

A Day at the Ministry: Magical Law and You

Subject: Language Arts, Civics, Critical Thinking

Grade Level: Adaptable for Ages 9-14 (Middle Grades)

Time Allotment: 60-90 minutes

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- **Describe** the primary purpose of a government department using the Ministry of Magic as a model.
 - **Develop** a persuasive argument to support a new rule or law.
 - **Apply** creative problem-solving skills to a fictional governance scenario.
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Materials Needed

- Paper (plain, lined, or parchment-style)
 - Pens, pencils, colored pencils, or markers
 - **Optional:** Access to the internet for research (e.g., looking up Ministry of Magic departments)
 - **Optional for Craft Extension:** Tea bags or instant coffee (for aging paper), ribbon or string, a red crayon and a lighter/flame (adult supervision required) for a wax seal.
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Lesson Plan

I. Introduction (10 minutes)

Hook: An Urgent Owl Post!

"Imagine this: An owl taps at your window, not with a letter from Hogwarts, but with a formal-looking scroll sealed with a large 'M'. You've been selected for a prestigious one-day internship at the Ministry of Magic! Your assignment is in the busiest, most important department of all: The Department of Magical Law Enforcement. Before you can start, you need to understand what they do. Why does the wizarding world even need a department like this?"

State Objectives Clearly

"Today, as a Ministry intern, your mission is to understand why rules are important, learn how to propose a new magical law, and create your own official Ministry document. By the end of our session, you'll be an expert on magical governance!"

II. Body (35-50 minutes)

This part follows the 'I do, We do, You do' model to build skills step-by-step.

Part 1: What is the Department of Magical Law Enforcement? (I do - 10 mins)

Educator's Role (The Senior Ministry Official): "Welcome to the Ministry. Before we put you to work, let's review the basics. The Department of Magical Law Enforcement is like the government, police, and courts of the wizarding world all rolled into one. Its main job is to create and enforce laws that keep witches and wizards safe and, most importantly, keep the magical world hidden from non-magical people (Muggles)."

Key Points to Explain:

- **Purpose:** To create, enforce, and judge laws.
- **Examples of Laws:** The Decree for the Reasonable Restriction of Underage Sorcery (prevents kids from doing magic outside of school) and the International Statute of Secrecy (the big one about hiding magic).
- **Sub-Departments:** Mention a few cool ones like the Auror Office (elite dark wizard catchers) and the Wizengamot (the high court).

Formative Check (Q&A): "In your own words, what is the most important job of this department? Why can't witches and wizards just do whatever they want?"

Part 2: Proposing a New Law (We do - 10 mins)

Educator's Role: "Every year, the Ministry considers new laws. A proposal must be clear, persuasive, and solve a problem. Let's practice together. I'm concerned about garden gnomes. They're always getting underfoot and causing a mess."

Collaborative Brainstorm:

- **Propose a silly law together:** "The Mandatory Gnome Relocation Act." This law would require all garden gnomes to be kindly relocated to designated national gnome sanctuaries.
- **Discuss the "Why":** Why is this law needed? (e.g., "To prevent twisted ankles in gardens," "To give gnomes a safe place to live with their friends.")
- **Discuss the "Cons":** Who might disagree? (e.g., "People who like their garden gnomes," "Gnomes who don't want to move!")
- **Discuss Enforcement:** How would the Ministry enforce this? (e.g., "Specially trained Gnome Relocation Officers.")

This guided practice demonstrates how to think through the consequences of a new rule in a fun, low-stakes way.

Part 3: Intern Project - Your Official Proposal (You do - 15-30 mins)

Educator's Role: "Alright, intern, it's your turn to make your mark on the wizarding world. You have a choice of two official tasks. Your work will be submitted to the Head of the Department for review."

Provide a Choice:

Option A: Write a Law Proposal Scroll

Draft a formal proposal for a new magical law. Your proposal must be at least one paragraph and

include:

1. **The Name of the Law:** (e.g., The Magical Creatures' Right to Privacy Act)
2. **The Problem it Solves:** What is going wrong in the wizarding world?
3. **Your Solution:** A clear description of your new law.
4. **One Strong Reason:** The most persuasive reason why the Ministry should pass your law.

Option B: Design a Public Information Poster

Create a poster that the Ministry could hang in Diagon Alley to inform people about a new or existing law. Your poster must include:

1. **A Catchy Slogan:** (e.g., "Loose Lips Sink Spellships!" for the Statute of Secrecy)
2. **A Clear Illustration:** A drawing that shows the law in action or the problem it prevents.
3. **The Law's Name and Purpose:** A brief, simple explanation.

Law Ideas for Inspiration:

- A law regulating the speed of flying broomsticks in residential areas.
- A law requiring all potions to have clearly labeled ingredients.
- A law about the proper and humane treatment of house-elves.
- A law banning the use of charms to cheat on school exams.

Success Criteria:

- **For Option A:** The proposal is clear, persuasive, and includes all four required elements. The tone is formal and professional.
- **For Option B:** The poster is visually engaging, the slogan is memorable, and the message is easy to understand at a glance.

III. Conclusion (10 minutes)

Present Your Work

The learner presents their law proposal or poster, explaining their reasoning and creative choices. The educator acts as the "Head of the Department," listening intently.

Recap and Reflect

Ask reflective questions:

- "What is one thing you learned about why laws are made?"
- "What was the most challenging part of your task?"
- "If your law were passed, what change would you hope to see in the wizarding world?"

Connect to the Real World

"Your internship is complete! You did fantastic work. Just like in the Ministry of Magic, our own communities have systems for making rules to keep people safe and society fair. Thinking about problems and proposing solutions is a powerful skill, whether you're dealing with wizards or Muggles."

Assessment

- **Formative:** Observe participation and understanding during the Q&A and the "We do" brainstorming activity.
 - **Summative:** The completed Law Proposal (Option A) or Public Information Poster (Option B) serves as the final assessment. Evaluate it based on the success criteria outlined in the "You do" section.
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Differentiation and Adaptability

- **For Younger or Struggling Learners (Scaffolding):** Provide a fill-in-the-blank template for the law proposal (e.g., "My law is called _____. It is needed because _____."). For the poster, provide a pre-written slogan and have them focus on the illustration.
- **For Older or Advanced Learners (Extension):** Challenge them to write a counter-argument. "A witch or wizard has written to the *Daily Prophet* to complain about your new law. Write their letter to the editor, explaining why they think your law is a bad idea." Alternatively, have them design a three-step enforcement plan for their law.
- **Homeschool/One-on-One:** The lesson works as written. The educator can provide direct feedback and engage in a deeper discussion.
- **Classroom Context:** Use "Think-Pair-Share" for brainstorming law ideas. Students can work in small groups ("Ministry Committees") to create their proposals or posters and present them to the class.
- **Training Context:** The core activity can be adapted to a corporate setting. "Propose a new company policy (e.g., for meetings, remote work) and create a one-page brief or internal marketing poster to persuade leadership."