Lesson Plan

Demonstrating Professionalism  
Clothes with Superpowers

Objective: Students will explore the correlation between wardrobe and attitude in the workplace.

Workplace Readiness Skill: **Demonstrate professionalism.**

*Demonstration includes*

* *defining* ***professionalism***
* *practicing punctuality and attendance*
* *adhering to work-schedule expectations*
* *exercising etiquette (e.g., language, manners, and behaviors suitable for the workplace and online; appropriate verbal and nonverbal communication)*
* *exhibiting professional self-representation (e.g., using a firm handshake, introducing oneself, making eye contact)*
* *maintaining professional appearance (e.g., maintaining personal hygiene, adhering to a dress code).*

Correlations to Other Workplace Readiness Skills:

* Demonstrate work ethic.
* Demonstrate customer service skills.
* Demonstrate big-picture thinking.
* Demonstrate career- and life-management skills.

Correlations to the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL):

English: 6.2, 6.7, 7.1, 7.2, 7.7, 8.2, 8.7, 9.1, 9.6, 10.1, 10.6, 11.1

History and Social Science: CE.1, CE.4, CE.14, GOVT.1, GOVT.16

Instructional Steps:

1. ***Introduce the lesson by asking students, “By a show of hands, how many of you used to play dress-up when you were younger? How about wearing costumes when playing superheroes or when going trick-or-treating on Halloween?”*** Most hands will go up. Discuss the appeal of dressing up. Explain to students that there has actually been research conducted that proves that our wardrobe affects our attitudes and behaviors. Tell them that they’ll be watching a short presentation by a high school senior about this phenomenon and discussing the impact of this in terms of success in the workplace.
2. ***Watch video entitled “Dress Like You Mean It” (***[***https://youtu.be/wE8i4\_J-kyY***](https://youtu.be/wE8i4_J-kyY)***), a TEDx Talk by high school student Michaela Finley.*** Length of the video is 10:46. (You may want to ask the students to watch it once just to absorb the information and a second time to complete Handout #1: Clothes with Superpowers.)
3. ***Ask students to answer the questions on Handout #1: Clothes with Superpowers, based upon the video.*** Students may complete the activity independently, in pairs, or in small groups. Access to the YouTube video while completing the handout will assist students in finding specific answers and examples from the video.
4. ***Hold class discussion.*** Ask, “Do any of you have experience with the topics discussed in the video?” Discuss examples of how various types of clothing affect confidence, behavior, and language. Ask, “What types of clothing will you want to wear on a job interview or in the workplace?”

Formative Assessment**:**

* Assess student understanding as demonstrated in the class and small group discussions.
* Evaluate student understanding of concepts within the lesson as demonstrated by responses to Handout #1: Clothes with Superpowers.

Options for Adaptation/Differentiation:

* To offer student scaffolding for this activity, watch the video in short segments as a class, completing Handout #1: Clothes with Superpowers together as concepts are covered in the video.
* To extend this activity and provide further enrichment, ask students to experiment with the types of clothing they choose to wear to school and report how these choices affected feelings of confidence, empowerment, and overall satisfaction.

Suggestions for Follow-up:

* Invite a manager or a human resources professional from business and industry to discuss the importance of professional dress in the workplace.
* Ask students to reflect in writing on the activity by answering the following essay questions:

*Why is it always a good idea to dress neatly and professionally for a job interview?*

*How is the culture of a workplace impacted by the clothing worn by employees? Explain.*

*When you have an important test, what type of clothing can you choose to help you feel confident and prepared?*

Teacher Resources:

[Making a Great First Impression, Mind Tools](https://www.mindtools.com/CommSkll/FirstImpressions.htm)