

EduTrend Contents

W4C · CIVICS & CITIZENSHIP · PRIMARY

Playground Parliament

Debate and vote on a new law

Ages 8–11	Level: Developing	60 minutes	Whole class in teams	Activity 02

Inside: activity at a glance · step-by-step session plan · facilitator notes · 3 pupil worksheets · assessment checklist

ACTIVITY 02 · AT A GLANCE

Playground Parliament

The class becomes a parliament. A proposal, such as a new playground rule, is presented. Pupils form parties, prepare arguments, debate with a Speaker, suggest amendments and vote by secret ballot, then compare the process with how laws are made.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session pupils can:

- describe how a law is proposed, debated and voted on;
- give a reason for or against a proposal and listen to others;
- explain why secret ballots and majority votes are used;
- compare the class process with a real parliament.

KEY WORDS

parliament · law · proposal · debate · Speaker · amendment · majority · secret ballot · democracy

CURRICULUM LINKS

Citizenship: democracy and how laws are made. English: spoken argument. C3 Framework, Dimension 2: Civics and processes.

1	2	3	4	5	6
NOTICE	**LEARN**	**LISTEN**	**DISCUSS**	**DECIDE**	**ACT**
What is the issue?	Rights and rules	Hear every view	Weigh the evidence	Vote or agree	Make a difference

Materials (per class)

- Proposal card (for example “Ball games only on one half of the playground”)
- Role cards: Speaker, clerk, party leaders
- Ballot papers and a box
- A simple diagram of how a law is made in your country
- Worksheets 1, 2 and 3

Before the session

- Choose a proposal that genuinely divides opinion but is safe to discuss.
- Arrange tables as two sides facing each other with the Speaker at the front.
- Prepare ballot papers with Yes and No.
- Find a simple diagram of how laws are made in your country.

SAFETY

Set ground rules for respectful disagreement: challenge ideas, not people. The Speaker can pause the debate.

ACTIVITY 02 · SESSION PLAN

Step by step

Give the Speaker real authority. Pupils learn most from following the rules of debate.

Time	What happens	Say or ask
0–10 min Hook	Present the proposal. Quick show of hands: who agrees?	*"Who would this rule affect?"*
10–20 min Prepare	Teams prepare two arguments for and two against.	*"What evidence supports your view?"*
20–35 min Debate	The Speaker calls speakers in turn; others listen and note points.	*"Which argument was strongest?"*
35–45 min Amend	Teams propose amendments; the class votes on each.	*"Does the change make the law fairer?"*
45–60 min Ballot	Secret ballot, count, announce, then compare with the real law-making diagram.	*"Why is the ballot secret?"*

CHALLENGE CARD (print or copy onto the board)

Debate a proposed new rule, improve it with amendments and decide by secret ballot, then explain how a real law is made.

ACTIVITY 02 · FACILITATOR NOTES

The citizenship in brief

In a representative democracy, people elect representatives who propose, debate and vote on laws in a parliament or assembly. Proposals are debated and can be changed by amendments before a final vote. A majority vote decides, and a Speaker or chair keeps debate orderly.

Secret ballots let people vote freely without pressure. Democracies also protect minorities through rights and courts, so a majority cannot simply override everyone else. Comparing the class process with a real diagram shows extra stages, such as a second chamber or approval by a head of state.

Common ideas to listen for

- “The loudest person wins the debate.” Arguments and votes decide, not volume.
- “Once proposed, a law can’t change.” Amendments often improve laws.
- “Majority rule means minorities don’t matter.” Rights protect everyone.

Adapting the activity

Support

Provide argument cards to choose from and sentence starters: “I agree because…”, “I disagree because…”.

Stretch

Research a real law that affects children and trace its journey through parliament.

WORKSHEET 1

Preparing arguments

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Think about both sides.

Arguments

For the proposal	Against the proposal

An amendment we could suggest

WORKSHEET 2

Debate notes

Note the best points you hear.

Points

Speaker	Point made	Strong or weak?

WORKSHEET 3

How laws are made

Compare our parliament with a real one.

Steps in our class

Steps in a real parliament

Why do we use secret ballots?

FOR THE TEACHER

Assessment checklist

Use during the session. One sheet covers up to eight pupils; copy as needed.

Pupil	Gives reasons in debate	Listens and responds to others	Explains how laws are made

Suggested codes: W = working towards · E = expected · G = greater depth

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

Playground Parliament is a sample activity from the EduTrend Contents W4C Civics & Citizenship programme (primary, level: developing). Every activity in the programme follows the same format: a practical challenge, a clear session plan, facilitator notes and ready-to-print worksheets, so that teachers, club leaders and parents can run it without extra preparation.

Full 15-, 20- and 32-week programmes are available from EduStore at edutrend.org.

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