| **Lesson Name: What is the “rule of law”?** | |
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| **Author Name: Roseanna Martinez** | |
| **Civic Literacy Curriculum Section/ Question(s):** | |
| **Lesson Summary:** (1-3 sentences) | |
| **Primary Sources:** [**U.S. Constitution**](https://bri-wp-images.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/The-Constitution.pdf)**,** | |
| **Grade Level(s): 3-5** | |
| **Learning Objectives:** Students will be able to describe how “rule of law” benefits not only the citizens but also the government officials of the United States. | |
| **Lesson Plan:**  **Q13: What is the “rule of law”?**  **Knowledge:**  Students will understand that no one is above the law, and all citizens as well as government officials must follow the laws of the United States.  Students will be familiar with the concept of divine right and absolute power.  **Skills:** Students will be able to describe how “rule of law” benefits not only the citizens but also the government officials of the United States.  **Application:** Students will be able to describe, through classroom activities, how “rule of law” helps us all to be protected from random or “unkind” abuse of power, through experiential activity involving Divine Right and absolute power.  **Materials Needed:**  [**Absolute Power and the Rule of Law Worksheet**](https://docs.google.com/document/u/0/d/1MiGepHXdE6pONUB2MvheQOGoO6sacMOSO-FdghFClII/edit)  [Divine Right Information Sheet](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1RuBMLsbmAC8OY4IMF1v65f-oLl8hD0ENj5n7n7wHdj0/edit?usp=sharing)  **Several sets of playing cards**  **Lesson Outline:**  **Introduction:**  The Pilgrims, who left England and arrived in American, wanted a new country where they were not subject to the rule of a King, but worked together to create a land where government was created by the people and all would create a system of government and laws that were fair and equal for all.  “Rule of Law” is the idea that all persons, whether citizens or government officials, must follow the laws of the land. No one is exempt from following the law of the land.  In some countries throughout history, Kings and other rulers have been able to create a rule or law that impacts its citizens and officials without going through the process of having a law voted on and approved by its citizens or governing officials. This allowed the ruler to control all things in an unfair or random way. The King, was not bound by the laws of the land because he believed he was given rule by God alone and therefore had “absolute power” over all, this is called “Divine Right”.  **Main Activity: Classroom Rules**  Make a list of 4 classroom rules that you have and follow daily, using the Daily Rules Worksheet. Do not complete the Absolute Power and Divine Right questions until after our games have finished.  Choose one student to be “King”, give him the Divine Right Information Sheet to read.  Inform the students that the King does not have to adhere to the rules and may do whatever he/she chooses.  Have students begin working in small groups on games (cards are simple games that work in this activity).  Quietly encourage the King to invoke absolute power in the game. The King also may move to different groups throughout the activity without permission.  After 10 minutes of game playing, have the students complete the questions at the bottom of their Daily Rules Worksheet to prepare for discussion.    **Discussion:**  How does the King’s freedom to make up rules as he goes, disrupt the activities and impact peace in the classroom?  What impact does “rule of law” have in your community that keeps peace and fairness for the people who live there?  **Link to Constitution:**  ***Rule of Law*** guarantees that all people will be treated equally and justly in the United States. No one is above the law, even the President, the police nor other members of congress. The rules that we follow are stated within the Constitution of the United States.  ***Supremacy Clause*** is the concept that all leaders, judges and state constitutions are bound by the rules of the Constitution. No state may make laws that violate the principals of the Constitution, which is commonly referred to as the “Supreme Law of the Land”. Any law that conflicts with the Constitution would be **unconstitutional** and therefore void.  **Reflection:**  **How does the U.S. Constitution protect citizens from unfair or random laws?**  **What problems do you think would come about if we did not have “rule of law”?**  **Conclusion:**  The Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, states that no person may “be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law.” Additionally the 14th Amendment states that no State may “deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.”  This portion of the Constitution reflects the beliefs of the Founding Fathers or our nation, that we would no longer be subject to the absolute power of a King or any other individual. The Founding Fathers created the U.S. Constitution to assure that we would have a government based on the laws which we agreed upon, and not the rule of any one individual. | |
| **Assessment:**   * **Students were able to complete the list of classroom rules.** * **Students participated in game playing activity.** * **Students were able to identify why “rule of law” is beneficial to communities.** * **Students could identify 2-3 potential problems with communities that do not have “rule of law”.** | |
| **Extension: (this can include any extensions for special education, gifted education, or ESL/ELL)**  **Differentiation:** Create small groups for students who need assistance to be paired with students who can be helpful in game playing and filling out the forms.  Having a visual or list of classroom rules you use each day will be helpful for students who have difficulty brainstorming ideas or spelling words.  **Extension:** Have students research rulers who had or believed they had absolute power throughout history. Write a small report or create a slide show about what kinds of difficulties that presented for their country and how that may have been resolved. | |