

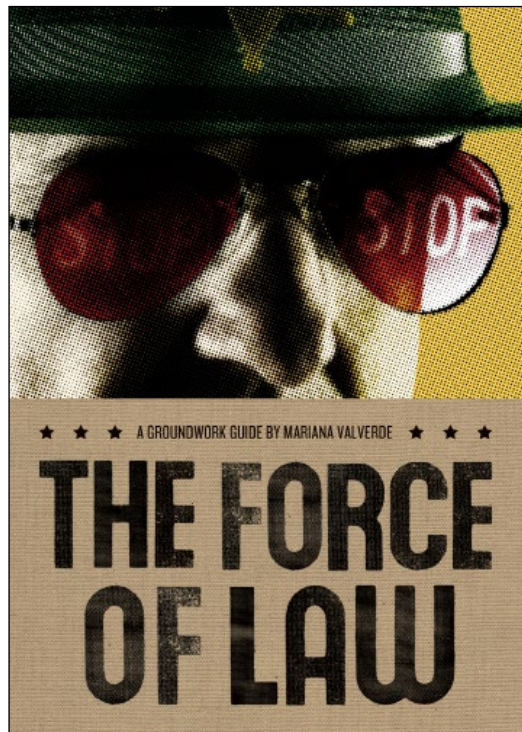


GROUNDWOOD STUDY GUIDES

The Force of Law

A Groundwork Guide

Written by Mariana Valverde



This book examines the meaning of law from a global perspective and the many connections between law and law enforcement.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Ages 14 and up / Grades 9 and up

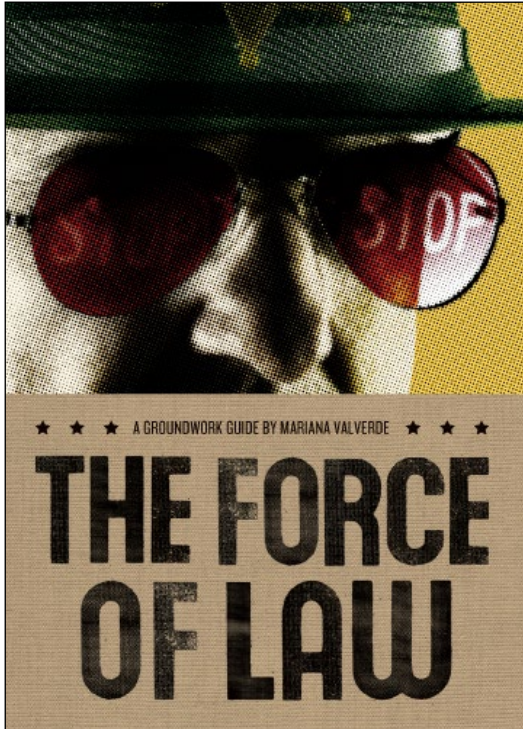
YOUNG ADULT NONFICTION / Social Studies / Business Studies / English Language Arts

5 x 7 / 144 pages

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BOOK DESCRIPTION

This book examines the meaning of law from a global perspective and the many connections between law and law enforcement.

The book studies the following topics:

- the meaning of law and how the principles of the rule of law developed
- cultural norms and the relation between laws and norms
- the relationship between law and justice
- police — who they are and what they do
- law enforcement that results in more harm than good
- issues of “policing the police” and police–citizen relations

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

- Social Studies (Civics, Geography, History, World Studies)
- Humanities and Social Sciences
- Business Studies (Economics)
- English Language Arts
- Arts (Visual Arts, Theater Arts)
- Information and Communications Technology
- Career Studies

IDEAS FOR GETTING STARTED

Introduce the book and your goals for studying it, and briefly outline the issues the book explores. Tell students that issues-based study raises varied opinions and that, as a class, you will set some ground rules for maintaining a respectful and safe classroom atmosphere for discussing personal views and beliefs. Ask the class to collaborate to create a list of expectations, such as “We’ll respect one another’s privacy”; “We’ll listen to one another”; and “We won’t insult one another.” Post the list and revisit it periodically to allow students to make observations and air problems.

Use *The Force of Law: Getting Started* (in this Teachers’ Guide) to initiate self-reflection and discussion of students’ ideas and attitudes about some issues of law and justice.

Introduce terms that will appear in the study of *The Force of Law*. Ask students to provide definitions and discuss their understanding of the terms. Examples are law, justice, enforcement, civil law, statutes, jurisdiction, constitution, common law, precedents, security, subculture, criminology, reparations and accountability.

As a discussion starter, show clips from some current and past television shows or films from the genre of law and law enforcement. Alternatively, ask students to name shows and movies of this genre that they like and dislike. Have class or group discussions using questions such as “What do you like and dislike about this show?” “What impression of police/lawyers/judges does this show present?” “How are the relations between the different systems (such as the

FBI and police; police and lawyers; crime-scene specialists and police) depicted?” “How do you think real-life police officers would preceive this show?”

TEACHING/LEARNING APPROACHES

Read the book as a class, with group or class discussions at the end of each chapter and a culminating activity at the end. You could use a combination of teacher read aloud, guided reading and independent reading.

Have students read the book independently and create their own study project.

Assign groups of students one chapter each and have them read it and present it to the rest of the class.

Have students read the book in groups and then either collaborate on a culminating activity or complete it independently.

Ask students to keep an Issues Journal (in writing or on audio or video) in which they comment on what they have read and/or discussed. Encourage frequent updates throughout the study of *The Force of Law*. Let students know from the outset whether the journal is for personal use only or if it’s meant to be part of their assessment.

IDEAS FOR DISCUSSION

How did you feel when you were reading this book? What did you learn? What surprised you? What misconceptions did you have that were corrected? What do you agree with? What do you disagree with? What would you like to learn more about?

What three principles does the author say make up the core of the rule of law?

How would you define “justice”?

What do you think of Hobbes’s statement, “Covenants without the sword are but words”? And the author’s, “Enforcement, then, which may involve violence, is an integral part of law”?

Do you think anyone within a country should be “above the law”? Are there any times when a person should have this power?

What does the author mean by “the face of policing has been transformed by private capital”? What examples does she cite?

How does the policing of disorder differ from the policing of crime?

What do you think about the “Mosquito” — the device that emits a high-frequency noise in order to disperse gatherings of young people?

What is your opinion on community policing? What does the author suggest is necessary for effective community policing?

Valverde writes, “In addition, law-and-order policing strategies are often counterproductive, and when they succeed, they usually succeed only in displacing the problem from one place to another.” What examples does the author use to support this statement? What do you think about it?

Why should the rule of law matter to you? Why does the author encourage citizens to become knowledgeable about law enforcement issues?

IDEAS FOR ACTIVITIES

Students use online resources to find the mottos of various police forces (such as “With honour we serve” from the Queensland Police, Australia) and to look at a variety of badges, symbols and icons used. Students work independently or in groups to create a badge and motto that represents the ideals they think are of utmost importance for a police force in their community. (Some students may prefer to create a badge for an international police force.) Afterward, have a discussion about whether the ideals and expectations might differ depending on the community, state, province or country.

Subjects: Social Studies (Civics, Geography, World Studies), Humanities and Social Sciences, Arts (Visual Arts), English Language Arts

A group of students organize a panel discussion on issues from *The Force of Law*. They identify and invite panel members as well as a moderator, and establish the purpose and topics to be covered, inviting suggestions from the rest of the class.

Subjects: Social Studies (Civics, Law, History, World Studies), Humanities and Social Sciences, English Language Arts

Students work in pairs to select a routine part of a typical day (see suggestions below) and identify as many laws as they can that relate to it (e.g., on their walk to school, they didn't jaywalk when they crossed the street; they didn't carry a weapon; they didn't drink underage, etc.). Extend the activity by having students distinguish cultural norms that apply to the situation, but that are not law. Students can share their ideas and their observations about the laws and norms in larger groups. Ideas include

- walking through a park
- attending a concert
- driving to school
- shopping at a mall
- catching a flight at an airport
- playing street hockey

Subjects: Social Studies (Civics, Law), Humanities and Social Sciences, Health/Career and Life Management, English Language Arts

Students select a police force or security agency — from the past or existing — that they want to know more about, such as a private security firm; political police organizations such as the CIA, NSA, MI5 or KGB; or a particular country's police force. Students can present their research findings in an essay, oral report or slideshow.

Subjects: Social Studies (Civics, Law, Geography, History, World Studies), Humanities and Social Sciences, English Language Arts

Students do a comparative study on a law-related theme of their choice. Some ideas:

- compare an Indigenous system of law with any other system of law
- compare two (or more) countries' police system
- compare two justice movements from history
- compare two (or more) historical examples of a ruler acting “above the law”
- compare two (or more) countries' attitudes regarding cultural or religious norms and state law

Students then conduct research and present their findings in the form of an essay, annotated diagram or oral report.

Subjects: Social Studies (Civics, Law, Geography, History, World Studies), Humanities and Social Sciences, English Language Arts

Have students reflect on the role of police officers as portrayed in many television dramas and films, or in detective or crime novels. Ask students to revisit what the author of *The Force of Law* writes about what police officers actually do in real life and Richard Ericson's idea that they are largely “knowledge brokers”. Students could write a critique or review of a particular show, film or book in terms of its accuracy of the portrayal. Alternatively, they could create a “spoof” of a show/film/book, or perform a dramatic monologue, in which they adopt the tone/structure of the fictional work, but portray a more accurate “day in the life” of a police officer.

Subjects: Social Studies (Civics, Law), Humanities and Social Sciences, English Language Arts, Arts (Theater Arts)

Point out to students that the author offers a number of examples of how law and justice are separate in Western societies' systems of law. Have them explore this concept by researching one of the examples further, coming up with an example of their own or by comparing it with a different system of law.

Subjects: Social Studies (Civics, Law), Humanities and Social Sciences, English Language Arts

Have students discuss the question, “How would you describe your community’s relations with the police?” They then create a written list of recommendations for their police force that they think would help to improve the relationship and/or a list of commendations for what the force has already done to establish good relations.

Subjects: Social Studies (Civics, Law), Humanities and Social Sciences, English Language Arts

Students may have had a field trip to a police station or courtroom when they were in elementary school, but they could benefit from a return visit as an older student. Arrange for a tour and a talk by a representative. Alternatively, have a guest speaker (e.g., a police officer, judge, courtroom worker, lawyer, criminologist, security officer) visit your class to present information and answer questions. The information could include details about possible careers in law, law enforcement and criminology.

Subjects: Social Studies (Civics, Law), Humanities and Social Sciences, English Language Arts

CONNECTIONS WITH OTHER GROUNDWORK GUIDES

See *Democracy* for issues of human rights.

See *The Betrayal of Africa*, *Democracy* and *Empire* for issues of colonialism, imperialism and racism.

See *Cities* and *Hip Hop World* for issues of poverty, racism and urban crime.

See *Genocide* for issues of totalitarianism and autocracies, racism and human rights.

See *Slavery Today* for issues of human rights and freedom.

Have students select other books in the series for independent study.

THE FORCE OF LAW: GETTING STARTED

To the teacher: The purpose of these statements — which are controversial and provocative — is to spark self-reflection and discussion, and to enable students to explore their personal reactions, biases and understandings and make connections to their lives and experiences.

Copy and hand out the following statements to different students who read the statements aloud. After each statement, students write about their initial reaction to it, their feelings, connections they make, and their interpretation and opinion. They can write in the form of a paragraph, jot-down notes or create a web. You can follow with group or class discussions or you can have students keep their thoughts private. Have students revisit these statements at the end of their study of *The Force of Law*.

Our legal system is way too harsh and we have too many laws.	Laws are real only if they are in a formal written text.
A wealthy person who commits a crime is subject to a different justice system than a poor person who commits a crime.	Our police force is too secretive and should be more accountable to the public.
Racial profiling is not an act of racism; it is an effective tool in the justice system.	A young person who commits a crime should not be treated by the legal system the same way as an adult would be treated.
Police forces should be routinely armed as opposed to routinely unarmed.	If the rest of the world rules against the death penalty as a violation of international human rights, then no country should be able to ignore that law, even though it is not a law within that country.
Tasers should be banned in the police force.	There can be no law without enforcement.

STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT: GROUP WORK

Name: _____

Date: _____

CATEGORY/CRITERIA	RATING	COMMENTS
I asked questions for more information or to clarify.		
I offered respectful feedback and comments on others' ideas.		
I offered my opinion and gave support for it.		
I encouraged others to participate.		
I fulfilled my role and tasks in the group.		
I participated effectively and not in a distracting way.		

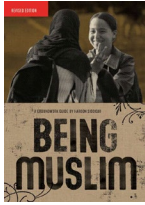
My goal for the next group activity:

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY



Mariana Valverde is the director of the University of Toronto's Centre of Criminology, a noted international research center. She is the author of several books on questions of law and social control and has participated in many community organizations. She lives in Toronto, Ontario.

GROUNDWORK GUIDES



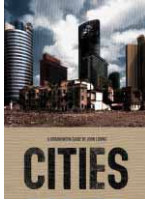
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THE BETRAYAL OF AFRICA (©2008)

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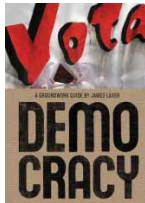
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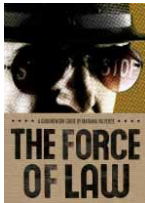
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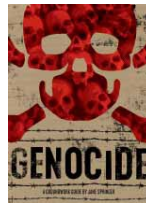
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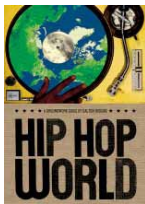
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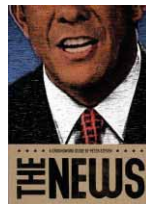
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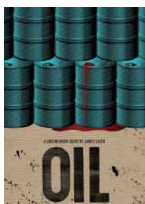
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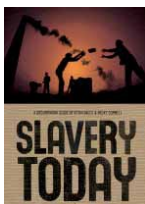
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