

LESSON 6: YOUNG PEOPLE AND UNIONS

Lesson aim:

- To give students a first-hand account of the work of unions.

Learning objectives:

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

- outline the kind of work a union is involved in;
- understand how young people can become active in unions; and
- explain the work of youth committees in unions.

Lesson outline:

Explain to students that they can invite a guest speaker to their classroom to talk about unions in general and young people in particular.

Prepare with the class a set of questions they would like to ask the speaker during the session. The following includes possible questions that students would like answered but they should be encouraged to develop their own set.

Possible questions:

- What union are you a member of?
- Why and how did you join?
- What have you gained by being a union member?
- What role do you have in your union and describe what it entails? Why did you take it up?
- Does your union have a youth committee and if so what kind of work do they do?
- How would you encourage young people to join a union?
- How can students get involved in unions?
- Indicate the issues of concern to young workers.

The class can then write a letter/email of invitation with an outline of the questions and topics they would like

covered during the session. This can be sent by email to congress@ictu.ie or posted to:

YouthConnect, Irish Congress of Trade Unions
Congress House, 31-32 Parnell Square, Dublin 1

Class activity: Debates

Debating gives students an opportunity to practice a range of valuable skills that are also useful in the workplace. This activity is designed to assist students to articulate and argue their points successfully. It also requires students to prepare fully and present their arguments in a logical fashion.

Outline:

- Each debating team should have no more than four speakers for and against the chosen topic.
- Presentation of each speaker's argument should not exceed five minutes with a reply time of two minutes.
- Time should be allocated to take contributions from the floor.
- At the end of each debate, the class should vote on whether they agree or disagree with the motion.
- All students should have the opportunity to participate in a debate.

Suggestions for motions:

The following are some suggested motions for debate but classes may decide their own motion:

- "A union is only needed when you are in trouble."
- "Unions are as relevant today as they were 100 years ago."
- "The union organisation is outdated."
- "Young workers are crucial to the survival of the union movement."
- "With strong employment laws, unions are no longer required."

Additional resources: www.schoolsdebate.com