



Objectives:

1. To learn about the Constitution and Referendums
2. To devise their own Constitution
3. To develop an experiential understanding of the key principals in the Referendum through group work.

You will need:

1. A copy of Bunreacht Na hÉireann
2. 4-6 Copies of the Our Constitution Worksheet for older children
3. 25-30 Copies of the Our Constitution (drawings) for younger Children.

Length: 80 Minutes (can be delivered in sections)

Content	Activity	Time
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The Constitution is the fundamental law of the state and proclaims our values as a society. The Constitution was enacted on 1st July 1937 and established how Ireland will be governed, what rights Irish citizens have and how its citizens will be protected. To change the Constitution the people must vote in a referendum to accept or reject the proposed change. (If possible, hand out a copy of the Bunreacht Na hÉireann). ▶ Although the Constitution recognises the fundamental rights of every citizen, it doesn't explicitly recognise children as individual rights holders. Many people, both in Ireland and internationally, have called for this amendment to strengthen the rights of children and protect the most vulnerable children. ▶ The government has agreed to hold a Children's Referendum which aims to ensure that children are visible in the Irish Constitution. Ireland will vote to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Recognise children as independent rights holders B. Provide a mechanism to ensure children are heard in cases that affect them C. Ensure that the best interest of the child is taken into account in relevant decision-making. 	10 mins
Age Ranges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ If children are too young to write their Constitution, they can use the worksheet below to draw pictures illustrating their Constitution. 	



Content	Activity	Time
Activity (Group Work)	<p>Devise a constitution with the children. This can be for the classroom, school yard, youth group or centre.</p> <p>Divide the group in to four groups, hand the attached worksheet for each group. Ask children to take out their Rights and Responsibility Worksheets to help them write their new constitution. (for younger children have sample rules) Ask them to choose someone to do the writing.</p> <p>Tell the children to take 5 minutes to discuss and devise the first three rules on the worksheet, then ask them to pass the worksheets to the group next to them. Ask them to read the first three rules and add the next three rules and then pass to the next group, and repeat. On the last group ask the children to add the last rule and discuss the rest of them.</p>	25 mins
	<p>Collect all four documents and write out the rules that were similar in each document. Ask the children to vote on adopting the new Constitution. (This can be simplified through a show of hands or can be done using a secret ballot)</p>	10 mins
Discussion	<p>Discussion Points:</p> <p>Ask the children to think about the exercise and how they organised the group. Ask them as a group did they protect everyone's rights to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Be heard (Did everyone feel listened to?) ▶ Be treated equally (Did everyone make the decisions?) ▶ Speak for oneself (Did everyone get a chance to speak?) ▶ Be respected (Did everyone feel there opinions mattered?) ▶ Be included (Did everyone contribute?) <p>Can they see the importance of getting the group to ensure rights are always protected?</p>	5 mins
Activity Extension (Referendum)	<p>Either on the same day or subsequent day combine all of the rules that differed or that you think are missing on to a sheet of paper with a yes or no box for each rule. Discuss this new document and hold a Referendum to adopt the changes to your Constitution.</p>	30 mins
	<p>Write up your new Constitution and photocopy it on to an A3 sheet and sign it.</p>	



OUR CONSTITUTION

We along with _____ are responsible for ensuring our rights and the rights of others are protected so that everyone feels safe, is treated equally and is able to fully participate and learn.

To do this we agree to the following:

Article 1: We have a right to:

1.

2.

3.

Article 2: In order to ensure everyone is treated equally we will:

4.

5.

Article 3: In order to protect everyone's right to fully participate and learn we will:

6.

7.

8.

Article 4: In order to be and feel safe we will:

9.

10.

Additions:

EST:

OUR CONSTITUTION

GROUP:



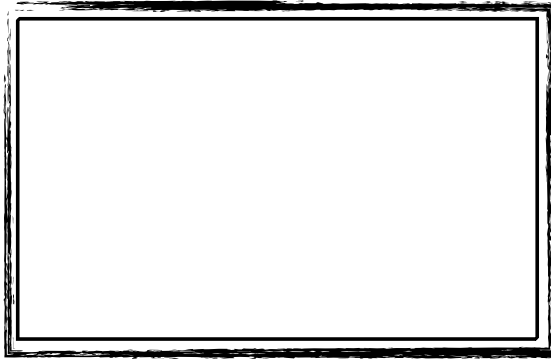
PREAMBLE:

WE WILL MAKE SURE THAT EVERYONE'S RIGHTS ARE PROTECTED, SO THAT WE ARE...

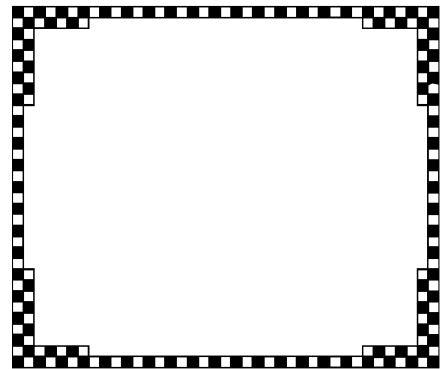
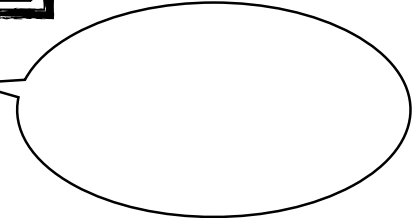
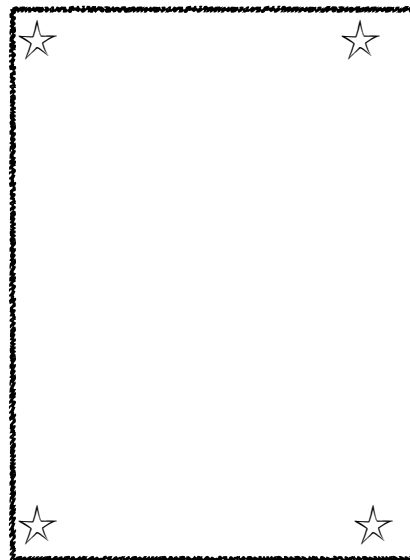
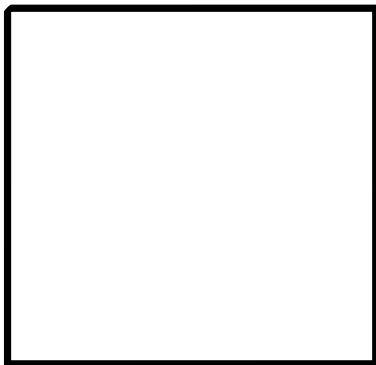
- * SAFE
- * INCLUDED
- * ABLE TO LEARN
- * TREATED EQUALLY

TO DO THIS WE AGREE...

RULES WE MUST ALL FOLLOW...



OUR RESPONSIBILITIES



OUR RIGHTS

