

RULE OF LAW

TEACHER RESOURCE

Learning Objectives

- To understand the role of the rule of law in ensuring a just, democratic society.
- To understand the basic elements of the rule of law.
- To familiarize students with the mechanisms that uphold the rule of law.

Materials

- Copies of the student handout, *Rule of Law* (one per student)
- Copies of the case summary, *Roncarelli v Duplessis* (one per student)
- Copies of *In Brief: Making a New Law* (optional; one per student)
- Newspapers (optional)

Teaching and Learning Strategies

1. Illustrate what life is like without the rule of law. Start the class by making unfair, arbitrary and ridiculous demands of students. Debrief, emphasizing the importance of shared and agreed-upon rules for maintaining a sense of fairness.
2. Assign the reading, discussion questions and activities individually or in groups.

Teacher's Key - Discussion Questions

1. Student responses should reflect the ideas that
 - a) society needs a clear system of rules to maintain order;
 - b) that no-one, no matter how powerful is above these rules; and
 - c) that no-one can have unrestricted power to make laws.

2. It moderates the effects of power differences in society, by helping to prevent abuses of authority, violence and intimidation, and by establishing an impartial means to settle disputes fairly. Therefore, we are free to pursue our own interests so long as these do not interfere unfairly with the interests of others.
3. The *Magna Carta* established the doctrine that even a monarch is not above the law, while the Glorious Revolution marked the decline of monarchical political systems and the rise of parliamentary systems of governance in Commonwealth nations.
4. Responses will vary.
5. Responses will vary.

3. Assign the case study, *Roncarelli v Duplessis*, and take up student responses in large group discussion. Student responses will vary, but should reflect their understanding of the rule of law.

Extension

1. Support students' understanding of the rule of law in practice with the OJEN resource, *In Brief: Making a New Law*, available at <http://ojen.ca/resource/2177>.
2. Scan current newspapers for stories pertaining to crime and justice. Have students identify examples of various forms of legal sanctions and discuss which are used most often. Optionally, this activity lends itself to graphic representation over time.