

Unit 6

Responsibility

Introduction

In this unit, you will learn more about your responsibilities. As a member of society, you have certain moral and legal obligations to observe. Your existence is intimately linked with your environment and you have a responsibility to protect it. Both as a citizen, and as a human being, you have the responsibility to help combat the spread of HIV/AIDS. When you fulfill your responsibilities you are contributing to the development of the country.

Lessons

1. Citizens' Obligations in Society
2. Responsibility for the Consequences of one's own Actions
3. Responsibility in Respecting Moral and Legal Obligations in Society
4. Responsibility for Protecting the Environment
5. Responsibility to Overcome Wastage of Public Property
6. Responsible Behaviour against HIV/AIDS

- appreciate the responsibilities of citizens to protect the environment.
- recognize the responsible behaviour expected of citizens to stop HIV/AIDS.

Key words and concepts

- Citizen's obligations
- Environmental responsibility
- Environmentalist
- Legal obligations
- Moral obligations
- Upholding the Constitution

What you will learn

You will:

- understand the responsibilities of citizens in society.

Mother having responsibility for a growing family



1

LESSON

Citizens' Obligations in Society

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

- explain what responsibilities citizens have towards their society.
- perform your duties in society responsibly.

What are some of the obligations you have in society?

Every person in society has some obligations to undertake. Fulfilling obligations is the basis of social life and allows you to use your rights. Some of the obligations citizens have in society include the following:

Participation in the political process

In a democracy, citizens have the right to participate to make their own life better. Thus, as a citizen, you



Public participation

have the right to debate on public issues so as to influence government policy makers. Also, you have the right to take part in elections, and contribute to the development of your community and the country. If you fail to exercise this right, you may make your life worse as your view might not be put forward.

Negotiate and compromise to resolve conflicts

Individuals and groups may have conflicts or misunderstandings on issues but, what is important, is to be able to solve them. Conflicts occur for many reasons but all should be settled peacefully.



Traditional way of conflict resolution

Citizens' Obligations in Society

When parties in conflict agree to give up some of their demands and accept the rights of others, a compromise may be reached. Negotiation and compromise are key to resolving conflicts. You have to be able to develop an ability to negotiate and compromise in order to live in peace.

? What political issues are of great importance to you? Do your friends and family agree and hold the same position on these issues? How do you make your point heard when others do not agree?

CASE STUDY

There are instances of conflicts in the regional states arising from claims of territory among peoples who share borders. Such claims exist between the regional governments of Oromia, Somale, the SNNPR, etc. The regional governments are not expected to resort to the use of force to settle such conflicts. Instead, what the regional governments do is to try to solve the problem through negotiation and compromise.

They are expected to build on this tradition whenever conflicts arise. Once conflicts are resolved this creates a favourable condition to work together for common objectives.

? Discuss how you resolve conflicts that may appear in your life. Use examples to explain your method.

Appreciating individual and group differences

Individuals are different both physically and in their ideas. For example, you might be tall or short, fat or thin. When it comes to viewpoints you can be different from your friends. Differences in opinions and viewpoints among individuals or groups create the opportunity to develop and gain better ideas to share. You have to develop a culture of appreciating individual and group differences. This helps create a good environment in which you can work together with others.

Paying fair taxes

Social development can be achieved when a government has money to invest in its development. Most of the money is obtained from taxes that

citizens pay from their earnings and when they buy goods. You are required to pay tax proportional to the income you generate. The tax you pay is invested in places like schools, hospitals and health care centers. The money benefits you and society.

As a citizen, you are required to perform activities that give you a sense of responsibility. Any duty you have to undertake may require time to accomplish. Time is an important factor in your daily activity. Thus, you have to take responsibility to finish the activities that you are committed to within the time set.

? Form groups to discuss the ways in which appreciating differences, paying tax and performing responsibilities, help society to develop.

Citizens' Obligations in Society

REMEMBER

- ❑ Fulfilling obligations is the basis for social life.
- ❑ You have to develop the culture of appreciating individual and group differences.
- ❑ Every person living in society has some obligations to undertake.
- ❑ In a democracy, citizens have the obligation to be active participants in the political life of society.
- ❑ Individuals and groups could develop conflict or misunderstanding, but the point is to be able to solve it.
- ❑ Differences in opinions and viewpoints among individuals or groups could create an opportunity to debate and get better ideas to understand each other better.
- ❑ Citizens have an obligation to pay money to the government as tax.

LESSON 2

Responsibility for the Consequences of one's own Actions

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

- explain what is meant by 'promise' in a social context.
- describe how executing responsibilities have either rewarding or punishing consequences.

Give an example of a time that you have made a promise? Did you keep that promise? What were the consequences?

Promises are frequently kept and broken by people all over society. You may make a promise to your friend, or to a member of your family. For example, you may have been asked to keep a secret or perform a task. Whether or not you keep the promise is up to you, however, there will be consequences either way.

Breaking promises can lead to serious problems both at the time and in the future. The immediate effect will instantly be apparent, however, the long-term result may be far worse. A politician who breaks a promise is unlikely to be respected and re-elected in the future. A friend who tells a secret is unlikely to be trusted and told other secrets later on. Through breaking promises you break the bond of trust.

In society we have many different responsibilities that we are expected to take on throughout our lives. If we behave in a responsible way then we are likely to be rewarded for our actions. If you take on responsibility well, then you may be given greater

responsibility in the future, often with greater reward. Failing to be responsible will often lead to a person missing out on future opportunities, though sometimes they may be punished as well.

For example, in school there are many ways that you can prove that you are a responsible student. These could include always completing your homework on time, offering to help when the teacher requires an assistant and volunteering to perform tasks outside of the class. If you take on the responsibility of running a club in school you may be asked to help run an important function where you are well rewarded for your efforts.

Give an example of a time when you took on a responsibility. What was it, and how did you respond to the situation? Were there any consequences to your actions?



A court of law in session

Responsibility for the Consequences of one's own Actions

CASE STUDY

The consequences of failing to undertake responsibilities

During a community election there were two groups campaigning for office. Consequently, the group that succeeded in having its candidate elected were happy. Members of the groups that lost the campaign decided not to participate in future elections. They argued that the person elected was not capable of doing good for the community.

In the next election, they were onlookers and the same person was elected again. They discussed among themselves and realized that it was a mistake on their part to boycott the second election.

In the third election, they participated and succeeded in having the person of their choice win. They were happy to see their participation had made a difference.

? Form groups to discuss what lessons you can draw from this case. Group leaders should present their ideas to the class for more discussion.



Active citizen's participation during an election

REMEMBER

- Promises are frequently kept and broken by people all over society.
- Whether or not you keep the promise is up to you, there will be consequences either way.
- While living in society, there are many responsibilities that you have to fulfill.
- During national elections, you have the responsibility, and at the same time the right, to actively participate.
- Failing to contribute to enhance democracy could give way to dictatorship.
- If we behave in a responsible way then we are likely to be rewarded for our actions.
- Failing to be responsible will often lead to a person missing out on future opportunities.
- The democratic process in the country can be strengthened when every citizen has a role to play.

LESSON 3

Responsibility in Respecting Moral and Legal Obligations in Society

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

- describe citizens' moral and legal obligations in society.

List five responsibilities you have in society.

There is a very telling famous old saying — “*When you are in Rome, live like the Romans.*” This is to mean that people who live in a given society should live respecting the moral and legal systems of the society. Social morality is built on the norms, values and ethical standards of people who live in it. The legal system in society is based on morality. When you live in any society, it is necessary to learn about its norms and values in order to fit in. If you change your place of work and live elsewhere, you have to learn about the legal system and the norms and values of the new society you live in as they may differ slightly from your own.

Knowledge about the moral standards of a society is important because there are expectations that you may discover to be different from your own.

You have a moral obligation to respect individual and group rights. You are obliged to respect the differences between people that exist in society.

Legal obligation means respecting the Constitution and all other laws of the country. To respect the Constitution means to respect all its provisions and other laws that are derived from it. Respecting the rights and equality of nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia is underlined in the Constitution. Thus, you have the legal obligation to treat all Ethiopians as equals. Without respecting the Constitution and other laws of the land, as legal foundations, peace and stability cannot be maintained and development achieved.

? Form groups to discuss and list some of your moral and legal obligations.



Pedestrians walking on zebra-crossing

Responsibility in Respecting Moral and Legal Obligations in Society

CASE STUDY

Abebe is a successful artist. He enjoys the rewards of his success and produces many works that are popular with both Ethiopians and tourists. He is also a popular figure in his community as he takes time to look out for the elder members there. He lost his parents at a young age and was taken care of by many of these people. He now takes the responsibility to support them with what they need.

He feels an obligation to repay them for their kind deeds in the past and to share in his own success. If

he did not fulfill this duty then it would be likely that these people would suffer.

As a responsible citizen, he not only helps people in the community, but he also pays taxes.

What is a moral and legal obligation?



What kind of person do you think Abebe is?

What moral obligations do you fulfill in your community?



The elderly given privilege and respect

REMEMBER

- Social morality is built on the norms, values and ethical standards of society.
- The legal system in any society is based on morality.
- You have a moral obligation to respect the rights of individuals and groups.
- You have the moral obligation to respect differences in people that exist in society.
- Legal obligations means respecting the Constitution and other laws of the country.

4

LESSON

Responsibility for Protecting the Environment

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

- explain the necessity of protecting the environment.
- refrain from damaging the environment.

Give one example of how you can help to protect the environment.

The environment is the area that you live in and the natural world around you. Our environment is the source of life and its very foundation. It is shared by all that exists in it. It is the responsibility of every human being to protect the environment for a better life. You have a role to protect and preserve the environment to make it a place comfortable to live in. The preservation and protection of trees, vegetations and wildlife is needed. We have to keep the land, air and water clean and free from destruction and pollution.

There are different types of vegetation and wildlife in the different parts of the world. There are plants and animals found only in Ethiopia. For example, the Walia Ibex in the Semien Mountains National Park and the Red Fox in the Bale Mountains National Park are found only in this country. It is in the best interest of Ethiopians to protect this wildlife. It is also important to protect the forests of the country where the wildlife lives. Citizens have a responsibility to replant trees where they are sparse or destroyed. Protecting the natural vegetation enriches the topsoil and maintains its fertility. This

in turn helps develop agriculture in order to feed people. Mismanagement of the environment poses health risks and brings about ecological crisis.

Your responsibility extends far beyond preserving the natural environment. It includes caring for the cultural and historical heritage. Preserving the cultural and historical heritages means protecting the achievements of generations of the past. Cultural artifacts and historical heritages, such as obelisks and monuments have to be preserved as these are links between the generations of the past, present and future. They are living testimonies to the history and culture of the people who had once lived on the land. Preserving them has rewards for people who are living now and those in the future. One of the rewards is the income generated through tourism. Eco-tourism in the country will be able to generate income to promote development. This will contribute to improving the living standards of the people.



Semien Mountains National Park

Responsibility for Protecting the Environment

Copy this table. Form groups to discuss what you can do to preserve and protect your environment, the wildlife and historical heritages of the country. Fill in the copy. Examples are given.



	What you can do to preserve/protect the environment?	What you can do to preserve/protect the wildlife?	What you can do to preserve/protect the historical heritages?
1	Do not drop litter	Stop unlawful hunting	Learn more about the sites
2			
3			



The Tiya stones — historical heritages



Yellow billed and Maribou storks in the lakes region



Zebra in Nech Sar National Park at Arba Minch

Responsibility for Protecting the Environment

CASE STUDY

Wangari Mahtay: an environmental activist

Wangari Mahtay is a Kenyan who is well known for her campaign to protect environment. She worked hard to raise public awareness and influenced government policies through demonstrations and public speeches. She has said, *“The generation that destroys the environment is not the generation that pays the price.”* Her good example is an encouragement for all Africans to do the same to protect their environment. Her untiring campaign led to her receiving the Nobel Prize.

Ways to protect the environment include planting trees and keeping areas free from litter. Rubbish needs to be reduced and dealt with properly, not dumped into our waterways and common areas. Goods should

be bought as locally as possible to reduce pollution from transportation, and they should be looked after properly to reduce waste. Water and electricity should be used carefully as their wastage leads to wastage of our natural resources that is also harmful to the environment. Travel by car causes harmful air pollution that chokes cities and makes people ill; short journeys should be done on foot where possible.



Are there any ideas from this case study and the next one, that you could use to help protect the environment that you live in? How can you put them into action?

CASE STUDY

Red Fox: an endangered species

The Bale Mountains National Park is home to the Red Fox. This is a wild animal found only in Ethiopia. Those that have settled in the park threaten the existence of the wildlife there. The new settlers have started farming and cultivating crops by removing the forests. Their domestic dogs have started mixing with the Red Fox and some instances of cross-breeding have already taken place. Rabies, transmitted from the dogs, has killed many Red Foxes.

This is a clear case of an alarming situation that calls for action to stop the danger. Unless prompt action is taken, the Red Foxes are going to disappear for good. This story appeared in the national media some years ago. It is the responsibility of everyone to play a role to protect the Red Fox from extinction. If we fail to preserve the wild life in the park, generations to come will blame us for destroying the Red Fox and for failing to do the right thing.



Responsibility for Protecting the Environment

CASE STUDY

Susenius Castle: a cultural heritage to be saved

On the western side of Lake Tana there is a big castle similar to those found in Gondar. It is named Susenius Castle after one of the emperors of Gondar. It has the potential to be a significant tourist attraction.

This castle is located a long way from the main road to Gondar. Because there is no road to access it, a four wheeled vehicle is necessary to reach it. Due to its inaccessibility, many Ethiopians do not know about it. Unfortunately, at present, the castle is in a very bad shape, and may even collapse in a few years to come. Part of its structure has already been out of shape, like some similar castles on the road to Gondar.

Such priceless historical heritages must not disappear due to neglect. The federal and regional governments and the people have a responsibility to unite and act fast in order to save Susenius Castle and similar sites.



Yeha



A church in Lalibela

There are many architectural remains that reflect the history of the country

? Are there any cultural heritage sites near where you live? Do they need help to be saved?

REMEMBER

- The environment is the area that you live in and the natural world around you.
- Our environment is the source of life and its very foundation.
- It is the responsibility of every human being to protect the environment.
- There are many ways to help protect the environment and we must be aware how to improve things.
- Preserving the cultural and historical heritage is important for attracting visitors and creating pride in our history.

5

LESSON

Responsibility to Overcome Wastage of Public Property

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

- explain what public properties are.
- explain how to avoid wastage of public property.

What places do you know of that are not looked after properly?

Public property is land or buildings that are for the use of everyone. This may include all those properties in your school, public toilets in your surroundings and others. Public properties also include those owned by government like power generating plants, electric power transmission towers across the country, roads, telecommunication networks and hospitals. These are public property and are important for citizens who require their services. As a citizen, you have the responsibility to protect such properties for future use.

You might have heard that some individuals dismantle high-tension transmission towers for their

selfish interests. This act causes power disruption. Factories on the same network are forced to stop production. This in turn damages the national economy. You have a responsibility to protect public property from destruction and expose those who are involved in such a harmful activity.

You have a part to play in caring for public property, starting with your own family and school property. Public schools are run with the taxpayers' money. Every citizen who earns an income must pay some tax to support him or her. The tax collected in the country is allotted to construct schools, hospitals, roads, airports, telecommunication networks, hydroelectric power plants, universities, research centers and other institutions. At present you are using the facilities of your school. If you join a university you will use the facilities there. At home you may have electricity, running water and telephone services. These services continue to reach every household when you play a role to protect them from those who cause destruction.



High voltage power lines and pylons

Responsibility to Overcome Wastage of Public Property

Strong legal action is taken against those who are found destroying and misusing public property. You have to be part of the process to make the legal system work to check and control those who destroy public property. You should have pride in protecting your surroundings. Certainly, for example, you want your schools to look good and be a pleasant environment. In doing so you contribute to the national cause to stop wastage of public property and promote development.

Form groups to discuss how you can protect public property from destruction and damage.

? You should come up with a plan for protecting school property. How can you encourage other students to respect your learning environment?

CASE STUDY

In a school, students and staff organized a competition to identify which grade section would become the best keepers of school property. Each grade section, and its members, who performed best, were awarded a certificate.

The selected sections from each grade level were further screened to choose the one that was the best in the whole school, taking into account its additional contributions to look after the school property. The winning section got the 'best section certificate' which was posted on the school notice board.

? Form groups to discuss the case study. What lessons do you learn from it? Could you do the same in your school? Would this really encourage a sense of respect for property? Explain your answer.



Damaged school property

REMEMBER

- You have a responsibility to protect public property from destruction.
- As a student, your part in caring for public property starts with taking care of school property.
- Legal punishment is enforced on those who destroy and misuse public property.
- Public property is land or buildings used by citizens.
- You should have pride in protecting your surroundings.

6

LESSON

Responsible Behaviour against HIV/AIDS

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

- explain the history of HIV/AIDS.
- describe how HIV/AIDS is transmitted.
- protect yourself from HIV/AIDS.

List three ways a person can contract HIV.

There are different viewpoints surrounding the rise and development of HIV/AIDS. So far, the origins of HIV and first cases of AIDS are not clear. The illness first came to be known in the early 1980's in the USA. Some would like to push the origin of HIV as far back as the 1940's but there is no solid evidence for this. There are a number of theories on the origin of AIDS.

HIV is a virus that is contracted through the exchange of body fluids. It weakens an infected person's immune system so that, when they contract an illness, their body is not able to fight to get better. This means that the person is likely to die of the illness, such as TB or bronchitis. The person would then be said to have had AIDS.

It is important for you, and the people around you, to be aware of how you can contract HIV. An exchange of body fluid can occur in many different ways; here are some of the most common in Ethiopia:

- Unprotected sex.
- From mother to baby during birth.

- From mother to baby while breast feeding.
- Through unsterilised equipment when tattooing, scarring, circumcising or during female genital mutilation.

The risk of contracting HIV in Ethiopia is high and, due to its rapid spread across the country, we have to take great care to avoid infections. One way to help protect ourselves is by using a condom when having sex as this creates a barrier between body fluids. Another way is to make sure that equipment used to cut the body is properly sterilised.

It is advisable to have an HIV test. If you are an expectant mother who has HIV then your baby does not necessarily have to contract the virus. Most babies become infected during birth, however this risk can be reduced if a woman takes action soon enough. She needs treatment during her pregnancy and her baby should be treated at birth and over the first 7 days.

Another reason you should be tested for HIV is because you need to start treatment as soon as possible. If you wait to see symptoms, then it may be too late for you to receive treatment.

We need to make sure we take every precaution to protect ourselves, and those around us, from contracting the virus. It is important that we are tested for the virus so that we can get treatment if we have it and protect others from getting it.

Responsible Behaviour against HIV/AIDS

? Form groups to discuss on the development of HIV/AIDS, ways of transmission and the challenges HIV/AIDS poses against humanity in general. Group leaders should present their ideas to the class for more discussions.

CASE STUDY

The story of Berehane Kelkay

Married at age 16, Berehane from Awassa became an AIDS widow and mother of three. In 1998 she was the first person to publicly reveal her HIV positive status.

Five years after her diagnosis, she set up the Awassa branch of Dawn of Hope in 1998. Then, in response to the problems that HIV positive women were facing, she initiated and established an association of HIV positive women called Tila Association of Women Living with HIV/AIDS.

Source: United Nation Population Fund (UNFPA) Ethiopian Millennium Edition. 2007/2008



Children born with HIV/AIDS need special care

? Why are women at a higher risk of becoming HIV positive than men? What steps can be taken in your school to help reduce the risk to girls?

REMEMBER

- ❑ There are different viewpoints surrounding the rise and development of HIV/AIDS.
- ❑ It is difficult to determine how, where and when AIDS and HIV started in the world.
- ❑ HIV is a virus which leads people to die from AIDS related illness.
- ❑ Unless people throughout the world develop the awareness to stop it, the disease is going to be a serious threat to the very existence of the human species.
- ❑ At present, more than 10,000 new infections take place in the world everyday.
- ❑ HIV/AIDS poses a serious health problem because it attacks the most active section of the population.
- ❑ The illness first came to be known in the early 1980's in the USA.

UNIT SUMMARY

In this unit, you learnt about the obligations you have in society. You have realized that you have many responsibilities. When failing your responsibility as a citizen, you will face many problems. You are taught that your responsibility extends to include protecting your environment and historical heritages. Protecting public property and playing a role to combat HIV/AIDS are part of the responsibilities you have. Fulfilling your responsibilities gives you the freedom to use your rights.

GLOSSARY

Citizens obligations:	The range of obligations that citizens of a country have.
Environmental responsibility:	The responsibility people have to protect the environment they live in.
Environmentalist:	One who is actively engaged to protect the environment.
Legal obligations:	The obligations citizens have as required in the legal system of a country.
Moral obligations:	The obligations individuals have related to the moral requirements of a society.
Taxes:	The revenue that government collects from citizens who earn some income.

UNIT REVIEW EXERCISES

Do these review exercises in your exercise book.

Part I – Multiple choice

- For which one of the following do you not have any responsibility?
 - when dealing with friends and classmates
 - when dealing with family members
 - when cutting flowers from your school garden
 - none
- Which one of the following is your obligation as a citizen?
 - respecting the cultures of others
 - considering others' religion as good as yours
 - contributing to protect the school property
 - all
- What do you understand by the term wildlife?
 - the cats and the dogs you see around
 - the animals which help men to do work
 - the birds, reptiles and animals who live in the forests, lakes and rivers
 - none

Part II – True or false

- Responsibility implies important roles for you to do or not do.

2. You have a responsibility toward others but not yourself.
3. Moral and legal responsibilities support each other.
4. It is necessary to protect the environment from those who advance selfish interests.
5. HIV/AIDS is not a disease to be frightened of.

Part III – Short answers

1. State some of the responsibilities you have to protect the environment?
2. How do you combat HIV/AIDS?
3. What are your responsibilities at school?
4. In what ways do you contribute to protect historical/cultural heritages?
5. How do you care for public property?

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