

How a Law is Made

Areas of Learning:

Personal Development and Mutual Understanding
The Arts

Learning Intentions

We are learning to:

- use our imagination to help understand why we need laws in our community;
- appreciate how a law is made at the Northern Ireland Assembly;
- explore the role of an MLA during the law making process; and
- discover the importance of democratic decision making.

Statutory Requirements

Following the online and class activities will contribute to the following statutory requirements:

Personal Development and Mutual Understanding

Teachers should enable the children to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in:

Strand Two: Mutual Understanding in the Local and Wider Community

Playing an active and meaningful part in the life of the community and being concerned about the wider environment.

Theme 6*: Rules, Rights and Responsibilities

- appreciate how and why rules and laws are created and implemented;
- understand that rules are essential in an ordered community and the need for different rules in different contexts; and
- identify the variety of groups that exist within the community and their roles and responsibilities.

Theme 9*: Learning to Live as Members of the Community

- know about the importance of democratic decision-making and involvement and the institutions that support it at a local level; and
- know about the range of jobs and work carried out by different people.

* Personal Development and Mutual Understanding Progression Grid (Key Stage 2) can be downloaded from the KS1&2 section of the Northern Ireland Curriculum website at: www.nicurriculum.org.uk



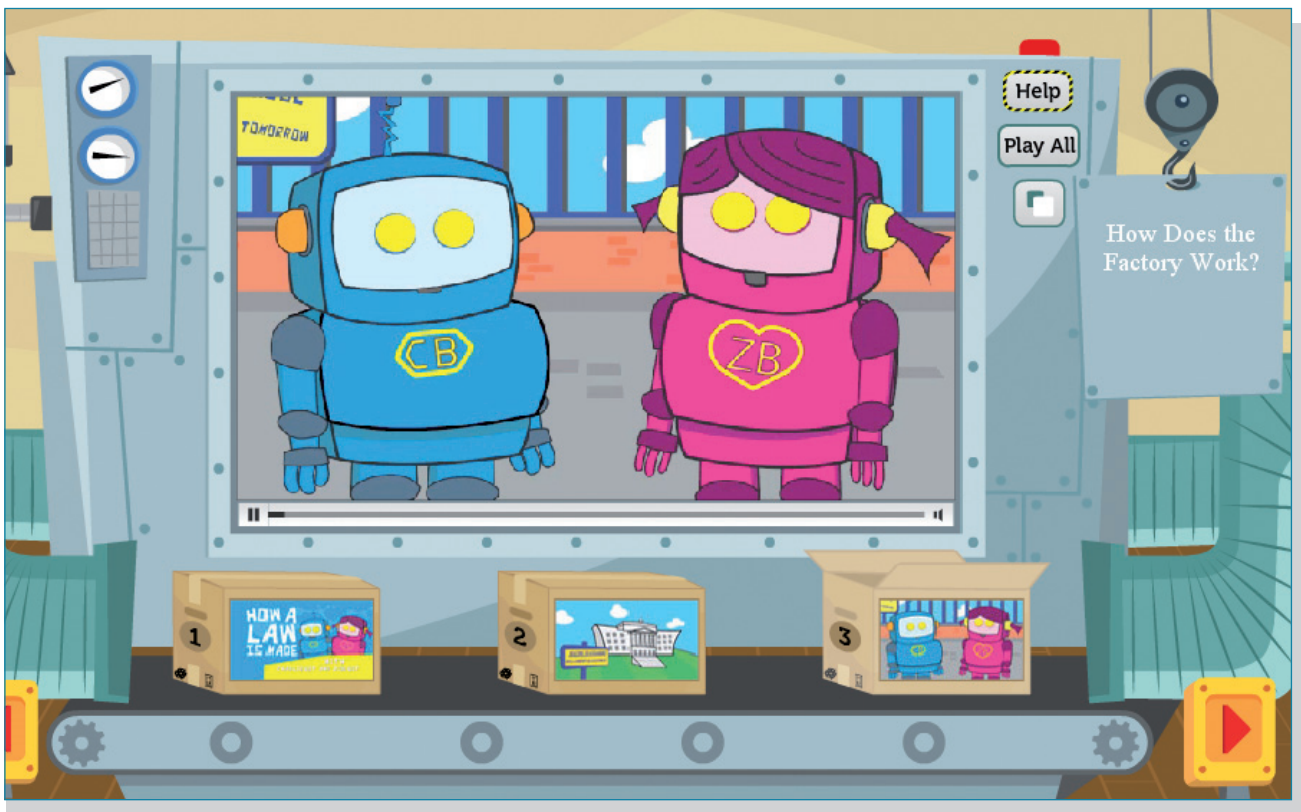


Teachers should enable the children to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in:

The Arts – Art and Design

Pupils should be enabled to:

- Use a range of media, materials, tools and processes such as: drawing, painting, printmaking, malleable materials, textiles and three-dimensional construction, selecting which is appropriate in order to realise personal ideas and intentions.





Cross-Curricular Skills & Thinking Skills & Personal Capabilities

Following the online and class activities will provide the opportunity to develop the following skills and capabilities:

<p>Communication: <i>Talking and Listening</i></p> <p>Working With Others</p> <p>Thinking, Problem-Solving and Decision-Making</p>	<p>By working in groups to create new laws in the Starter and Follow-Up Activities, the children will have opportunity to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • listen to and take part in discussions, explanations, role plays and presentations; and • communicate information, ideas, opinions, feelings and imaginings, using an expanding vocabulary. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show that they can work with in different roles in a group and take responsibility for appropriate tasks; and • work with their peers to reach agreements. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explain and justify methods, opinions and conclusions; and • examine options and weigh up pros and cons.
<p>Being Creative</p>	<p>Through using the Mind Movies exercise and creating a law making machine using junk art materials, the children will have the opportunity to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • experiment with different modes of thinking, for example visualisation; and • experiment with objects and ideas in a playful way.





Overview

How a Law is Made is an animation featuring Charlie Bot and Zoe Bot. The robot school children discuss why we need rules and how laws are made at the “law making factory” of the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Prior to showing the animation to the children, complete the Starter Activity with them. The Starter Activity is an imaginative task exploring why we need rules in the community.

The Follow-Up Activity then focuses on the process of how laws are made by MLAs at Northern Ireland Assembly and the importance of democratic decision-making.

Starter Activity



Use the Mind Movies exercise on page 50 of the Active Learning and Teaching Methods for Key Stages 1&2 booklet*. Ask the children to close their eyes and imagine that they have gone back in time to a town in the Wild West. Read the following scenario to them:

As you approach the town, a horse and rider gallop towards you. The old sheriff pulls his horse to a halt in a cloud of dust. He tells you that he has heard gold has been discovered in the mountains and he is off to find his fortune. He tosses his star-shaped Sheriff badge into your hand. You are the new sheriff! Just before he rides away, he tells you that he hasn't had time to make any rules to keep law and order in the town – he was too busy trying to make his fortune by playing cards in the casino. Unfortunately things have got a bit out of hand in the community, but he's pretty sure you can sort it out! The old sheriff wishes you luck and then gallops off in a whirlwind of dust.

You look at the shiny star in your hand. Should you stay or should you turn on your tail and run? You decide to ride on into your new town. What chaos do you find as you enter? What rules will you make to restore law and order in the town?

* Active Learning and Teaching Methods for Key Stages 1&2 booklet can be downloaded from the KS1&2 section of the Northern Ireland Curriculum website at: www.nicurriculum.org.uk



After giving the children a few minutes to think, split them into groups. Each group should discuss their thoughts and make a list of the bad behaviours that they imagined. Suggestions may include:

- riders galloping horses at full speed through the centre of the town;
- fighting in the street;
- cattle rustling;
- vandalising Wanted posters;
- dropping tumbleweed and other litter;
- inequality among citizens;
- smoking near the hay barn;
- no age limit for the casino; and
- no age limit for the bars.

When they have had time to discuss in their groups, ask the children to choose three types of behaviour from their list that they could fix by making a law. Tell the children that if they make laws that make the townspeople feel happy and safe, they will put up a monument in their honour!

Give each child a copy of Resource 1. Working in groups, ask the children to note down the three areas they are making a law for. On the left side of the scroll, they should declare their new law. On the right side, they should think about what law the old sheriff might have had in place. Remind them that the old sheriff didn't do a very good job! When ready, each group should present their sensible and silly laws. They should describe what happens under the silly law with, for example, horses galloping through the main street of the town with no speed limit, then explain how their new law changes this for the better.

At the end of the activity, the children should be congratulated for restoring law and order to their Wild West towns. To recap, ask the children the following questions:

- Why do we need laws?
- Do any of their new laws relate to the rules they find in their community?
- As there are no sheriffs in Northern Ireland, who are the people keeping law and order in our community?
- Do they know who makes the laws in Northern Ireland or where the laws are made?

Online Activity

The How a Law is Made animation in the **Primary** section of the Northern Ireland Assembly Education Service website features robot school children Charlie Bot and Zoe Bot. They discuss why we need rules and how laws are made at the "law making factory" of the Northern Ireland Assembly.

To play the animation as a whole or in chapters, click on:

- the Play All button to view the full animation;
- the numbered boxes on the conveyor belt to view separate chapters;
- the red arrows at each side of the conveyor belt to navigate forward and back through the chapters; and
- the Full Screen button to play the animation at maximum size.





You may like the class to watch the whole animation in Full Screen mode to get an overview of how a law is made. The children could then navigate the individual chapters to research information on the different stages of the law making process in the Follow-Up activity.

As the children watch the animation, ask them to listen for the answers to the following questions:

- Who makes the laws in Northern Ireland?
- Where are the laws made?
- Can they list the names of the different Stages in how a law is made?

Related Activities

The Northern Ireland Assembly Education Service website contains other multimedia resources which may be related to this activity:

Who Are Your MLAs?

Use the map to find out who your MLAs are and which constituency you live in for the Northern Ireland Assembly elections.

Follow-Up Activity

Check how the children got on picking out the answers to the questions in the Online Activity. After watching the animation, they should know that MLAs make laws at the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Ask if anyone caught the names of all the different stages a Bill (the suggestion for a new law) must pass through to become a law. Write the names of the different stages the children feedback on the board. Get the class to organise the new phrases in the correct order:

New Words and Phrases

1. First Stage
2. Second Stage
3. Committee Stage
4. Consideration Stage
5. Final Stage
6. Royal Agreement



In the animation, the different stages of the law making process are represented as different parts of the law making machine. Explain to the children they are going to work in 6 groups to build different parts of this machine using junk art materials, for example boxes, tin foil, string, buttons. They must clearly label their part of the machine with the name of the Stage they are given from the list. When they have finished, the children should work together to organise the different parts of the machine in the right order.

The children can use the media in the How a Law is Made section of website for:

- ideas on how their machine might look; and
- help to explain how their part of the machine works to the rest of the class.

When the machine is assembled in the correct order, the children will test if it is working by using it to make a law:

- Each group should come up with a suggestion for a law, for example laws to improve the school community or the laws they created in the Starter Activity.
- Their law should be written on a large sheet of paper to be passed along the different parts of the machine.

Ask each group to imagine that they are MLAs. As the Bill passes to their part of the machine, they must explain to the rest of the class what MLAs do at that Stage. For example, at First Stage the idea for a new law is written down and introduced to the rest of the MLAs at a large meeting, at Second Stage they decide if they think the Bill is a good idea or not by voting Aye or No, the Committee may suggest some amendments during the Committee Stage. When they have explained what happens at their Stage, the group should consider the pros and con of the Bill and vote to democratically decide if it will pass to the next Stage. They must be able to explain the reason for their decision.

When each group has had a chance to put their idea for a new law through the machine, evaluate the Bills that have passed or been rejected. Why? Debrief by reminding the children that MLAs are elected to make these decisions for us, so it is important people vote to have a say in what is decided.





Resource 1: My Law and Order Scroll



New Law



Old Law

A Law for...

A Law for...

A Law for...

