



5 Washington Street
PO Box 630
Newark, NJ 07101-630



Developed by [Amanda Klein](#),
Education Outreach Specialist

Lesson Plan for Grade K-8 (with upper grade level extensions)

Summer Lesson Plan #7

How have Traditions and Rules Shaped the Newark Community?

Overview

- Categorizing people is a natural aspect of human behavior. How communities categorize or recognize its citizens can be detrimental to the health of a community at the same time some categorization can be beneficial to a community.
- Students will be looking at the customs nurtured by a community and how these customs are formalized into law.
- Students will think about the relationship between customs and laws as it relates to a safe, productive community environment.
- Students will consider the difference between laws and customs and begin to think about the rules they want to adopt in their classroom.
- The class will be able to create a socially inclusive contract that they can all sign as a symbol of their commitment to upholding the customs of their community.
- The building blocks of any community: customs, laws, rules, and contracts.
- Students can reflect on how the rules and customs of Newark have evolved overtime societies nurturing relationships among its members. Just as students attempt to establish rules to help the classroom community achieve the best environment for learners, they can investigate how the rules they have created may not be relevant in the future as society evolve so must customs and rules of society.

Learning Goals

1. Students will develop an understanding of the relationship among laws, customs, and community cohesion.
2. Students will be able to define the terms
 - a. Rule
 - b. Law
 - c. Contract
 - d. Custom

Materials

1. Large paper
2. “What is a law? What is a custom?” Venn Diagram handout
3. “Writing a Class Contract” handout
4. Dane’s Reflection from Lesson #6
5. Preamble Schoolhouse Rock: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yHp7sMqPL0g>

Activity #1

1. Ask students to think about what qualities a classroom community should have to provide a safe environment for all of its members. Students can meet in groups to discuss the following prompt:
2. The goal of a classroom community is to provide a space where all students can do their best learning. Refer students back to Dane’s story.
 - a. Do you think Dane’s school community was a good environment for all of the students? Why or why not?
 - b. What qualities does a class have when all students are able to feel and do their best?
3. Give students three to five minutes to discuss. Then ask each group to share its list of qualities and record their responses on the board.

Activity #2

1. Ask students to think about the relationship among rules, customs, and culture and ask them to answer the following questions:
 - “What could we do if we want to have a classroom with the qualities of a good learning environment?”
 - How do other communities try to get their members to behave in certain ways?”
2. Students will likely bring up the idea that countries have laws that everyone must follow or communities have traditions and customs that members adhere to.
3. When students mention laws or customs, ask them to identify specific examples.
4. Ask students to define:
 - a. Rule - a guide or principle for conduct or action
 - b. Law – rule, established by governments and institutions
 - c. Custom –rule, but more informal
 - d. Contract - is a document that turns customs into laws by making them enforceable by a government or other institution such as a religious organization
5. Have students create a Venn diagram giving examples of laws, examples of customs, and examples of laws that are also customs in Newark.
 - EXAMPLES:
 - Holidays often start as customs, but later become part of the laws, such as the Thanksgiving.
 - In some communities, if a person litters people in the community may not be happy about it, but the litterbug will not be fined or put in jail for the offense. Other communities have anti-littering laws. In those communities, littering is a police-able offense. A police officer could give a fine for such an offense.

Activity #3

1. Explain to students that they will create a class contract.
 - a. A contract is made up of rules as well as consequences, which explain what will happen if the rules are not followed.
 - b. Contracts often begin with mission statements which state the purpose or goals of the contract.
 - c. Give students the Preamble of the United States Constitution as an example. Allow students to watch Schoolhouse Rock: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yHp7sMqPL0g>
2. You may want to lead the class through the process of writing a class mission statement.
 - The mission statement might begin with the phrase, “To support the best environment for all students, we believe our class must. . . .”
3. After completing the class mission statement, ask students to meet in small groups to create a list of rules to support the mission or purpose of the class.
 - Ask students to consider consequences, if students do not follow the rules.
 - The handout “Writing a class contract” will to help structure students’ discussion in small groups.
4. Students will propose their rules to the class and the class will vote for each rule and consequence (majority rules voting).
5. Students, as a class, can finalize the rules and consequences on a large sheet of paper and sign the document as individuals.
6. Explain to students the rules established were all a result of compromise, in order to do the most good for the greatest number of students

Activity #4

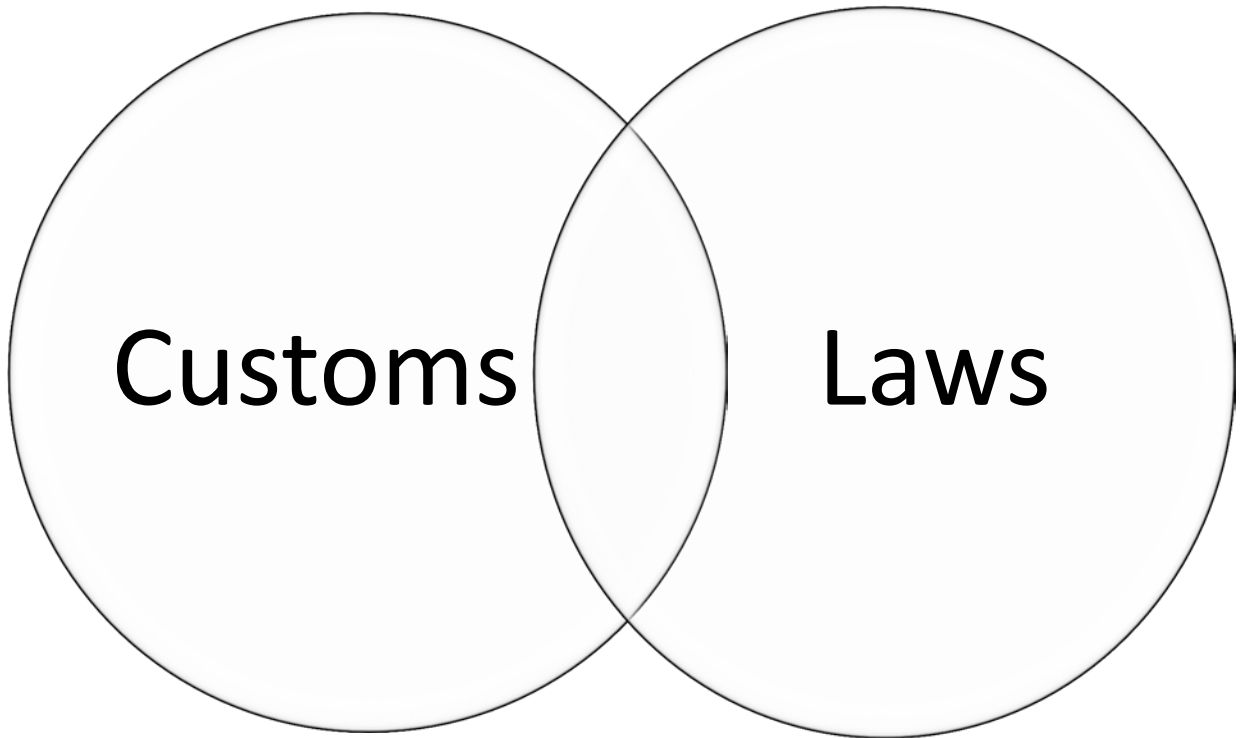
Ask students to reflect on the contract they created by answering the following question and later sharing them with a partner:

1. Does having a contract that is unique to this class contribute to a feeling of community? Why or why not?
2. Do you feel any differently about this class now than you did before the contract was created?
3. What is the difference between writing the rules yourself and being told what the rules are?
4. What role should community members have in creating the rules?
5. What is the difference between how laws are made and how customs are established?
6. What would it take to establish class customs?
7. Give an example of a custom you would like to have in this class.
8. Do you think these same rules will be useful for students in 20 years? How might rules change over time?

Activity #5

1. Since this is the last lesson, now is an appropriate time to have students review what they have learned about identity and community.
2. Have students look through their body of work they have produced over the course of these lessons.

3. Ask students to make a list, “The Top Ten Things I Have Learned about Myself and My Newark Community.”
4. At this time they can choose the works they created during their lessons they would like to include in their community gallery.
5. Allow them to arrange their works in a hallway or class to facilitate a gallery walk through.



Writing a Class Contract

Record the class mission statement here:

What rules might help your class achieve its goals as a community?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

What should happen if a member of the community does not follow the rules?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.