

OUR LAWS

TEACHERS' NOTES

Teachers should read all the instructions, shown at the foot of this document, intended for pupils but may find the following of use. Overall we do not believe in prescriptive resources so each teacher is free to adapt the project to their needs and those of their pupils. In order to benefit from the work of others and allow others to make use of your work, it is ideal if you can follow the majority of our sections in producing your project.

Once we begin to upload the links to these projects, you will be able to use them as part of any learning programme you have. The idea that others may be reading their work is a great motivation for pupils to carry out the projects

PARTICIPANTS

The project should only be done by a group of at least ten pupils.

DURATION

We would suggest a minimum of 1 introductory hour-long lessons to explain the project and decide on which pupils will cover which topic and then work out a programme to do the work. You know your pupils far better than we do so we will leave you to decide how much research and writing time is needed for part one.

Again we felt it is best left up to you, the teacher, to decide how much time should be given to each discussion in part two of the project. My own feeling is that a minimum of 30 minutes for each topic is about right. It is obviously easy to extend this into a longer programme of work but we feel the above is the minimum time to complete the project

LESSON GUIDELINES

At the beginning the pupils should be presented with the project outline or it should be read to them. Emphasise the sections that have to be covered. Make them aware that students all over the world will have the chance to read their work.

The pupils can then choose, or be given, one of the topics in our list. While they are doing the research try to make sure they are covering everything.

Once all research is done, you could spend a short time on report writing as a topic to help ensure that all reports are of similar style. Explain that these reports are factual and objective; the time for personal views is in part two.

The way the meeting is set up and run is, again, a matter for you as the teacher. We would suggest, unless there is an obvious candidate who has not been involved, you take on the chairperson role. Make the meeting as formal and realistic as possible. You could set a time limit for each individual speaker as well as for each topic. Tell the speakers that they should not just disagree with something but explain their reason for doing so.

The final report of the discussion should again be a realistic set of minutes and you could add in an extra sessions here after each has been written where you have them signed by all as a true record and deal with any objections

OUR LAWS

FOR PUPILS

AIMS

- To find out basic laws within a country.
- To allow pupils to take part in reasoned debate.
- To introduce the structure and operation of formal meetings
- To allow comparisons with other countries across the world.

FORMAT

You can do this project in any written format you like. You could do it as a word document or as a power-point. The choice is yours. Just make sure you cover all the topics we ask because we want to be able, and we want you to be able, to compare projects done by different schools in different locations.

INSTRUCTIONS

This project has two distinct parts. Ideally we would like that you complete both parts before sending us the link. However, in rare circumstances, we may agree to link to a project if only part one is completed.

PART ONE

The first part of the project is to investigate certain laws and practices in your country. There are ten areas we want you to look at and these are as follows. As we suggested this be done by a minimum group of ten, each person can be responsible for one area. If you have more than ten people, some can pair up. At the end of the research time, each of the ten should write a report about their particular law. Please do not, in this case, add any other laws.

EDUCATION

- is it compulsory and if so between what ages?
- between what months does the school year run, how many school terms are there and when, usually, are the holidays?
- what type of schools are there? (private, public, religious etc)
- at what age do pupils move from primary to secondary? Is there an intermediate stage?
- what punishment, if any, is there for not attending school?

MATURITY

- at what age do children legally become adults?
- has it always been at this age?
- is there any special ceremony to celebrate this fact?
- do you receive an identity card at this age?
- what other things can you do (not covered in any of our other sections, ie driving etc)?

VOTING RIGHTS

- at what age can you vote?
- is everyone allowed to vote at this age or are there exceptions?
- how does voting take place (secret ballot, computerised voting etc)?
- how often do you normally vote for a new government?
- for what other reason does voting happen in your country (local elections, referenda etc)?

MARRIAGE

- at what age can people marry?
- is it the same for men and women?
- who can conduct a marriage ceremony?
- are there any people who are forbidden to marry excluding those who are too young?
- is divorce available to people and, if so, on what grounds?

DRIVING

- at what age can people learn to drive? Do the same ages apply to cars and motorbikes or are they different?
- is there a driving test and, if so, is it part theory, part practical or all practical?
- what rules apply when you are a learner. Do you need a qualified driver in the car? Must they sit in the front? Can you take passengers?
- what laws are there regarding things like crash helmets, safety belts, smoking in cars and where children should sit? Do you have to legally wear a helmet on a bicycle?
- what are the speed limits on different roads?

SMOKING

- at what age can you legally buy tobacco products?
- are these products on show in shops or, because of the obvious health risk, are they hidden?
- what laws are there about smoking public, public buildings, closed spaces etc?
- how much tax is charged on a packet of 20 cigarettes?
- are there figures to show how many deaths are smoking-related in your country? If so, what is the latest figure?

DRINKING

- at what age can you legally buy an alcoholic drink?
- are these products on show in shops or, because of the possible health risk, are they hidden?
- at what age can you go into a pub or bar if you don't wish to buy an alcoholic drink? Is the age different if you are with an adult?
- is it legal to drink alcohol in your own home when under the age allowed for buying it?
- driving after any drink is foolish, but what is the legal limit of alcohol allowed in the blood? This is usually measured as BAC (blood alcohol content)

MILITARY SERVICE

- is it compulsory to do a period of military service?
- if so, at what age and for how long?
- does the same law apply to men and women?
- how many people are serving in your country's military? How many men and how many women?
- are any of your military personnel serving in a foreign land? If so where and how many?

PENALTIES

- does your country have the death penalty, known as capital punishment? If so, what method is used and how many times has it been used in the last five years?
- if a prisoner has been given a life sentence, after how many years can he/she apply to be released?
- if a prison sentence is thought of as being too hard, what alternatives do judges have? Is there community service?
- what is the maximum sentence a judge can give for i)murder, ii)manslaughter, iii)rape, iv)assault, v)crimes against children?
- at what age can a criminal be named in court

OTHER

- is it illegal to smack a child and if so what is the penalty?
- is it illegal to hunt animals? If not, which animals can you hunt and how?
- is it illegal to be naked in public?
- is it illegal to play loud music and, if so, what level is considered acceptable?
- is it illegal to cross the road except at a designated crossing place and is it illegal to ride a bicycle on the pavement?
- many countries now have mobility scooters for the elderly and infirm. At what speed can these go and can they go on the road and/or the pavement?

Once all the research has been done to answer the questions posed in these 10 topics, it is necessary for a report to be written about each one. These reports comprise part one of the project and, under the appropriate headings, should be uploaded to your school website.

PART TWO

In part two, we want you to set up a meeting of all participants. The meeting should have a chairperson, who will be in charge. It is their job to ask each individual, pair or group, to read out the findings about their particular laws. Others should take notes. Then a discussion should take place about whether any of the laws mentioned should be changed. Once all discussion has taken place, don't go on too long, a vote is taken to see if this law is changed.

It will be necessary for notes to be taken about what is said at the meeting and in the discussion. In formal meetings there is usually a "minutes" secretary who will take notes and then type up the "minutes", which will then be approved by all members as a true record. This is usually done at the next meeting.

However, we don't want to be cruel to anyone so we would suggest that each individual, pair or group takes the notes about their particular laws. This means they don't need to write anything down while reading out their laws (they already have this), they just need to take notes while other people discuss it. Each minute taker will then write up a report of the discussion and the voting.

These reports comprise part two of the project and, under the appropriate headings, should be uploaded to your school website.

That finishes this project.

GENERAL OUTCOMES

At the completion of this project the student will be able to:

- be more aware of the laws in their country
- have, and be able to explain, their own opinions on these laws
- listen to, argue with and accept the views of others
- understand the principals of collective responsibility
- experience a voting procedure where their own views may not prevail
- understand, develop and communicate ideas and information
- access, analyse, evaluate and use information from a variety of sources work with others to achieve individual and collective goals
- understand and appreciate social, cultural, geographical and historical contexts and participate as active and informed citizens
- express themselves through creative activity and engage with the artistic, cultural and intellectual work of others
- understand and apply a variety of analytical and creative techniques to solve problems
- speak, listen, read, write, view and represent
- use language and communicate appropriately and effectively
- think in ways that are imaginative, interpretative and critical
- understand the power of language to explore and express views of themselves, others and the world
- understand the power of effective communication using the language modes of speaking, listening, reading, writing, viewing and representing
- understand the role of language in developing positive interaction and co-operation with others
- use the diversity and aesthetics of language through literary and other texts
- understand the independence gained from thinking imaginatively, interpretatively and critically
- use the power of language to express the personal, social, cultural, ethical, moral, spiritual and aesthetic dimensions of human experiences
- use technology and aids to communicate with a range of audiences recognise visual texts in a range of contexts
- use visual texts in a range of contexts
- read and respond to short written texts
- respond to increasingly complex written texts
- write short texts for everyday purposes
- compose increasingly complex written texts using language appropriately and effectively view and respond to a range of visual texts, media and multimedia
- communicate for a variety of purposes, in a range of contexts and with a range of audiences
- draw on background and experiences to respond to texts in ways that are imaginative, interpretative or critical
- express themselves and their relationships with others and the world
- explore social and cultural issues through texts
- use individual and collaborative skills in the learning process