

WHAT MAKES A GOOD LAW?

Laws are fundamental to achieving social cohesion and protecting the rights of individuals. They establish a framework in which people live, set boundaries for behaviour, and allow groups and individuals to make choices about how they live.

A legal system is a set of methods and institutions which makes, administers and enforces laws. Having a legal system helps to ensure that rights are upheld, and that society continues to function effectively.

Choose three characteristics from the list below that you believe are most important for making 'good law'. You can also make up some of your own if you wish.

A good law....

- protects individual freedom
- protects the collective safety of the community
- protects fundamental human rights
- rewards good behaviour
- contains clear and strong punishments for breaches
- is simple to understand
- is simple to enforce
- reflects the moral standards of the community
- reflects the views of the majority of people in the community
- reflects the views of the well-educated people in the community
- has flexibility to be applied different to everyone, as everyone is different
- applies to everyone in the community equally



Discussion questions

Explain why you chose your three characteristics. How do they relate to fairness and justice?

What is an example of a criminal law and a civil law that reflects and upholds your three characteristics?

Was it difficult to decide which characteristics were the most important? Why, or why not?