

# Lesson 5

## Language Rights Charter

**Aim:** That students will understand language rights, especially the official Language Rights Charter from the Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga (Office of the Irish Language Commissioner).

**Learning Outcomes:** At the end of the class, students will understand:

- What a Language Rights Charter means.
- They will be able to draft their own Charter.
- They will know about the official Language Rights Charter from the Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga.

## Requirements for the Class:

- White paper and markers for the students.
- A large poster of the official *Language Rights Charter* to be hung in the classroom. This poster is in the teacher's box and it's also provided in this booklet.
- A large poster of *Our Class Language Rights Charter* with no text. This Charter is to be hung in the classroom and completed by the teacher based on ideas from the students. This poster is in the teacher's box and it's also provided in this booklet.

## Start of Class:

1. Remind the students about the stories they watched on the vox pops in Lesson 4 and discuss these stories briefly.

## Development of Class:

2. Ask the students to think of 4 language rights themselves and to write them down.
3. After a few minutes, ask the students to form pairs. Give the pairs time to discuss together the rights which they have written and then ask them to agree 5 language rights between them.
4. Then divide the students into groups of six. Ask them to look at all the language rights which have been written by every pair in the group. The group must agree on 5 – 7 language rights.
5. Give each group a blank sheet and markers. Each group must design their own Language Rights Charter.
6. When all the Charters are finished, ask a pupil from each group to hang their Charter on the wall and give them an opportunity to look at the ideas from the different groups.
7. Put the large poster of *Our Class Language Rights Charter* without text on the wall. This Charter is to be written by the teacher in the class based on ideas from the pupils.

## End of Class:

8. Before the end of the class, the teacher can hang the official *Language Rights Charter* from the Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga on the wall also.

## Teacher's Notes:

The Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga (Office of the Irish Language Commissioner) was established under the Official Languages Act 2003 to monitor compliance of public bodies with the provisions of that Act.

The main objective of the Act is to ensure better availability and a higher standard of public services through Irish. The Act provides specific language rights for members of the public and places statutory obligations on public bodies to provide certain services in Irish.

The Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga is charged with investigating complaints in relation to non-compliance of public bodies with the provisions of the Official Languages Act 2003 or with any other enactment relating to the status or use of Irish. Other functions of the Office include the provision of advice to the public regarding their language rights under the Act and to public bodies regarding their language duties under the Act.

The Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga may be contacted as follows if you wish to obtain further information on the Official Languages Act or the work of the Office:

**An Coimisinéir Teanga, An Spidéal, Co. na Gaillimhe**

**Phone: 091 504 006 Lo-call: 1890 504 006**

**eolas@coimisineir.ie www.coimisineir.ie**

# LANGUAGE RIGHTS CHARTER

Your language rights are protected under the Irish Constitution and under the Official Languages Act.

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## Irish Constitution

Article 8 of the Constitution says:

As the national language, Irish is the first official language.  
English is the second official language.

## Official Languages Act:

These are your language rights under the Official Languages Act:

### Reply in Irish

You have a right to get a reply in Irish to a letter or email in Irish to public bodies.

### Acts of the Oireachtas

You have a right to be able to get Acts of the Oireachtas at the same time in both Irish and English.

### Irish in the Courts

You have a right to use Irish in any court.

### Mailshots

You have a right to get mailshots from public bodies at the same time in both Irish and English. Mailshots contain general information sent to the public.

### Key documents in Irish

You have a right to be able to get important documents such as annual reports from public bodies at the same time in both Irish and English.

### Stationery

You have a right to expect that notepaper used by public bodies is in both Irish and English.

### Advice

You can get advice from our Office about your language rights.

### Recorded Oral Announcements

You have a right to expect to hear recorded oral announcements by public bodies in both Irish and English, for example on phones.

### Signage

You have a right to expect that signs put up by public bodies are in both Irish and English.

### Irish in the Houses of the Oireachtas

TDs and Senators have a right to use Irish in the Houses of the Oireachtas.

### Services agreed under language schemes

You have a right to get more services in Irish as agreed in language schemes by public bodies. Under language schemes, public bodies agree to provide many more services in Irish besides those listed here.

### Complaints

Our Office will investigate if you have a complaint about your language rights.

# OUR CLASS LANGUAGE RIGHTS CHARTER

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