Lesson Plan

Understanding Work Ethic

Objective: Students will investigate the concept of work ethic as it relates to workplace readiness.

Workplace Readiness Skill: **Demonstrate work ethic.**

*Demonstration includes*

* *maintaining punctual and consistent attendance (e.g., accounting for hours worked, arriving on time for work and/or appointments)*
* *taking direction willingly (e.g., using active listening techniques, approaching the assigned task with motivation)*
* *exhibiting motivation to accomplish the task at hand (i.e., remaining on task and completing the task efficiently).*

Correlations to Other Workplace Readiness Skills:

* Demonstrate integrity.
* Demonstrate teamwork skills.
* Demonstrate self-representation skills.
* Demonstrate conflict-resolution skills.
* Demonstrate creativity and resourcefulness.
* Demonstrate healthy behaviors and safety skills.
* Demonstrate an understanding of workplace organizations, systems, and climates.
* Demonstrate job-acquisition and advancement skills.
* Demonstrate time-, task-, and resource-management skills.
* Demonstrate customer-service skills.

Correlations to Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL):

* English: 6.1, 6.6, 6.7, 6.8, 7.1, 7.6, 7.7, 7.8, 8.6, 8.7, 8.8, 9.5, 9.6, 9.7, 10.1, 10.5, 10.6, 10.7, 11.5, 11.6, 11.7, 12.5, 12.6, 12.7
* History and Social Science: CE.1, CE.4, CE.14, GOVT.1, GOVT.16, USI.1, USII.1, VUS.1, WG.1, WHI.1, WHII.1

Instructional Steps:

1. ***Introduce the concept of work ethic through a quote.*** Use one of the following examples, or research a quote relating to work ethic, to launch a discussion of the concept.

*“The minute you get away from fundamentals – whether it’s proper technique, work ethic or mental preparation – the bottom can fall out of your game, your schoolwork, your job, whatever you’re doing.”* ― Michael Jordan

*“The harder I work, the luckier I get.”* ― Samuel Goldwyn

*“I'm always asked, 'What's the secret to success?' But there are no secrets. Be humble. Be hungry. And always be the hardest worker in the room.”* ― Dwayne (“The Rock”) Johnson

*“I was never a natural. I got there in the end because I did believe that if you work hard enough, then you can achieve a lot.”* ― Victoria Beckham

1. ***Discuss work ethic.*** What is it? Is work ethic one specific skill, or is it demonstrated through several behaviors? Make a list of character traits that someone with a good work ethic would possess (e.g., trustworthiness, punctuality, diligence, dependability, self-reliance).
2. ***Introduce the class activity. Students will investigate the concept of work ethic through an active reading of an article, “Work Ethic and the Skills Gap,” related to the importance of work ethic to employers.*** Students should read actively, making notes in the margins and highlighting important concepts, relating to questions such as:
   1. How is work ethic related to the skills gap?
   2. What characterizes a person with a good work ethic?
   3. Why do employers think work ethic is so important?
   4. What activities might help a person develop a good work ethic?

1. ***Lead students in discussing the following:***
   1. How is work ethic related to self-reliance?
   2. Why do you think being on time is something that indicates positive work ethic?
   3. Do you think work ethic can be taught? How might a person improve his/her work ethic?
   4. How can taking the time to reflect back on performance be a helpful strategy to improve work ethic?
2. ***Reflect on the concept.*** After introducing the concept, brainstorming ideas, reading about the importance of work ethic to employers, and holding a class discussion, students should be ready to reflect in writing on the concept of work ethic. Ask students to write a journal reflection based on the following prompt:   
     
   *Your friend, Joy, is preparing to start her first job. It is very important to Joy that she be successful since this job opportunity could lead to career development and advancement that will help her meet key career goals. You and Joy are meeting to see a movie and then to discuss her exciting new job the evening before she starts. Based on what you’ve learned thus far about work ethic, what advice might you offer to Joy to help her as she enters her new job?*
3. ***Apply the lesson.*** Ask students to break into small groups. Ask students to respond to a set of workplace case studies/scenarios using a four-step process for making ethical decisions at work as explained in activity 22, “Workplace Ethics,” on pages 102-105 of [Soft Skills to Pay the Bills — Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success](https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills/) (<https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills/>). (The case studies are located on page 104 and a response sheet, “Steps to Solving Ethical Dilemmas,” is on page 105.)

Formative Assessment**:**

* Gauge student understanding of the concept of work ethic during discussion of the article, “Work Ethic and the Skills Gap.”
* Use the “Journal Assessment Rubric” to assess student understanding of the concept as demonstrated in writing.
* Evaluate student responses to the case studies (page 104-105) in “Workplace Ethics,” from [Soft Skills to Pay the Bills — Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success](https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills/) (<https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills/>). A key with sample appropriate responses is located at the end of this document.

Options for Adaptation/Differentiation:

* To offer scaffolding to students, a whole-group reading and discussion of the article, “Work Ethic and the Skills Gap.”
* To offer an extension option to students, ask them to role-play scenarios in which ethical decisions must be made in the workplace. Use the case studies on page 104 of “Workplace Ethics” in [Soft Skills to Pay the Bills — Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success](https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills/) (<https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills/>), or ask students to create their own scenarios.

Suggestions for Follow-up:

* Ask students to design a bulletin board titled “Characterizing Good Work Ethic” highlighting behaviors that are indicative of a strong work ethic.
* Ask students to complete the journaling and extension activities on page 102 of “Workplace Ethics,” in [Soft Skills to Pay the Bills — Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success](https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills/) (<https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills/>), from the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy.

Teacher Resources

*Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* by Carol S. Dweck

[Soft Skills to Pay the Bills — Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success](https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills/) (<https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills/>), U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy.

[Workplace Readiness Skills (WRS) Assessment: Virginia Overview](https://www.ctecs.org/virginia/virginia-overview) (<https://www.ctecs.org/virginia/virginia-overview>), Career and Technical Education Consortium of States (CTECS).

[Workplace Readiness Skills (WRS) for the Commonwealth: Instructional Resources](http://cteresource.org/wrs/index.html) (<http://cteresource.org/wrs/index.html>), Career and Technical Education (CTE) Resource Center.