

Rule of Law: Discussion Starters and Writing Prompts

Watch the five-minute [Court Shorts: Rule of Law](https://youtu.be/bmAKAHDsnGs) video. <https://youtu.be/bmAKAHDsnGs>
Answer the following questions.

What Questions

1. What did Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor mean when she said: “I firmly believe in the rule of law as the foundation for all our basic rights.”
2. What does it mean to be accountable to the law? For adults? For underage students, like you?
3. What does the rule of law mean when applied to the government and to governmental officials?
4. What does it mean to balance individual rights with the safety of others? Explain the statement: “Your right to swing your fist stops just short of my nose.”

How Questions

5. How does fair and consistent adherence to the rule of law protect our rights and well-being in everyday situations like buying a breakfast sandwich? Give other examples from daily life.
6. How do we, as a society, make the lawmaking process and the laws public? How do we make legal proceedings public?
7. How do we apply the rule of law to government, not just individuals, businesses, and other entities?

Why Questions

8. Why is it important that people consent to abiding by the law? What would happen if they didn't?
9. Why would anyone follow the law in instances when it is inconvenient? Give examples.
10. Why do people follow the law even when they think there is no chance of getting caught and punished?

Timeliness Questions

11. This year is the 100th anniversary of women's legal right to vote. How did women use the rule of law to assert their right to vote? What other groups have asserted their rights using the rule of law?
12. The rule of law creates a structure for society to strive for equality and fairness for everyone. Sometimes those efforts fail. Give current examples and discuss the societal structures, systems, and practices that are in place to address such situations?

Relevancy Questions

13. Give examples of ways that the rule of law has an impact on your life every day.
14. Consider the difference the rule of law makes in your life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness by comparing your life to news events in which the rule of law is discussed as an issue.

Rule of Law in Your Life: On the Clock
Diagram Activity and Discussion Starter

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Answer the following questions.

1. List your normal daily activities (on a typical day when school is in session). Try to list the activities in the following time slots.

- 6 a.m.

- 9 a.m.

- Noon

- 3 p.m.

- 6 p.m.

- 9 p.m.

2. Now work through some of the highlights of the day, starting when you awake. Explain how the rule of law has an impact on your quality of life in ways you may not have realized. Pick at least **SIX** things from your day and explain how each is impacted by the rule of law in some way.

1. How does the rule of law have an impact on you when you wake up to the sound of your alarm?

2. What happens next?

3. What happens next?

4. What happens next?

5. What happens next?

6. What happens next?