

# Soft Skills for Employment

## Chapter Seven: Individual Work Ethic



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VII. Lesson Seven: Individual Work Ethic

Teaching Materials:	Duration:	Learning Objective:
What is Work Ethic? Discussion and worksheet	20 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Raising an awareness of what a personal work ethic is and how it defines one’s image at work.</li> <li>➤ Providing an opportunity to develop personal systems of workplace ethics</li> </ul>
Flip chart, markers, note cards	45 minutes	
Small group discussions	15 minutes	
<b>Setting and Method:</b> classroom discussion and individual/small group work		

**Lesson Summary for Instructors:**

Work ethic is an area that students have been evaluated on since they started elementary school, they just might not have heard the term. This lesson starts with a discussion what work ethic means as well as an opportunity for them to personalize its meaning. It is important for students to consider their own backgrounds and personal influences—some may have positive influences in this area, and others may have very negative ones. Students will want to consider what they can do to overcome any struggles they face when making ethical decisions and how those decisions can affect them at work.

## What is Work Ethic?

An individual work ethic is an employee's attitude about their personal responsibility in how well he/she does his/her job. It takes a certain level of commitment to getting your job done every day, especially if no one is looking over your shoulder to encourage you, or sometimes prod you, throughout the day.

Another way to consider work ethic is the amount of investment you have in a job. Even if you are working in a job that is an entry level position and not something that you consider a career, having a strong work ethic means that you will give the job 100% of your effort and ability.



### THINK ABOUT THIS...

1. How would you describe or define a positive work ethic in your own words?
2. Why do you think a positive work ethic is so important to teachers and employers?
3. Who in your life do you consider to have a positive work ethic? What does this person do that gives you this impression of them?
4. What can you do to stay positive at work and/or at school, even if you are frustrated, bored or
5. Who in your life did you learn your work ethic from?
6. Do you feel your personal work ethic needs any improvement? In what areas?

## Classroom Activity

Ask the class to think of some positive personality traits and have students call them out while you write them on a flip chart for all to see. Examples might be: friendly, creative, honest, dependable, trustworthy, upbeat, polite, helpful, etc.

Now, ask participants what these features might mean to an employer. For example:

- Honesty means you can be counted on to do the right thing when no one is looking
- Friendliness means you will help customers feel welcomed and co-workers feel included.

Give each participant two sets of notecards—**each set should be a different color**.

1. With the **first color**/set, participants should draw a picture of or write a positive feature they possess. On the other side of the card, the participants should draw a picture of write the BENEFIT (or why this feature would be important) to the employer. It would be ideal if each student could come up with at least five positive traits about themselves.

2. With the **second color**/set of cards, participants should draw a picture of or write a feature that they are currently working on or would like to possess. On the other side of the card, participants should draw a picture or write how they will develop that skill. This could include an action plan of how to develop that positive feature. Ideally, each student would come up with at least three positive traits they would like to develop or hone.

Depending on the group, this activity can be done individually or in groups of two or three. After the activity is completed, encourage each person or group to share one or two of each color notecard.

A classroom discussion to summarize this activity should include how knowing and understanding our personal traits and skills directly affects our work ethic. We need to constantly remind ourselves and encourage ourselves to work hard and complete difficult tasks so that we can accomplish our goals. That motivation to complete work well and on time will be noticed and respected by employers and co-workers.

## Small Group Discussion

Divide the students into small groups and ask them to pretend they are all employers. As employers, ask them to write down ways they would evaluate their employees on positive work habits and good work ethic. What criteria would they use to determine if their employees had these traits? How would they reward employees who showed these traits and encourage employees who did not?