# Who Sets the Rules?

Sort everyday responses to behavior

**S.10.2** "Identify formal and informal, as well as positive and negative forms of social control employed in our society."

NAME _____ DATE _____

| FORMAL | INFORMAL |
|---|---|
| Formal social control uses official rules. An organization or person with authority gives the response. | Informal social control comes from everyday reactions, not official rules. People may show approval or disapproval. |
| A city inspector fines a restaurant for violating a health code. | Neighbors cheer when a resident plants flowers in a shared garden. |

## 1 SORT

8 items

Circle FORMAL or INFORMAL for each item, then choose two items and explain what makes each one fit its category.

1. A rider thanks someone for giving up a bus seat. FORMAL INFORMAL
2. Classmates glare at a student who cuts in the lunch line. FORMAL INFORMAL
3. A principal assigns detention for breaking a written school rule. FORMAL INFORMAL
4. Coworkers smile when a colleague shares credit for a project. FORMAL INFORMAL
5. A judge orders community service after a vandalism conviction. FORMAL INFORMAL
6. An employer gives a bonus under a written performance policy. FORMAL INFORMAL
7. Audience members shush someone who talks during a play. FORMAL INFORMAL
8. Friends stop inviting someone who repeatedly insults them. FORMAL INFORMAL

## 2 PROVE IT

Explain your thinking

Pick two items from Part 1. For each one, tell how you knew where it belonged.

**ITEM #** _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

**ITEM #** _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

## 3 MAKE YOUR OWN

One of each

Write one new example of FORMAL social control and one new example of INFORMAL social control, and state who gives each response.

**FORMAL** _____

**INFORMAL** _____

**CHALLENGE**

Describe one behavior that could receive both a formal and an informal response, and identify who gives each response.

**ANSWER KEY**

# Who Sets the Rules?



## PART 1 · SORT

| # | ITEM | CATEGORY | WHY |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | A rider thanks someone for giving up a bus seat. | **INFORMAL** | A passenger shows approval through an everyday reaction. |
| 2 | Classmates glare at a student who cuts in the lunch line. | **INFORMAL** | Peers show disapproval without using an official rule. |
| 3 | A principal assigns detention for breaking a written school rule. | **FORMAL** | A school official enforces a written rule. |
| 4 | Coworkers smile when a colleague shares credit for a project. | **INFORMAL** | Peers show approval through an everyday reaction. |
| 5 | A judge orders community service after a vandalism conviction. | **FORMAL** | A judge imposes an official legal penalty. |
| 6 | An employer gives a bonus under a written performance policy. | **FORMAL** | An organization gives a reward under its written policy. |
| 7 | Audience members shush someone who talks during a play. | **INFORMAL** | Other audience members show disapproval without an official penalty. |
| 8 | Friends stop inviting someone who repeatedly insults them. | **INFORMAL** | Friends change how they treat the person without enforcing an official rule. |

## PART 2 · PROVE IT

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item.

## PART 3 · MAKE YOUR OWN (SAMPLE ANSWERS)

- **FORMAL**: A transit agency issues a citation to a rider for boarding without a ticket under its written fare policy.
- **INFORMAL**: Teammates thank a player for helping clean up after practice.

**Challenge:** A student copies answers on a test. The school gives a zero under its written academic policy (formal), and classmates voice disapproval (informal).

For Part 2, item 3 is formal because a principal enforces a written rule; item 8 is informal because friends respond without enforcing an official rule.