

DO WE NEED LAWS?

You are travelling with your hockey team to the Australia-Pacific U-18s Hockey Tournament.

You are flying on a small plane with 40 people on board.

Somewhere over the Pacific Ocean, one of the plane engines catches on fire and the plane is forced to crash land on a deserted island. Unfortunately the front of the plane with all the communication systems is wrecked and there is no way to call for help.

The 40 survivors of the crash gather to talk about the options and decide that because you are the largest group on the plane, your team should be responsible for making sure everyone on the island is safe and doing the right thing.

The first rule you come up with is for everyone on the island to help clear the fertile land near the beach and begin farming. The second rule is that someone must stay up each night and keep a bright fire going.

The first week on the island is productive and morale is high as the group feels hopeful about a rescue. However, problems start to arise on the island. As a group setting the rules you need to work together to respond these situations.

You need to decide whether a law is needed, and what the law should be. You also need to explain your reasons so as to convince the other survivors to follow the rules.



Is a law required? Why?

One survivor kills another while arguing.

One person bashed another person who has taken some of his potatoes

At first, every works for 5 days on the farm and then rests for two. After two weeks, a few people start ignoring these rules and only work 2 days a week.

A group starts having parties at night, keeping others awake

Someone drops the matches used to light the fire in the ocean

Some people discover a large supply of chocolate in the plane and keep it for themselves

A group of adults start to protest against your laws and campaign to take over the responsibility of law-making

Some people discover a two antique pistols in the plane and keep them for themselves.

Is a law required? Why?

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF LAWS?

Law making has been a feature of human societies for many thousands of years. Laws may arise from religious beliefs, customs, morality (ideas about what is right and wrong), or from a need to ensure that people can live safely. Each society has its particular needs for which particular laws arise. However, many needs are common to all societies.

Look at the reasons for laws and decide which reasons apply to the laws you have decided your society needs. You can select more than one reason.

REASONS FOR LAWS

Morality: To acknowledge what is fundamentally right or wrong

Privilege: To give special status and power to selected people.

Personal liberty: To protect people's rights to do what they want.

A smooth-running society: To develop a society in which people behave fairly and settle disputes peacefully.

Protection: To ensure people's physical, mental and financial well-being and prevent them from harming each other.

Discussion and reflection questions:

1. Do you think discussing between group members helped you to make better decisions for the laws than you would have by yourself?
2. Which 'reason for law' have you recorded most often?
3. Why do you believe that this appears frequently?
4. What makes a law 'good'?
5. What makes a law 'bad'?

