

Playing by the Rules



Do you raise your hand when you want to speak in school? If so, you have followed a rule. Rules can be as simple as raising your hand and as complicated as knowing when you are “out” in a game.

Laws are rules, too, but they are made differently. Rules can be made by anyone. You probably make rules when you play with friends. Rules ensure that

you can play without fighting about what’s fair. If you change your minds, you can change the rules. Sports, such as hockey and softball, are played by rules, too.

In contrast, laws are made by elected representatives. Voters agree to allow their representatives to make laws that ensure that everyone stays safe and is treated fairly. Laws can’t be changed as often as rules, so representatives consider laws carefully before making new ones.

Being a good citizen involves following rules and obeying laws. The biggest difference between rules and

laws is the penalty for breaking them. If you break a rule, your penalty might be as small as losing a turn in a game. If a person breaks an important law, though, the penalty might be a fine or time in prison.

Parents make rules that help children stay healthy and safe. Having a bedtime is a rule. Rules at home might also include doing chores, such as washing dishes or cleaning your room.

Teachers make rules to help students learn and stay safe. Asking permission to use the restroom lets the teacher know where you are. Also, raising your hand before asking a question helps the class focus on the lesson.

Adults follow rules and obey laws, too. Traffic laws ensure that people travel safely. You follow traffic laws, too, when you cross the street at a corner instead of jaywalking.

Rules and laws keep everyone safe. They ensure that people work and live together in peace and fairness.

