

Rules RULE!

This lesson provides an overview of responsibility but also examines perseverance. As students in 5th grade likely already have a good understanding of what responsibility means, we are looking more at what keeps us making responsible choices, especially when we don't feel like it. This lesson gives students an opportunity to discuss why we have rules that help us be responsible and why rules actually exist to help us and not limit us.

Kindness Sub-Concept(s)

Perseverance

Lesson Timeframe

25-30 minutes

Required Materials☐ These Rules RULE worksheet**Standards Map**

This lesson aligns with CASEL Competencies, National Health Education Standards, and Common Core State Standards. Please refer to the [Standards Map](#) for more information.



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See last page for details.

Lesson Objective

- Students will analyze the role of perseverance in responsible decision making.

Teacher Connection/Self-Care

Whether you're a first year teacher or a veteran, you owe it to your students to plan. Try sorting your students into groups based on learning style instead of academic level. How does this change your groupings?

Tips for Diverse Learners

- When calling on students to share which rules they have broken, be aware of students who might over-share or who are routinely breaking the rules or getting into trouble. Frame the question differently if such discussion might embarrass or trigger students who regularly struggle with following the rules. (This is different from the embarrassment that honest accountability might inspire; in this case, the embarrassment is temporary and leads to revelations more associated with humility. This, in turn, may create a sense of urgency to self-correct or even a sense of solidarity with others as we all make mistakes or break rules sometimes - both healthy manifestations of humility that could lead to better choices later).

**Share**

5-7 minutes

Students may be familiar with the concept of responsibility, but ensure they know the Random Acts of Kindness Foundation for **responsibility**, which is *being reliable to do the things that are expected or required of you*.

Ask:

- What are some things that people expect or require you to do?

Discuss:

Take this concept further by asking students: What if you don't want to do something that you are responsible for? What motivates you to do the things that people expect or require/need you to do, even if you don't want to?

Answers may vary here; often kids do things simply because they are told or because they are attached to other things like grades or privileges. Acknowledge that it can be hard to do things you don't want to do, even if there is a good reason why you have to do them. This is where **perseverance** comes in - which is *trying our best, even when it gets hard, until we reach our goal*. Or, in this case, until we fulfill our responsibilities.



Inspire

5-7 minutes

Now take a minute to review with students the rules you have for your classroom. Feel free to read them if they are posted or ask students to tell you what the classroom rules are. Undoubtedly you have both written and unwritten rules.

Ask:

- Why do you think we have these rules?

Invite student responses. Look for things like, *the rules help keep our classroom safe, help us learn in an organized environment, help us have fun while taking our work seriously, help us be able to hear and see everything, help us stay on time.*

Go Deeper:

Good! Now, let's have an honest chat. How many of you have ever broken one of these rules?

Invite student response. When you call on a student to share, ask him or her why he/she chose to break the rule.

This is where perseverance comes into play. We must overcome the temptation to break the rules even if it feels like it won't be a big deal. Building our perseverance muscles will help us make responsible choices all the time!



Empower

10-15 minutes

Rules Rule

Often rules get a "bad rap" - meaning we only see rules as things we cannot do vs. things that help us be the best we can be. For this activity, students are going to take the rules of your classroom that you just discussed, and write a positive affirmation about why that rule "rules"! (e.g., is really super awesome...)

Instructions:

1. Pass out an Our Rules Rule worksheet (below), one to each student.
2. Have them pick 3-5 of your classroom rules and write them on the paper.

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3. Under each rule, have them finish the sentence starter: "This rule RULES because_____."



Reflect

5-7 minutes

When the class is finished, have them come together and share their ideas and the rules they picked and why they think those rules RULE.



Extension Ideas

- If this goes over well with the classroom rules, students could do something similar with school rules and create a series of "This rule RULES" posters and hang them up around the school to remind other students that the rules exist to help them be their best!



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The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has been reviewing evidence-based SEL programs since 2003. Kindness in the Classroom® meets CASEL's SElect Program and is included in the [CASEL Guide to Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs](#).

Kindness in the Classroom® met or exceeded all of CASEL's criteria for high-quality SEL programming. Kindness in the Classroom® received CASEL's highest designation for high-quality SEL programming.

<https://casel.org/guide/kindness-in-the-classroom/>

These Rules RULE!

Select 3-5 classroom rules and write them on the numbered lines below. Then, under each rule, finish the sentence starter and explain why that rule is actually totally awesome.

Rule #1:

This rule RULES because:

Rule #2:

This rule RULES because:

Rule #3:

This rule RULES because:

Rule #4:

This rule RULES because:

Rule #5:

This rule RULES because:
