

# Principles of *The* Rule of Law in American Govt.

## Middle/ Junior High/ High School

**Objectives:** Students will be able to:

- identify the importance of the Rule of Law
- analyze a current event and apply the Rule of Law to it
- interpret a political cartoon
- create a political cartoon about the Rule of Law

## 2015 Standards

<b>Virginia SOL:</b>	<b>CE.2a</b>	Fundamental political principles define and shape American constitutional government. Rule of Law: Everyone, including government officials, must follow the law.
	<b>CE.3</b>	Duties of citizens: obey the laws.
	<b>CE.4d</b>	Practicing respect for the law.
	<b>GOVT.2b</b>	Early document supporting the idea that men have rights and establishing the concept of rule of law (English Petition of Right).
	<b>GOVT.4c</b>	Fundamental principles of the Constitution: Rule of Law. The Constitution of the United States is supreme, and all individuals are accountable under the law.

<b>National:</b>	<b>NSS-C.5-8.1, C.9-12.1</b>	Revolution & the New Nation (1754-1820s)
	<b>NSS-C.5-8.2, C.9-12.1</b>	Foundations of the Political System
	<b>NSS-C.5-8.3, C.9-12.1</b>	Principles of Democracy

**Approx. Time:** One 90 minute block or two 45 minute blocks.

# Principles of *The* Rule of Law in American Govt.

**Hook:** To introduce this lesson, you will hand out the rules for “Rock, Paper, Scissors” (or “Rochambeau”) and have the students pair up and play the game. To make sure they will all play, tell them you will give them a reward for whoever in the pair wins the most out of five rounds (candy, homework passes, extra points, etc., are always good rewards!). Once every pair has a victor and rewards have been granted, tell them they will play another five rounds for another prize, however, this time there are no rules to the game. They will, of course, protest, but cut them off immediately and tell them to start playing the game. Again, they will continue to protest and claim they cannot play without rules, but, again, encourage them to continue playing until there is a winner. When you feel that they have had enough, you can give them all a reward for their frustration and then ask them these questions:

1. **How did you feel when you had to play the game without any rules?**
2. **Why are rules important, especially in a game?**
3. **Do you think it is important to have rules to have a better life?**
4. **What kind of rules do we have in America that help us to have a better life?**

Discuss how the rules we live by created by our various levels of governments are called laws and that in America, and in most other countries, we all follow the Rule of Law which means that everyone, including government officials, must follow the law. Today they will learn more about the idea and importance of the Rule of Law.

## Activity - The Rule of Law: Ferguson Shooting and Protest

Students will review and discuss a timeline of events concerning the shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, and the protests that followed, and decide how the Rule of Law applies to both events.

**Post Assessment:** Students will interpret a political cartoon concerning the protests. After discussing the initial events, students will make predictions as to what they think the outcome will be. After discussing their predictions, students will next read excerpts from five news articles to find out what happened in the end. They should get a good idea of how the Rule of Law works over time and how it is applied in different ways. Last, students will create their own political cartoon reflecting their views on the Rule of Law in America.

**Struggling Learners:** Invite students to work in pairs and read the articles together and have them discuss the answers amongst themselves. Also, allow them to work in pairs or small groups to come up with a political cartoon using large paper and display the cartoons around the room.

**Advanced Learners:** As you discuss the five articles in “Ferguson: How Does the Story End?”, divide students into two sections depending on whether they agree or disagree with the results in the articles. Once they have separated themselves into these sections have them develop arguments for the opposing view. They may work together and use whatever resources necessary to develop their arguments. Once they are done, have them present their arguments to the class.