



The Big Legal Lesson

February 2025

What's the law got to do with me?

Classroom Notes

Ages 7-11



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The Big Legal Lesson

Classroom Notes

Age range: 7-11

Introduction: Thank you for taking part in The Big Legal Lesson 2025. You are joining a network of thousands of teachers across England and Wales who are committed to developing children's knowledge of the rule of law and their legal rights.

Thank you to international law firm Mishcon de Reya for sponsoring The Big Legal Lesson again in 2025. Their funding allows us to offer all resources and support to participating schools for free.

Also, thank you to our education partner The Law Society for their continued support in helping us deliver legal education to children and young people across the UK.

Time commitment: This resource has been designed to give you flexibility. Five separate activities have been included. Some of the activities also include an optional The Big Legal Lesson Big Challenge. You can choose to deliver all the suggested activities or select those that best suit the needs of your pupils and your time-frame.

The supporting PowerPoint can be used in its entirety, or it can be edited, saved, and delivered across several shorter sessions. For example, one activity could be run each day throughout The Big Legal Lesson campaign.

Taken part before? If pupils have participated in The Big Legal Lesson before or they have a good basic understanding of what the rule of law is, teachers might choose to spend less time on Activities 1-3 and instead focus their time on Activities 4 and 5.

Learning objectives

After taking part in The Big Legal Lesson pupils will be able to:

Activities 1-3:

- Describe what the law is;
- Explain how the law impacts their day-to-day lives;

Activities 4-5:

- Identify who has the power to make and change laws in the UK;
- Examine how changes to the law affect them and others;
- Identify a new law they would like to introduce in the UK.

Overview of activities

Activity 1: Rules Pupils think about school rules, why they are important and who makes them.	Worksheet 1 (1 copy per pair)
Activity 2: The rule of law Pupils learn what the rule of law is and think about the differences between rules and laws.	No resources needed
Activity 3: What's the law got to do with me? Pupils are introduced to Charlie and consider how the law affects Charlie's day.	Worksheet 2 (1 per pupil)
Activity 4: Who makes the law? Pupils explore which people in the UK have the power to make and change laws.	Worksheet 3a (1 set cut up into cards) Worksheet 3b (1 card per pupil) OR Worksheet 3c (1 per pupil) Worksheet 4(1 per pupil)
Activity 5: The changing law Pupils take all they have learnt and use it to think about the impact that changes to the law can have.	Worksheet 5a, 5b, 5c or 5d (1 per pupil)
Plenary	'My new law is' / 'One new thing I learned is' templates (a few of each)



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Make some noise about what you've done!

Help us spread the word about the importance of legal literacy! We'd love to see what you got up to as part of The Big Legal Lesson. Send us your photos, ideas and feedback via social media @YoungCitizensUK using the hashtag #TheBigLegalLesson.

Download our media pack for help with sharing your involvement. It includes branded graphics, social media posts, a press release template and other useful bits.

Tell us what you thought

Once you have delivered your activities, please take five minutes to complete a short evaluation form. Your feedback helps us to keep this campaign freely available. To say thank you we will put you into a prize draw for Amazon vouchers.



[Teacher Survey](#)



[Pupil Survey](#)



[Legal Volunteer Survey](#)

Other resources

Young Citizens has a range of other classroom resources available which explore the law in more depth including:

- [What Happens When Laws Are Broken?](#)
- [Magna Carta](#)
- [Relationships and the Law](#)
- [What are Human Rights?](#)
- [Conflicting Rights](#)
- [Discrimination](#)
- [Children's Rights](#)

We also have resources covering topics such as social action, democracy, digital citizenship, media literacy, money and finance and sustainability and climate action. **For more details and to access these free resources visit:**

<https://www.youngcitizens.org/resources>

Teacher training

Want to support your pupils to make their voices heard with key decision makers? Take a look at our online teacher training - [Getting Heard](#).

In this free training resource, we explore who holds 'the power' locally, and nationally, including political and financial decision-makers, and other influential people such as the media and religious and community leaders. The training provides you with the tools you need to support pupils to engage with decision-makers and influential people to make change in their communities.



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Introduction

Use **slides 2-3** to introduce the class to The Big Legal Lesson and what they will be learning about today.

Activity 1: Rules

Ask pupils to talk to a partner about the two questions on **slide 4** then ask each pair to complete **worksheet 1 – school rules**.

Take in some feedback from pairs then use **slide 5** to summarise what school rules are and why we have them.

Finish the activity by leading a discussion on how your school rules are decided – **slide 6**.

Activity 2: The rule of law

Working with their partner ask pupils to discuss the questions on **slide 7**. Take in some feedback before revealing the information on **slide 8**. **Slide 9**, challenges pupils to describe a law. Take in some ideas before sharing the two example laws:

The law	Fun fact
Children must use a car seat until they're 12 years old or 135cm tall, (whichever comes first).	<p>The use of children's car seats was introduced in 2006. The rules are different in some situations. For example, if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The child is in a taxi or minicab;■ The child is in a minibus, coach or van;■ The child is on an unexpected journey, for example an emergency. <p>Any driver caught with children not strapped into a vehicle in the correct way could risk a £500 fine and perhaps points on their licence.</p>
You must not smoke in a car if there is anyone under 18 there.	<p>This law was introduced in 2015. If broken both the driver of the car and the smoker could be fined £50. The law does not apply to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ E-cigarettes;■ A driver who is 17 years old if they are on their own in the car;■ A convertible car with the roof completely down.



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The Big Legal Lesson Big Challenge

Display **slide 10**. Read through the statements in the table below (or make up some of your own). Challenge pupils to stand up if they think the statement is against the law. Statements can be found on **slides 11-12**.

Throwing rubbish out of a car window	Yes Under environmental law, littering is a crime. The car's owner could be given a fine if litter is thrown from their vehicle.
Getting your ears pierced when you are 7	No There is no age requirement to get your ears pierced in England and Wales. However, most shops would not allow you to do so if you are under 18 unless you have your parent's permission.
Getting a job when you are 11	Yes There are lots of employment laws which are there to protect children. Generally speaking, the youngest age a child can work part-time is 13. There are a few exceptions. For example, acting and modelling.
Buying fireworks when you are 17	Yes The Fireworks Act is a law that sets out lots of rules about fireworks. For example, anyone under 18 cannot have fireworks in public places. You cannot set fireworks off late at night (after 11pm) except for on some special occasions like New Year's Eve, Diwali, Chinese New Year and Guy Fawkes night.
Getting a tattoo when you are 16	Yes It is against the law to tattoo a person who is under the age of 18, even if they give their consent, except when the tattoo is done for medical reasons by a medical practitioner.
Not going to school	It depends! In England, the law says that you have to participate in some sort of education if you are between the ages of 5 and 18. However, that doesn't always have to be in a school. For example, your family might choose to home school. Legally you do need to be getting an education. In the rest of the UK, you can leave education at 16.
Not cleaning up your pet dog's poo when out on a walk	Yes Under environmental law you will commit an offence if you leave dog poo on land to which the public can have access. You could receive a fixed penalty notice, and may be required to pay a fine.
Crossing the road when the red man is showing	No Whilst it isn't very safe, in the UK this isn't actually against the law. It is against the law in some places like Germany and certain states in America. However, you could be breaking the law if you intentionally cause danger to other road-users when crossing.



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Activity 3: What's the law got to do with me?

If pupils have completed The Big Legal Lesson taster activity you can skip this activity or do a short recap and move on to The Big Legal Lesson Big Challenge.

Read about Charlie's day on **slides 14-18**. Ask pupils to discuss all the ways they think Charlie's day has been affected by the law. Take in a selection of feedback before revealing the answers on **slides 19-20**.

Eating breakfast	The law stops supermarkets from offering price promotions on certain foods like those that are high in sugar. There are also laws about where these products can be placed in shops.
Watching TV	There are laws about what type of advertising can happen. Adverts must be truthful and honest and they must include accurate descriptions of products. There are certain things that you cannot advertise, like smoking.
Going to school	Parents have a legal duty to make sure their children receive an education. In England, the law says you have to stay in some sort of education until you're 18. In the rest of the UK, it is 16.
In the car	There are lots of laws about driving. For example, both Charlie and his grandad will need to wear a seatbelt. If Charlie is under 135cm he will also need to be in an appropriate car seat. Charlie's grandad will need to stick to the speed limit and can't be holding his mobile phone whilst driving or do anything that might take his concentration away from the road.
Petrol	It is against the law to sell petrol to anyone under the age of 16.
What you learn	Lots of schools have to follow the national curriculum. This sets out what subjects should be taught and what should be covered within those subjects. Schools are under a legal duty not to discriminate against a pupil on the grounds of certain protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation)
Lunch time	The law says that schools have to provide healthy and nutritious food and drink. Schools also need to make sure that pupils' medical, dietary and cultural needs are taken into account. The law also says that some pupils, who meet certain criteria, should get these meals for free.
PE	There is a law which tells schools they have to have an outside space that allows pupils to play outside and do PE outside.
Buying a game	Some video games will have an age limit. It is against the law to sell these games to someone under that age. The law also says that the game must be of satisfactory quality. If Charlie got home and the game didn't work the law says he could get a refund.
Homework	This one is a trick - there are no laws here! In years gone by the government have set guidelines about how much homework schools should be setting but these have never been made into law.
Playing Roblox	The Online Safety Act 2023 received Royal Assent on 26th October 2023. It will make social media companies more responsible for users' safety on their platforms, particularly children. For example, they will have to remove illegal content, protect children from harmful content and enforce age limits and age-checking measures.

Big Legal Lesson Big Challenge:

Display **slide 21**. Ask pupils to write about an average day in their lives showing all the different ways they interact with the law. A template for this can be found on **worksheet 2**. Alternatively pupils could draw out a time-line of their day and label the ways they think the law impacted them.



Activity 4: Who makes the law?

This activity can be run in two different ways.

Option 1:

This option works best in an open space, where pupils can freely move around.

- Display **slide 22**
- Select eight pupils and allocate each of them a role card from **worksheet 3a**.
- The eight pupils should space themselves out around the room and hold up their role card so it can be clearly seen.
- Allocate all other pupils a description card from **worksheet 3b**. Pupils should read their descriptions and then go and stand next to the matching role.
- Check that everyone has ended up in the correct place.
- Ask each group to discuss whether they think their role has the power to make or change the law. Groups who think they do have this power should stand up. Groups who do not think they have this power should sit down.
- Using **slides 23-25** and the information in the table on the next page discuss each group's decision.

Option 2:

This option works best when time is limited and pupils have limited space to move about.

- Display **slide 22** and give each pupil a copy of **worksheet 3c**.
- Ask pupils to match the role to its description
- Lead a discussion about which of the roles has the power to make and change the law; use **slides 23-25** to support. Additional information on each role can be found on the next page.
- Conclude the activity by asking pupils to colour their sheets in **red** = cannot make or change the law, **green** = can make or change the law.

Conclude the activity by sharing the information on **slide 26** which summarises who has the power to change the law and asks pupils to consider why so many different people are involved in this process.

The Big Legal Lesson Big Challenge:

Display **slide 27**. Challenge pupils to share all they have learnt so far with an alien who has just landed on their playground. They can use the sentence starters on **worksheet 4** to help or they could choose to present their ideas through other mediums such as a poster, PowerPoint or leaflet.



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Activity 4: Additional information on roles

Role	Can they make and change the law?
The Police	No The police are responsible for maintaining public order and safety. They enforce the law, preventing and investigating criminal activities. They have no direct involvement in making or changing the law.
A Judge	No It is not a judge's role to make the law but rather to uphold it.
A Lawyer	No. Lawyers are there to advise on the law; they cannot make or change it.
The King	Sort of, but not really! The final stage of getting any law created or changed is called Royal Assent. In practice, this is a formality and the monarch always grants Royal Assent. The last time a monarch refused was Queen Anne in 1707. The King is not able to introduce new laws.
MPs	Yes (but not on their own). At a general election, citizens vote for an MP to represent them in parliament. A total of 650 MPs are voted in and they all sit in a special chamber called the House of Commons. Part of an MP's job is to debate and vote on laws in the House of Commons. In order for a new law to pass, 50% or more of MPs have to have voted for it.
The Prime Minister	Yes (but not on their own). The prime minister is the leader of the government, the group of people who have been elected to run the country. The government can propose new laws and suggest changes to laws; however, these have to be voted and agreed on in parliament.
Citizens	Whilst citizens do not have any direct power to change the law, they can influence it. For example, by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Contacting their MP/local council representatives to express their views on matters they think are important;■ Petitioning the government;■ Campaigning for causes they believe are important;■ Taking part in peaceful protests.
A Lord or Baroness	Otherwise known as peers, these people form the second chamber of parliament – the House of Lords. They are appointed by the monarch on the advice of the prime minister because they are expert in their field (e.g. education, music, science, sport). Their job is to check and challenge the government. As part of this they discuss and debate any proposed changes to the law. The House of Lords cannot prevent bills passing into law, except in very limited circumstances, but they can delay bills and force the House of Commons to reconsider their decisions.



Activity 5: The changing law

Display **slide 28**. Split pupils into small groups. Groups will be asked to discuss a suggested change to the law and what impact the change might have. We have provided three examples on **worksheets 5a, b or c**. Alternatively you can create your own using the blank template on **worksheet 5d**.

Worksheet 5a - In England, children cannot be arrested and charged with a crime until they are 10. The law should be changed, the age should be raised to 12.

- This is known as the age of criminal responsibility. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the age of criminal responsibility is 10.
- Until 1998, in England and Wales it was agreed that children between 10 and 14 lacked the necessary intent to be criminally responsible for their actions under the principle of '*doli incapax*' ('incapable of devil'). The prosecution would have to prove that the accused child was intellectually and emotionally mature enough to know they were doing something seriously wrong. This has now been abolished.
- The age of criminal responsibility is different around the world. For example, in Nigeria it is 7, Scotland it is 12, France it is 13, Germany it is 14 and Belgium it is 18.

Worksheet 5b - In 2006, a new law was introduced. The law said that children must use a car seat until they are 12 years old or 135 cm, whichever comes first.

- Seatbelt law has evolved over the last 50 years.
- The first laws around seatbelts came in 1968, at this point they only really covered the fitting of seatbelts; it wasn't yet law that they had to be worn.
- In 1989, new laws were passed that made it a legal requirement for children to wear seatbelts and by 1991 all passengers had to wear them. However, car seats were not made a legal requirement until 2006.

Worksheet 5c - The law should be changed so that all school aged pupils get free school meals.

- The Education Act 1996 requires all schools to provide free school meals to disadvantaged pupils who are aged between 5 and 16.
- Since 2014, state-funded schools in England have been required by law to provide free school meals to all pupils in Reception and Years 1 and 2. In Wales all primary school children started to receive free school meals in September 2024.
- In recent years we have seen a number of high-profile people, such as footballer Marcus Rashford, campaigning for the provision of free school meals to be extended.

Plenary - In an ideal world

Slide 29 challenges pupils to use what they have learnt today to suggest a new law they would like to see introduced.

Extension: Why not try and get your local representatives involved? Pupils could write to their MP explaining their ideas for new laws. A template has been provided on **worksheet 6**. You can find out contact details for your local MP at www.writetothem.com

Tell us about your ideas: We'd love to hear what new laws pupils suggest. Take a picture and share with us @YoungCitizensUK #TheBigLegalLesson. A template is included for this at the end of this pack.



The Big Legal Lesson

Worksheet 1

School Rules

Task: Read the rule and then give three reasons why it is important.

Big Legal Lesson Big Challenge: Write down three more rules and explain why they are important.

Walk in the corridors.	Look after school equipment.	Treat others with respect.
1)	1)	1)
2)	2)	2)
3)	3)	3)
1)	1)	1)
2)	2)	2)
3)	3)	3)



The Law and Me

My day started when _____

At school I _____

After school I _____

The last thing I did before bed was _____

Re-read your day. Describe three different ways the law affected your day.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____



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Worksheet 3a

A Police Officer

A Judge

A Lawyer

The King

A Member of Parliament (MP)

A Citizen

The Prime Minister

A Lord or Baroness



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Worksheet 3b

This person works for an organised force which maintains order, prevents and detects crimes and enforces the law.

This person works in a court of law. Once it has been decided if someone is guilty or not guilty, this person decides what their sentence should be.

This person is an expert on the law. They can give advice on the law. They can also represent people in court.

This person is our monarch; he reigns over our country, and he is the Head of State.

This person's job is to represent citizens from a certain area of the UK in parliament. They win their seat in parliament at a general election.

Me, you, us! The people that live in a country.

This person is the leader of the government. They are the person in charge of the political party that won the latest general election.

This person sits in the House of Lords alongside about 800 other people. They are appointed by the monarch because they have expert knowledge in a certain area, e.g. education, sport, science and art.



The Big Legal Lesson

Worksheet 3c

Match the role to the description

Role
A Lawyer
A Lord or Baroness
A Judge
A Citizen
The Prime Minister
The King
A Member of Parliament (MP)
A Police Officer

Description
This person works for an organised force which maintains order, prevents and detects crimes and enforces the law.
This person works in a court of law. Once it has been decided if someone is guilty or not guilty, this person decides what their sentence should be.
This person is an expert on the law. They can give advice on the law. They can also represent people in court.
This person is our monarch; he reigns over our country, and he is the Head of State.
This person's job is to represent citizens from a certain area of the UK in parliament. They win their seat in parliament at a general election.
Me, you, us! The people that live in a country.
This person is the leader of the government. They are the person in charge of the political party that won the latest general election.
This person sits in the House of Lords alongside about 800 other people. They are appointed by the monarch because they have expert knowledge and experience in a certain area, e.g. education, sport, science and art.



What is the law?

An alien has landed on your playground.
You need to tell them all about the law and why it is important. Use these sentence starters to help you.



The law is _____

We need laws because _____

If we didn't have laws _____

Laws are made by _____



The Big Legal Lesson

Worksheet 5a

In England, children cannot be arrested and charged with a crime until they are 10. The law should be changed, the age should be raised to 12.

**Do you agree with this change?
Why/why not?**



Whose opinions should the government ask before making this change?

How would this change affect you?

How would this change affect others?

What might happen if this change didn't happen?



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Worksheet 5b

In 2006, a new law was introduced. The law said that children must use a car seat until they are 12 years old or 135 cm, whichever comes first.

**Do you agree with this change?
Why/why not?**



Whose opinions should the government ask before making this change?

How would this change affect you?

How would this change affect others?

What might happen if this change didn't happen?



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Worksheet 5c

The law should be changed so that all school aged pupils get free school meals.

**Do you agree with this change?
Why/why not?**



Whose opinions should the government ask before making this change?

How would this change affect you?

How would this change affect others?

What might happen if this change didn't happen?



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Worksheet 5d

<p>Do you agree with the change? Why/why not?</p>		<p>Whose opinions should the government ask before making this change?</p>
<p>How does this change impact you?</p>	<p>How does this change affect others?</p>	<p>What might happen if this change wasn't made?</p>



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Worksheet 6

Dear _____

My name is _____ and I am a pupil at _____

At school we have been taking part in The Big Legal Lesson, learning what the law is and why it is so important. We have been thinking about new laws we would like to see introduced in the UK.

A new law I would like to see is _____

I believe this law will benefit children because _____

Another reason I feel strongly that the law should change is _____

I am worried that if this law is not introduced then _____

Please can you support our campaign to change the law by _____

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,