

LESSON 1: INDIVIDUAL, SOCIETY & STATE

Law & Citizenship Course • *Ghid practic de educație juridică - „Elevul și legea”* • Judecător Cristi Danileț



FREE BECAUSE OF RULES



In a democracy, rules don't limit
freedom — they protect it.
Every citizen's rights exist because
we all follow the same fair laws.

LESSON CONTENTS

PART 1

WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

Freedom and rules working together; how democracy balances power

PART 2

WHY DO WE HAVE RULES?

How rules protect equal freedom in homes, schools and public life

PART 3

THE CONSTITUTION & NATIONAL SYMBOLS

How the Constitution organizes power and defines shared identity

PART 4

FROM IDEA TO LAW

The steps from proposal to publication — how a law becomes binding

PART 5

REVIEW & PRACTICE

Quiz, key concepts and reflection tickets

LAW & CITIZENSHIP COURSE

WHAT YOU'LL LEARN IN THIS CHAPTER

In this chapter, you'll see how **freedom and rules work together**. A democracy means people are in charge, not a single ruler. To prevent abuse, power is split into **three branches** that watch and balance one another: Parliament makes the laws, the Government & President apply them, and the Courts interpret them and settle conflicts. The Constitution stands above all other rules; it sets how the state is built and what **fundamental rights and duties** we all have. By the end, you should be able to explain why rules **protect freedom**, name who makes, applies, and judges laws, and describe how a bill becomes binding for everyone. You'll also recognize Romania's **national symbols** and why they matter for our shared identity.

HOW A DEMOCRACY ACTUALLY WORKS

FREE BECAUSE OF RULES

WHY SPLITTING POWER AND FOLLOWING RULES KEEPS EVERYONE FREE

In a modern democracy, **people are in charge**. Citizens choose representatives to work for the public good, not for private interests. To stop any group from getting too much control, state power is split into **three branches** that watch and balance one another. Clear rules **don't crush freedom** — they **protect it**, so your freedom and mine can exist at the same time.



Warm-Up Activity



Write one rule that actually makes your life easier — at home, school, or online. Why does it help?
Share your answer with a classmate.

Rules limit force, not freedom.

WHY DO WE HAVE RULES?

People live together — in families, schools, cities, and online spaces. Without rules, **the loudest voices would dominate** and **the weakest would be ignored**. Conflicts would be solved by **force or popularity**, not by **fairness**. Rules set **clear, shared limits** so everyone can **learn, move, speak**, and **feel safe**. The aim isn't to limit your life; it's to **protect equal freedom** for different people with different needs. That's why we meet rules **everywhere** — at home, at school, on the road, in parks, at the beach, and on social platforms.



At School & Online

No bullying or cheating; protect your accounts; give credit when you use someone else's work.



Why it helps

Rules protect the shy, the new, and the different; everyone gets a fair chance.



On the Road

Follow traffic lights and crossings; wear a seatbelt; bikes use lanes safely.



Fairness, not force

Problems are solved by rules everyone knows, not by who shouts louder.



In Public Spaces

Respect queues; keep areas clean; follow safety signs (pools, parks, beaches).



Shared freedom

Your freedom ends where someone else's begins — and rules keep that line clear.

Imagine and Reflect

Imagine a world with no rules at all — at school, on the road, or online. What do you think would happen? Would people feel safer or more afraid? Write 2–3 sentences below.

WHO DOES WHAT IN THE STATE

Lawmakers



Legislative Power

- **Parliament** – makes laws for the country. Members discuss, amend, and vote on proposals that become national laws.

Executors



Executive Power

- **Government & President** – apply the laws, create public policies, and manage national programs and services.

Judges



Judicial Power

- **Courts & Judges** – interpret laws, resolve conflicts, and punish violations. Justice must be fair, independent, and equal for all.

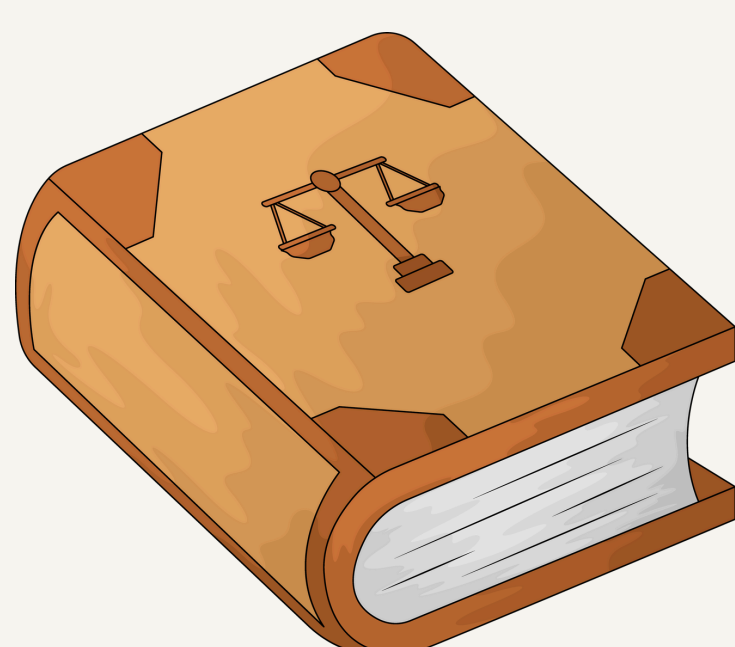
Referee



Constitutional Court

- Acts like a referee when branches clash. It checks if new laws or decisions respect the Constitution.

Key terms



Mini-Glossary

- **Democracy** = demos (people) + kratos (power). Citizens decide directly or through elected representatives.
- **Rule of Law** = everyone equal before the law.
- **Citizenship** = belonging, rights, and duties in a state.

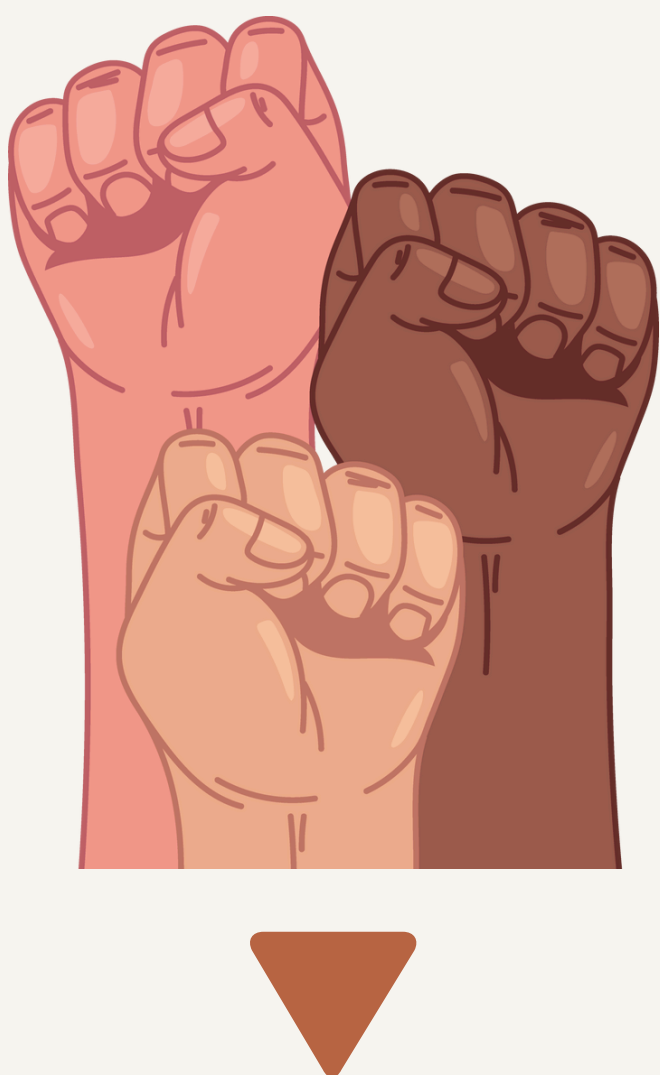
THE CONSTITUTION & NATIONAL SYMBOLS

A country's **Constitution** works like an operating system — it shows how **power is shared**, **what rights people have**, and **what keeps them united** as a nation. Romania's Constitution, **approved by citizens through a referendum**, defines our **institutions**, **rights**, and **national symbols** — the flag, anthem, and national day.



INSTITUTIONS

The Constitution explains how the state is organized. It defines the three branches — legislative (Parliament), executive (Government and President), and judiciary (courts) — and how they work together.



RIGHTS & DUTIES

It lists the fundamental rights and duties of every citizen — freedom, equality, responsibility, and respect for law. All other laws must follow these constitutional principles.



NATIONAL SYMBOLS

Romania's Constitution defines our symbols: the flag (blue, yellow, red), the national day (1 December), and the anthem “Deșteaptă-te, române!”. They represent unity and national identity.



WHY SYMBOLS MATTER

They express shared history and identity, remind institutions to serve the people — not themselves — and unite citizens both in celebration and in difficult times.

HOW A BILL BECOMES BINDING FOR EVERYONE

FROM IDEA TO LAW

Proposal

A bill is introduced by MPs or the Government.



Draft

Committee Review

Specialized committees study the draft and propose amendments.



Experts check

Debate & Vote

Both chambers of Parliament debate and vote on the text.



Public decision

Promulgation

The President signs (promulgates) the law.



President signs

Publication

The law is published in the Official Gazette (Monitorul Oficial). From this moment, everyone must respect it. Local rules appear in the local official monitor.



Law for all

So what for me?

„I didn't know” is not a valid excuse after a law is published. Parliament has two chambers — the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies — with fixed terms.

Democracy works only if citizens take part (when eligible) and follow rules — that's how freedom stays real for everyone.

Try it: Pick one everyday rule (e.g., traffic lights). Who is protected? What happens if ignored?

QUIZ — Lesson 1

Check what you've learned about how democracy and laws work. Read each question carefully and choose the correct answer.



- 1** Who holds power in a democracy?
 - a) The army
 - b) The people
 - c) The president alone
- 2** Which branch makes the laws?
 - a) Judicial (Courts)
 - b) Executive (Government & President)
 - c) Legislative (Parliament)
- 3** Who applies the laws?
 - a) The Parliament
 - b) The Government & President
 - c) The Constitutional Court
- 4** Who interprets the laws and resolves conflicts?
 - a) Courts & Judges
 - b) Parliament
 - c) Citizens
- 5** What is the Constitution?
 - a) A simple rulebook for schools
 - b) The country's highest law
 - c) A list of local regulations
- 6** What happens after a law is published in the Official Gazette?
 - a) Only adults must follow it
 - b) Only voters must follow it
 - c) Everyone must follow it
- 7** When branches of power clash, who acts as referee?
 - a) The Police
 - b) The Constitutional Court
 - c) The Prime Minister
- 8** Why are rules important?
 - a) They replace personal responsibility with government control
 - b) They make equal freedom possible by setting shared limits
 - c) They guarantee that popular groups always win conflicts
- 9** What do national symbols represent?
 - a) The current government's program and promises
 - b) The shared history and identity of the community
 - c) Advertising used mainly for tourism and sport
- 10** What does „Rule of Law” mean?
 - a) During emergencies, leaders may act above the law
 - b) Courts must follow instructions from elected officials
 - c) Laws bind institutions and citizens equally — no one is above the law.

QUIZ — Lesson 1

ANSWER KEY



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KEY CONCEPTS FROM LESSON 1



DEMOCRACY

Power of the people — citizens choose representatives to govern for the public good.



SEPARATION OF POWERS

Division of state authority into legislative, executive, and judicial branches.



LEGISLATIVE POWER (PARLIAMENT)

Makes national laws through debate, amendment, and voting.



EXECUTIVE POWER (GOVERNMENT & PRESIDENT)

Applies laws, manages public services, and runs national policies.



JUDICIAL POWER (COURTS & JUDGES)

Interprets laws, settles disputes, and ensures justice is fair and independent.



CONSTITUTION

The country's highest law — defines institutions, rights, and duties for all.



CONSTITUTIONAL COURT

Referee of democracy — ensures laws and actions respect the Constitution.



RULE OF LAW

Everyone is equal before the law; no one is above it.



NATIONAL SYMBOLS

The flag, anthem, and national day express unity and shared identity.



OFFICIAL GAZETTE

Where new laws are published; from that moment, they apply to everyone.