

RIGHTS IN PRACTICE

LESSON 4: CITIZENS AND THEIR RIGHTS

Lesson aim:

- ↘ Briefly introduce students to the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
- ↘ To engage students in questioning the purpose, extent and effect of the law in Ireland.
- ↘ To examine the Irish constitution in more detail and identify the rights contained in it.
- ↘ To look at amendment procedures and the role of democracy.
- ↘ Examine enforcement and how breaches are dealt with.

Learning objectives:

At the end of this lesson students will be able to:

- ↘ explain the rights of citizens and where they come from; and
- ↘ understand the importance of citizen participation.

Lesson outline:

In-class activity: Constitutional rights

Open the discussion by referring back to the section on 'Citizen and legal rights and responsibilities'. Discuss with students the origins of rights as citizens, in particular referring to the Irish constitution. Provide students with a copy of the Constitution and a list of proposed and enacted amendments (these can be found on either of the websites listed in the resource).

Students should then complete **Worksheet 2** for homework.

Class debate: Constitutional debate

If the class has been able to organise a series of debates with other classes or other schools, a possible topic could be on the Irish Constitution. Topics should be chosen by students but could include debating on:

- ↘ specific articles of interest;
- ↘ proposed or enacted amendments;
- ↘ a new proposal for an amendment from students;
- ↘ the quality of the amendments procedure; or
- ↘ does the Irish Constitution recognise 21st century Ireland?

Student activity: Essay on the Irish Constitution

Ask students to write an essay on an aspect of the Irish constitution. Teachers can choose their own topic or select one from the following suggestions:

- ↘ "The Irish people should always have the right to veto a constitutional amendment."
- ↘ "Referenda are a waste of taxpayers money as people are no longer political."
- ↘ "Our method of amending the Constitution is democracy in its highest form."

Student assignment: Rights exercise

Based on the work already undertaken, ask students to write a charter of citizen's rights for society outlining some of the rules they would create. This assignment can take any form of expression the student chooses, such as an essay, poster, artwork, animation, storyboard etc.

All students should be given the opportunity throughout the school year to present their work to the class. They should also be prepared to defend and give the background to each of the rights within their charter.