

Lesson 8: Employment Behavior

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce students to the idea of what it means to be a good employee. Students will take a true/false quiz and then discuss various scenarios they may encounter in the workplace. This lesson is a good opportunity to invite an area employer or staffing agency as a guest speaker.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will be able to identify traits of a good employee, possible workplace accommodations, and ways an employee can be terminated from a job.
- Students will analyze and discuss workplace scenarios.
- Students will understand characteristics and ethics of an effective employee.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Community Partner employer
- Lesson 8: Employment Behavior presentation
- Student Portfolio

LESSON SET UP / PREP

- Schedule an area employer (particularly of students, if possible) to guest speak for this lesson. Provide them with the Lesson 8 presentation so they are prepared to work through it with the students. Encourage them to share appropriate work anecdotes and advice for students.
- Before class, cue the Lesson 8 Employment Behavior presentation.

LESSON OUTLINE

Introduction and Activity (30–35 Minutes)

1. Introduce the community partner/employer to the students.
2. Explain that in today's activity the students will learn about being a good employee. Have the students turn to the Employee Behavior True/False quiz on page 26 in their Student Portfolio.
3. Read each question out loud and give the students a moment to answer the question. Remind them to answer the questions silently because you will be reviewing the answers together as a group.

4. As the questions are asked, work through the answers via the Lesson 8 presentation. As you go through the slides, ask students if they answered True or False and why. As you review the answers, solicit feedback from the students as to why the answers are reasonable and check for understanding.

Activity (15 Minutes)

1. Divide students into two teams, if possible, for this activity. Using the Lesson 8 presentation, give teams a chance to respond to 5 employee behavior scenarios. If a team gives a satisfactory answer, give them a point. If not, allow the opposing team to respond.

Lesson Wrap Up (2–5 Minutes)

1. Have students complete the “Now I know...” section in their Student Portfolio for this lesson.

Lesson 8: Employment Behavior Presentation

Notes

Slide 1: Explain that in today's activity the students will learn about being a good employee. They will start by taking a true/false quiz about things to do or not do on the job. This quiz will assess what students already know about workplace etiquette, behaviors, and attitudes. They will find the quiz in their Student Portfolio.

Slide 2: Read each question out loud and give the students a moment to answer the question.

Consider polling students by asking students who answered True (or False) to raise their hand. Then give the correct answer and provide an explanation.

Slide 3: Getting on social media during times when there is nothing to do at work is appropriate: **False**

Most employers actually have a policy that cell phones are not allowed out at work, even if you are not busy. If you are not "busy" you should be looking for something to do related to your job or asking a co-worker or your manager if there is something else for you to do. Occasionally, you may work for someone who doesn't have this policy, but for the most part, you are expected to stay off your phone/social media while you are "on the clock."

Slide 4: If everyone else at work tells racist or sexist jokes, including your manager, it is OK to do so: **False**

Telling racist, sexist, or any other sort of prejudicial jokes is inappropriate, unethical, and unkind. You can hurt others and your working relationship with them. People telling these jokes, including (and especially) managers, make others uncomfortable. Additionally, you can be liable for your speech and can open yourself up to harassment and/or discrimination claims.

Slide 5: The standard amount of notice you give an employer before leaving a job is 2 weeks: **True**

Giving two weeks' notice is not the law, but it is courteous. Ask students why it is a good idea to give two weeks' notice. Possible answers include:

- It gives the employer time to find a replacement.
- It gives the employer time to schedule other employees to cover your shifts.
- It gives the employee a favorable impression that they cared about the job and their fellow employees.
- It gives the employee a favorable impression to future employers.

Slide 6: Employers are required to give you 30 days' notice before letting you go: **False**

Employers are not required to give any notice before letting an employee go. Explain "at-will employment." Solicit feedback from students as to why someone might get let go from a job. Ask

students why it would not be a good idea to keep an employee for 30 days after letting them go.

Possible answers include:

- The employee would not do a good job, knowing that their employment is at an end.
- There could be a lot of tension between employer and employee as well as the workplace in general.
- Being let go, whether for cause or due to cutbacks, can be very upsetting. Some employees may act out or act destructively at work because of this. (Make sure students understand what “cause” is and the difference between being fired and laid off.)

Slide 7: If you get fired from a job that employer can't tell any future employers why you were fired:

True

Explain to students that sometimes people make mistakes, especially when they are young, and sometimes those can get them fired. This is an opportunity for them to improve and learn. They still have a right to privacy and to seek other employment. If someone is fired for cause, the employer who fired them cannot tell any future employers the details of what the reason was. The only information the employer can provide is whether or not that person worked for them. However, if asked, that employer can say that if given the option they would not hire the employee again. That still definitely can influence a future employer so it is important to behave appropriately on the job.

Slide 8: In general, it's OK to show up late for work as long as you are willing to stay late: **False**

Solicit answers from students on why this usually is not acceptable employment behavior. Possible answers include:

- There won't be enough employees to cover a shift.
- Shifts are specific hours for specific reasons—such as serving food during mealtimes/busy hours, businesses being open only during those hours, customers arriving at specific times for appointments, etc.
- It may not be possible to stay late to make up time.
- It is unreliable behavior in general.

Slide 9: If you have a disability, you are required by law to tell your employer what it is: **False**

A person with a disability has a right to privacy, including disclosing that disability. Some disabilities are visible: being a wheelchair user, being blind, need an interpreter/using ASL. Other disabilities are not visible, and employers may have no idea an employee has one. The law cannot require you to disclose your disability; however, it can be a good idea if you need accommodations at work.

Make sure students know what accommodations are before moving to the next question.

Slide 10: If you request an accommodation, an employer is required by law to meet your request: **True & False—trick question!**

This is a bit of a trick question because it is missing a word: REASONABLE. Explain to students what a reasonable accommodation is. According to the Americans with Disabilities Act and similar disability-

related laws, providing reasonable accommodations in the workplace IS the law. However, employers do not have to provide accommodations that are NOT reasonable. Provide students with some examples:

Not Reasonable Accommodations:

Something that is not reasonable is something that would cause the employer undue cost, would cause another employee to lose their job or take on the disabled employee's job, or that would completely change the disabled employee's job so that they no longer were performing what they were hired to do.

Examples: Giving a disabled employee more paid time off than other employees (based on what they are entitled to). If a requirement of the job is being able to lift a certain amount of weight, e.g., 50 lb, because the employee needs to complete inventory or load a truck, an unreasonable accommodation would be removing the weight requirement and not having the employee lift anything. If a requirement of the job is driving, an unreasonable accommodation would be allowing an employee to not have or obtain a driver's license and be unable to drive.

Reasonable Accommodations:

Reasonable accommodations are things that will help an employee do their job without negatively affecting the employer, the other employees, or the job functions in general. Most accommodations are reasonable and cost little to nothing.

Examples: Printing out the steps for a job and posting them for an employee so they have a visual of the work they are supposed to complete. Providing breaks at certain scheduled times so that an employee knows when they will be able to take them. Allowing an employee to remain seated (or standing) if it does not impact the way they do their job (a greeter in a store can greet customers just as effectively sitting down as they do standing). Modifying work schedules. Allowing several short breaks instead of one or two longer breaks.

Slide 11: You can get fired for ALL of the following: lying on an application, falling asleep on the job, gossiping about co-workers and negative social media posts: **True**

Review each of these answers with students. Solicit reasons from them why you can get fired for any of these behaviors. Possible answers include:

- Lying on an application: you are untrustworthy, it's unethical, you may not know how to do portions of your job but you said you did
- Falling asleep on the job: that's not what employees are paid for, you should ask for additional tasks if you don't have anything to do, it can be dangerous in certain situations
- Gossiping about co-workers: it causes drama in the workplace; it can make it difficult for others to work with you; in some cases you could be liable for harassment
- Negative social media posts: A large percentage of employers check social media posts—being negative about your employer or other employees online can be cause for firing; also, posting illegal or unethical behavior online can be cause for firing

Slide 12: You can get fired for ALL of the following: arriving late, taking office supplies, dating a co-worker, and not following directions: **True**

Review each of these answers with students. Solicit reasons from them why you can get fired for any of these behaviors. Possible answers include:

- Arriving late: Normally, you will not get fired for arriving late to work one time. However, if you are not good at time management and continually arrive late to work, you could be fired or receive some sort of disciplinary action because arriving late is irresponsible. Your employer is counting on you to be on time for your shift.
- Taking office supplies: Unless there are items at your work that are left over and employees are expressly told to help themselves, taking office supplies or other items from work is theft.
- Dating a co-worker: This can cause drama and make other employees uncomfortable.
- Not following directions: Normally, you will not get fired if you fail to follow directions occasionally, especially because you are young and learning how to be employed. However, continually not following directions can cause unsafe working conditions or cause work to be undone and will waste time and money.

Slide 13: Divide students into two teams. Give teams a chance to respond to a scenario. If a team gives a satisfactory answer, give them a point. If not, allow the opposing team to respond.

Let's look at a few scenarios and get some ideas on how you would behave if this happened to you on the job.

Slide 14: Scenario #1: You overhear a conversation between your supervisor and her boss. You find out your best friend will be offered a part-time position. Do you call them and tell them what you overheard? Why or why not?

Slide 15: Scenario #2: You have a part-time job at a hospital. Your friend wants a job at the hospital also. She has a job interview at the hospital on Friday and wants to know if you will help her prepare for it. You find the interview questions for the job for which your friend will be interviewed sitting on your supervisor's desk. What will you do?

Slide 16: Scenario #3: You work at a retail store. You keep your cell phone in your pocket in case a friend wants to contact you. Several times during your shift you check to see who has texted you and when work slows, you text them back. A complaint has been made by a customer about students using cell phones at work. Your supervisor calls you into her office and shows you security video footage of you text messaging. How do you respond?

Slide 17: Scenario #4: You have a summer job in an office. While at work, a friend of yours who is looking for a job sends you an e-mail with a copy of his résumé attached. He asks you to make a dozen copies of it for him on your company's photocopier. What do you do?

Slide 18: Scenario #5: You have a computer workstation at your job. You receive an e-mail from your sister with a really funny joke. You consider sending the joke to three colleagues at your workplace. Should you? Why or why not?