

# Rules, Rules, Rules

## OVERVIEW

Students will begin the activity by reflecting on when and why rules are needed. The *Pass the Eraser Game* allows students to actively think about the importance of rules in the classroom or in a community setting.

## PROCEDURE

1. Begin by dividing the class into two separate lines and by telling them that you want them to play the *Pass the Eraser* game.

### The *Pass the Eraser* Game

**Step One.** Tell them “Okay, let’s play the *Pass the Eraser* Game.” Do not say anything else, and do not give them any rules. [Note: The students will probably look confused and ask you, “How do you play it?” or “What are we supposed to do?”]

As the game begins, students will begin to realize that they will need to know the rules in order to play the game.

**Step Two.** Tell the first person in each line to “Let’s begin the game. The first person in each line should pass the eraser from the front to the back of the line.”

**Step Three.** Tell the last person in line to “Bring the eraser to the first person in line.”

**Step Four.** Allow the students to play for 30 seconds. After 30 seconds, interrupt the game to give the students new directions. Tell them “Oh wait, you are supposed to pass the eraser with your eyes closed. Let’s start the game over and follow these new directions.”

**Step Five.** After 30 seconds, interrupt again to tell them “Actually, you are supposed to pass the eraser with your left hand.” Once again, start the game from the beginning.

**Step Six.** Allow the students to play for 30 seconds before changing the directions again. Tell them “You should all be on your knees when you pass the eraser. We will have to start the game over.”

**Step Seven.** After 30 seconds, interrupt one last time to tell them “You must walk backward to the front of the line when you bring the eraser forward.” Start the game from the beginning.

**Step Eight.** Allow the students to play for 30 seconds, and then stop the game.

2. Once the game has stopped, review the problems with the students. Ask them if they had any difficulties with the game. Ask them to explain what problems they experienced.
  - Help them understand that they had difficulties because of the way that the rules were given. Lack of agreement about the rules and constant changes of direction lead to confusion.
3. Write “A rule should be easy to follow” on the chalkboard. (See additional “Tests for Good Rules” below.) Brainstorm with the students to develop a clear set of rules for the *Pass the Eraser* game. List the students’ suggestions for rules of the game. Ask the entire class to vote to select a few simple rules for the game.

### Tests for Good Rules

A rule should be easy to follow.

A rule should be simply stated.

A rule should include only activities we are able to perform.

A rule must be enforceable.

A rule must not go against another rule.

A rule should have a penalty for breaking it.

4. Play the game again by following the rules created by the class. This will demonstrate that clear rules and directions make for a better structured and positive, productive experience while playing together.



5. After the students have successfully played the *Pass the Eraser* game, observe that people in classrooms and communities need to have rules to live and work together.
  - Ask students to think about why people need rules in families, in schools, on playgrounds, and in communities.
  - List responses on chart paper or the chalkboard. As a class, review the list and consolidate similar ideas.
  - Note: Keep the list of responses on chart paper for later use.

This activity is based in part on material adapted from *Rules, Rules, Rules*, developed by David T. Naylor, et al. (Ohio State Bar Association, 1980) and from the Elementary Law-Related Education Source Guide, grades 3-6 (Cleveland Public Schools, 1981). The Eraser Game is adapted from the Buckle Game designed by Harriet Bickelman Joseph.