

ACTIVITY 2

Citizenship, Rights and Responsibilities

Citizenship grants us invaluable rights and freedoms, but with these privileges comes individual and collective responsibility to maintain and protect the rights and freedoms of others. As two sides of the same coin, rights and responsibilities provide the foundation for living harmoniously and justly within society.

In this lesson, students will

- develop an understanding of the concept of *rights as benefits of citizenship*
- explore the rights and responsibilities that are a part of their everyday lives (in home, neighbourhood and school contexts)
- understand the close relationship between rights and responsibilities
- identify their responsibility or role in maintaining their rights and the rights of others.

Activity Overview

In step 1, students will work in pairs to explore what the term "rights" actually means.

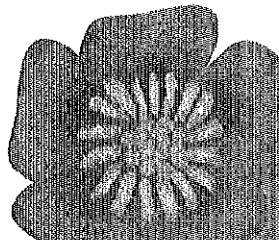
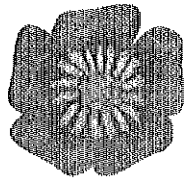
In step 2, students will work in small groups to classify statements concerning the rights of students in the classroom; develop a list of class rights; and explore concepts related to the complexity of exercising and protecting the rights of individuals and groups.

In step 3, groups will create a rights and responsibilities mind map graphic organizer and begin to formulate an understanding of how responsibilities are linked to rights, how to fulfil these responsibilities and how to protect these rights.

Step 4 will allow students to visually represent the rights and responsibilities connections by constructing mobiles that reflect the concepts explored in this lesson.

Materials Needed

- two sheets of newsprint, markers and tape for each group of three or four
- one copy of **Student Rights?** (handout 2) per group of three or four, cut into pieces and placed in envelopes
- construction paper, scissors, dowelling or coat hangers, string or yarn, glue



Growing Tips

Framing Questions to Involve Students

Effective questioning can maximize student involvement and reduce the amount of pressure often placed on individuals asked to respond quickly.

Frame questions in such a way that every student is required to form an answer and all students have time to think about and formulate a response.

- Questions that begin with such phrases as, "Who can tell us ...," "Can someone explain ...," or "Elena, what do you think about ..." often require that only one student think about and respond to the question.

- In contrast, the following questions are framed to ensure the accountability and participation of all students: "Talk with a partner about the steps involved in ...," "Take one minute to write down (or reflect on) your ideas concerning ...," "Now, discuss these ideas with your partner or group ..." and "I want you to take a few moments to recall yesterday's discussion on ... Be prepared to be called on."

In this way, students can direct their energy to thinking about the question instead of worrying about being "wrong" or looking "stupid" in front of their friends.

STEP 1

- 1 Explain that the word "citizen" has been used for thousands of years. The word was first used in ancient Greece. Being a citizen meant that you were considered a member of the city-state in which you lived. Citizens were given certain rights in their society. In return for those rights, each citizen was expected to do things that would benefit their communities.
- 2 Ask students to do a think/pair/share to come up with a definition of "rights." Give students 30 seconds to *think* on their own and a minute to discuss ideas in *pairs*, and then call on students to *share* their ideas in a class discussion.

STEP 2

Student Rights?

- 1 Organize students into groups of three to four. Give each group a sheet of newsprint and an envelope containing statement cards from **Student Rights?** (handout 2).
- 2 Ask each group of students to create a table with three columns and the headings "yes," "no" and "maybe."
- 3 Explain that on each piece of paper in their envelopes, there is a statement concerning the possible rights of a student in your classroom.
- 4 Ask each group of students to place the statements in the "yes" column if they agree with the statement, the "no" column if they disagree and the "maybe" column if they can't decide.
- 5 When students have completed their charts, draw a table with "yes," "no" and "maybe" columns on the blackboard. Go from group to group asking for two items that they placed in the "yes" column. Discuss any differences of opinion regarding where items should be placed. Repeat the process with the "no" items.
- 6 For "maybe" items, use the following guiding questions to analyse the complexities of these items and the reasons why students found it hard to place them in either the "yes" or "no" column.

Guiding Questions

- 1 What aspects of this item made it difficult to place in either the "yes" or "no" columns?
- 2 Look at each word in the statement and consider the changes you might make in the wording to make it a "yes" or a "no."

- 1 Notice how some "maybe" items seem similar to a "yes" or "no" item. For example, the right to express our opinions sounds like the right to talk when we want to. How are the items different?

- 2 What are your concerns about placing this item in the "yes" column? If this was a right, what problems do you feel might arise?

- 3 What problems might arise if we did have the right to do this "maybe" item—for example, to talk whenever we want to? Identify other "maybe" items and ask the same question.

Note: Make sure to cover concepts such as infringing on the rights of others and considering the good of the many.

- 7 As a class, cluster like items together to come up with a list of class rights. Do a majority rules vote on any controversial items.
- 8 You may wish to bring the activity to a close by continuing the discussion of the roots of the concept of citizenship. In ancient Greece, not everyone was granted citizenship and the rights that went with it. In fact, only Athenian-born adult males were granted citizenship. Citizenship rights could also be revoked under certain circumstances, such as cases where a citizen had committed a serious crime.
- 9 Debrief students using the following guiding questions.

Guiding Questions

- 1 Who or what has rights? (For example, do animals or other living things have rights?)
- 2 Why do we have rights?
- 3 How do we get rights?
- 4 Does everyone in this class have these rights?
- 5 Do students in every classroom have these rights?
Note: Point out that it depends on the classroom in which you have "citizenship." There are classrooms around the world where student rights would be very different.
- 6 Do we have these rights no matter what we do?



STEP 3 Linking Rights with Responsibilities

- 1 Select one of the student rights from the previous activity. Ask students to think about what other people need to do to protect that right for them. Discuss the connections between rights and responsibilities.
- 2 Model for your students the way to link a right with its accompanying responsibilities. Draw an oval on the blackboard. Inside the oval, write the word "right." Beneath it, copy one of the rights from your class list. Draw three to four ovals around this centre oval (see figure 2 on page 8). In each one, write the word "responsibility" and ask students to consider the responsibilities that are linked to the right.
- 3 Assign each group a right from step 2. Distribute a sheet of chart paper and markers to each group. Ask each group to create a right/responsibilities chart like the one you have modelled. Tell groups to be prepared to share their charts with the class.
- 4 Use the following guiding questions as the groups present their charts.

Guiding Questions

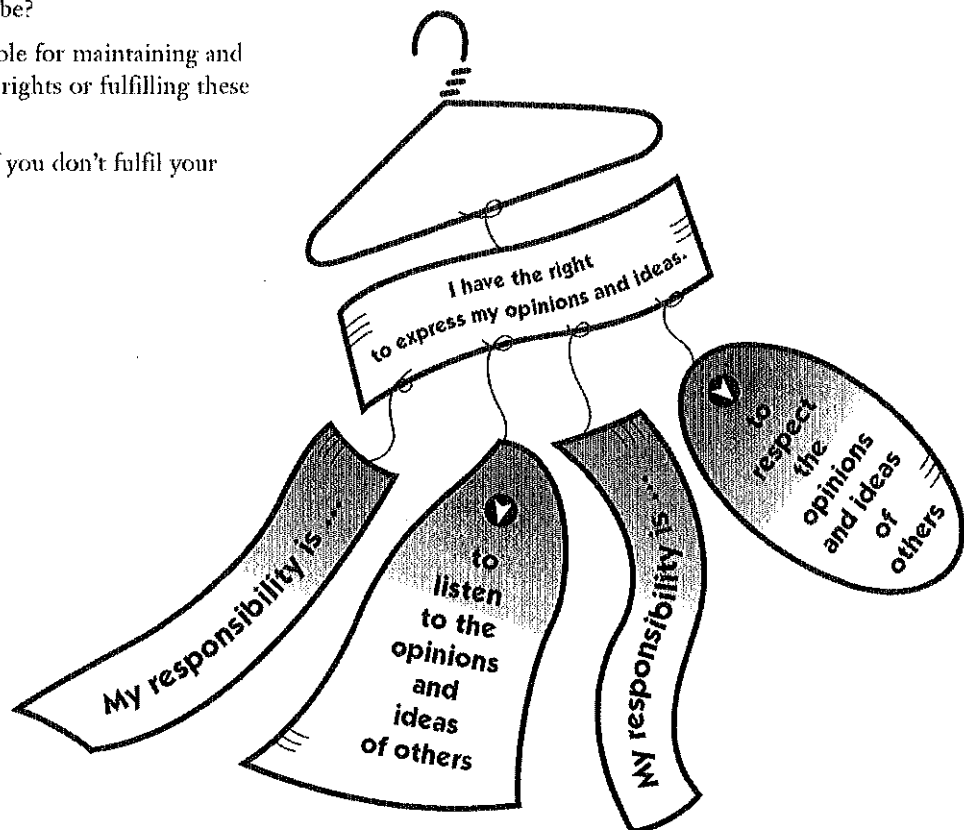
- 1 Are there any responsibilities that occur more than once on the charts you've made? Why might this be?
- 2 Who is responsible for maintaining and protecting these rights or fulfilling these responsibilities?
- 3 What happens if you don't fulfil your responsibilities?

STEP 4 Making Rights and Responsibilities Mobiles

Ask students to use their rights and responsibilities charts to create a mobile of construction paper shapes onto which the right and its accompanying responsibilities will be copied. Encourage the use of representative visuals (pictures, icons or symbols) and the innovative use of shapes in the pieces of the mobile that reflect the concepts explored.

- 1 Students will copy the right from their chart onto both sides of the main or top mobile piece.
 - To make the pieces that will be suspended from this main piece, students will create enough paper shapes to include each of the responsibilities they wrote on their group chart. They will write the words "our responsibility" on one side of each shape. On the other side, they will write one of the responsibilities from their chart.
 - Suspend the mobile pieces using string or yarn. To create the structure, coat hangers, drinking straws or doweling may be used.
 - Remind students to suspend pieces far enough apart to allow movement by air currents.

























Note: These mobiles can be used as references for upcoming lessons.



Student Rights?

Handout

2

 I have the right to my own space where I can keep my things.	 I have the right to borrow things without asking.
 I have the right to express my opinions and ideas.	 I have the right to say whatever I want about other people.
 I have the right to push or hit someone who is bothering me.	 I have the right to be treated fairly.
 I have the right to be myself.	 I have the right to do whatever I want to do.
 I have the right to use classroom materials and books.	 I have the right to throw garbage on the floor if I want to.
 I have the right to participate in activities so I can learn.	 I have the right to ignore people if I don't want to listen to them.
 I have the right to a quiet classroom so I can think and work.	 I have the right to feel safe, comfortable and included in the class.
 I have the right to not talk to people I don't want to talk to.	 I have the right to be anywhere on school property at any time.
 I have the right to be treated equally by others.	 I have the right to be included in all classroom activities.
 I have the right to talk whenever I want to.	 I have the right to a clean classroom and washroom facilities.
 I have the right to go to school only when I want to.	 I have the right to be listened to when I talk.
 I have the right to wear whatever I want to wear to school.	 I have the right to be free from bullying or violence.