, and efficient .	
In your own words:	
4. Justice is delivered timely by competent, ethical, and independent representatives and neutrals who are of sufficient number, have adequate resources, and reflect the makeup of the communities they serve.	
In your own words:	
Concepts	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountability to the law • Fair procedures • Decisions based on the law 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent application • Enforcement of the law • Transparency of institutions

Rule in Reality

Directions: Using the Country Profile you were provided, along with your partner's, complete the chart below with the scores for each category and the highest and lowest score in each category. Be sure to write the factor number and name. **Example:**

Your country: United States (19)		Partner's Country: Kenya (84)	
Category	Score	Category	Score
Absence of corruption	.75	Absence of corruption	.27
Highest score: No corruption in judiciary	.87	Highest score: No corruption in judiciary	.36
Lowest score: No corruption in the legislature	.59	Lowest score: No corruption in the legislature	.17

About the Country Profile

You will see different numbers on your Country Profile handout. Each country is assigned a "Rule of Law Score" between 0 and 1. Countries are also assigned a "Rank" – you will only need to locate the Global Rank. The closer to 1 a country is, the more they uphold the Rule of Law. The closer to 0 a country is, the less Rule of Law they have.

Your country & rank:		Partner's country & rank:	
Category	Score	Category	Score
Constraints on government powers		Constraints on government powers	
Highest score:		Highest score:	
Lowest score:		Lowest score:	
Absence of corruption		Absence of corruption	
Highest score:		Highest score:	
Lowest score:		Lowest score:	
Open Government		Open Government	
Highest score:		Highest score:	
Lowest score:		Lowest score:	
Fundamental Rights		Fundamental Rights	
Highest score:		Highest score:	
Lowest score:		Lowest score:	
Order and Security		Order and Security	
Highest score:		Highest score:	
Lowest score:		Lowest score:	
Regulatory Enforcement		Regulatory Enforcement	
Highest score:		Highest score:	
Lowest score:		Lowest score:	
Civil Justice		Civil Justice	
Highest score:		Highest score:	
Lowest score:		Lowest score:	
Criminal Justice		Criminal Justice	
Highest score:		Highest score:	
Lowest score:		Lowest score:	

The Principles of the Rule of Law

Principles	Concepts
5. The government and its officials and agents as well as individuals and private entities are accountable under the law .	Accountability to the law
In your own words: All people have a responsibility to follow the law and are held to what the law says. <i>Answers will vary.</i>	
6. The laws are clear, publicized, stable, and just ; are applied evenly ; and protect fundamental rights , including the security of persons and property.	Decisions based on the law Consistent application
In your own words: The laws are made public and apply to everyone while protecting our natural rights.	
7. The process by which the laws are enacted, administered, and enforced is accessible, fair, and efficient .	Fair procedures Enforcement of the law
In your own words: The ways that laws are carried out are fair and apply to everyone.	
8. Justice is delivered timely by competent, ethical, and independent representatives and neutrals who are of sufficient number, have adequate resources, and reflect the makeup of the communities they serve.	Transparency of institutions
In your own words: Justice is carried out by people who are informed, fair, and not corrupt.	
Concepts	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountability to the law • Fair procedures • Decisions based on the law 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent application • Enforcement of the law • Transparency of institutions