

Soft Skills for Employment

Chapter Eight: Team Work Ethic



I. Lesson Eight: Team Work Ethic

Teaching Materials:	Duration:	Learning Objective:
PowerPoint and class presentation	20 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Raising an awareness of what makes a team, what it means to work as a team as well as techniques to work successfully in a team environment. ➤ How to evaluate and communicate personal leadership skills and other abilities
Team work considerations and personal skills list	30 minutes	
Minute to win it games	30 minutes	
Setting and Method: class discussion, group activity		

Lesson summary:

Working in a team can be stressful for many people and students are often expected to work in groups or teams, without being taught how to do so. This lesson has some discussion items for students to think about as well as an opportunity for reflection of what skills they can offer a team.

It is important for students to be reminded that at work, a team may take on a number of different forms—it may be a unit within a business and it may be ALL the employees at the business. Students will need to start looking at the world as an endless supply of opportunities for team work and how they can support those teams with their personal skills and strengths.

Team Work Ethic

A team is a group of people working together on a shared project or task. Teams might be a group of people who ask to work together, or they might be assigned to work together. Either way, working in a team can be very challenging.

There are many advantages to working in a team: sharing the workload, new ideas to share and having a group to belong to.

There are many disadvantages and challenges to working in a team as well. It is sometimes difficult for individuals to see the credit for a successfully completed project to go to a team rather than him/herself. Also, there can be personality conflicts that arise in the process of teamwork: some people might have more domineering personalities that want to take over and other people might have less outgoing personalities and let others take over and do the work.



Each of us bring different talents to the table when working together. One person might be artistic, one might be great with technology, while another might be a big picture thinker and know how to map out the vision of a plan.

An effective team should have effective leadership. And, effective leaders need to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the team members so each person can have a role.



What qualities do you bring to a team? Are you artistic, organized, helpful, good at math, etc.? Take a look at these qualities and put a check mark next to all the qualities that you think you are particularly good at. Write some more in the blanks if you can think of other ways you are helpful in a group effort?

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|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> artistic | <input type="checkbox"/> organized | <input type="checkbox"/> good listener |
| <input type="checkbox"/> problem-solver | <input type="checkbox"/> considerate | <input type="checkbox"/> respectful of others' opinions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> truthful | <input type="checkbox"/> computer skills | <input type="checkbox"/> strong math skills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> creative thinker | <input type="checkbox"/> sense of humor | <input type="checkbox"/> enjoys leading others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> reliable | <input type="checkbox"/> hard-worker | <input type="checkbox"/> good reading skills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> articulate (speaks well in front of others) | | <input type="checkbox"/> strong writing skills |

Any other skills you can think of? _____

Here are some ideas to consider when working in a team:

1. *Communicate!*

If you have a problem with someone in your team or at your place of work, let them know in a respectful way and work hard to resolve the conflict. Not saying anything will usually make matters worse and is bad for the team in the long run.

2. *Don't blame others.*

People will lose respect for you very quickly if you are constantly blaming others for missed deadlines or work that isn't done the way you think it should be. If you see a team member struggling, offer to help. If you are struggling, ask for help and don't try to cover it up by pointing out others' faults.

3. *Support other team members' ideas.*

Even if the idea is the silliest idea you have ever heard, support other people's ideas. Consider it and talk about its possibilities. People need to feel heard and chances are, if you support others' ideas, they will support yours as well!

4. *No bragging.*

You can be proud of your accomplishments, but you need to be proud of your teammate's accomplishments as well. If someone compliments you, say something along the lines of "Thanks, that means a lot!", and leave it at that. Bragging is another way to hurt feelings and lose your team members' respect.

5. *Listen actively and get involved.*

Make sure you are making eye contact, asking questions and paying attention when others are talking. Don't be afraid to pitch in and help when others need it. Be a part of the whole process of your project or task, not just your one little assigned piece of it.



Class Activity

Chances are, the youth in the class have had many opportunities to work in teams. Many classes in high schools offer opportunities for group projects or are set up to do labs with partners. Discussing with students about what works or doesn't work for them in these situations is a great way to start this lesson.

This activity is a fun way for students to practice and analyze their part in developing and implementing team decisions.

You will need to group the class into groups of 5-7 people per group. Then, introduce this activity as a series of games. Once you describe the different tasks that need to be completed, it is up to each group to designate the jobs for each team member. You may also want to direct the group to think about what their roles should be while each of their team mates are completing their tasks and how they can be helpful and supportive during the competitions.



The tasks that the teams will need to complete are based on Minute to Win It games. There are five example games listed below that involve a variety of skills types, but other games can be supplemented as well. An Internet search of Minute to Win It games will offer a plethora of options. When considering what games to play, consider the abilities in the classroom and make sure to have a diverse assortment of options. Some games are more open to modification than others, as well, in case contestants may need physical or sensory accommodations.

To Play:

Each game is timed for 60 seconds and a representative from each team should compete during each game. It works best to have the games completed at one designated area of the room or at one table, so that the instructor can determine winners and time the competitions.

1. The Oreo Game: This game is best performed sitting down. Each contestant is given three Oreos. They will place one Oreo at a time on their foreheads and by using ONLY their facial muscles, attempt to move the Oreo down their face and into their mouths. If an Oreo drops, they should pick up another Oreo and try again. The first person to have an Oreo reach his/her mouth wins the game. Hands may only be used for putting the cookie on the forehead and not in aiding the movement of the cookie down the face.

2. Candy Corn Stacking: each contestant will be given 10 candy corns and will be instructed to stack the candies in as tall of a tower as he/she is able. They may not build a base of more than one candy corn. The person who is able to stack the most candies within the 60 seconds is the winner.

3. Cotton Ball Race: Each contestant is given a paper soup bowl, a plastic spoon and 12 cotton balls. The cotton balls need to be spread out on the table in front of each contestant. In 60 seconds, they are to spoon as many cotton balls into each of their bowls as they can. Depending on the students, you can decide if they should use their non-dominant hand or their dominant hand to complete the task. However, the hand they are not using needs to be behind their back.

4. M&M Sorting: Each contestant is given a plastic cup for each color (6) and approximately 15 candies of each color (a typical bag includes brown, green, blue, red, orange and yellow). They need to arrange the cups on a table in front of them and dump the candies (mixed up) on the table in front of them as well. In 60 seconds, each contestant is to sort the candies BY COLOR into the cups, using their NON-DOMINANT hand. Each person's dominant hand should be behind his/her back. The person who finishes first or who has the fewest candies remaining is the winner.

5. Pasta Threading: Each contestant is given one regular spaghetti noodle and six penne noodles. The penne noodles are placed in a row on the edge of the table, with the openings facing toward the person. The object is for each contestant, while holding the spaghetti noodles in their mouths, to thread all six penne noodles onto the spaghetti noodle. Contestants may NOT use their hands, and will most likely need to be sitting on the floor or on their knees so as to be eye level with the penne. The person who gets all six penne noodles threaded first, or the person with the most threaded in 60 seconds, is the winner.

Summary

After all the games are completed, engage the students in a discussion about how they decided as a group who was going to do what game. Did they have any trouble deciding since only one person from each team could play a game? Did they have to make compromises? Is there anything else they would have done differently next time?

This is a fun example, but it is a great way to demonstrate how we evaluate our own skills and the skills of others to determine who is the best fit for each job and that there are sometimes considerations that need to be made when working in teams, besides just what we would like to do most or what we are comfortable doing.