

Work Ethic Inventory & Reflection Lesson

For Financial Literacy, Civics, Career Readiness, and Psychology

Lesson Overview

This lesson uses a **Work Ethic Inventory** to help students examine their personal attitudes toward work, responsibility, motivation, and professionalism. Students complete a self-scored inventory, analyze their results, and connect their attitudes to **employer expectations, career readiness, and long-term financial outcomes**.

This activity works especially well as a **discussion-based lesson** rather than a graded assignment. There are **no “right” answers**—the goal is honest self-reflection and growth.

Grade Levels

Grades 9–12

Time Required

- Inventory completion: **10–15 minutes**
 - Small-group discussion: **10 minutes**
 - Whole-class discussion & reflection: **20–30 minutes**
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Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Evaluate their own attitudes toward work and responsibility
 - Understand how employers define “work ethic”
 - Connect work habits to career success and financial stability
 - Reflect on which professional traits matter most to them personally
 - Distinguish between **healthy productivity** and **unhealthy work expectations**
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Teacher Instructions

1. Introduce the Activity

- Explain that students will complete a **Work Ethic Inventory**.
- Emphasize honesty—this is **not a test**.
- Let students know their score is private unless they choose to share.

2. Explain the Scoring System

- Strongly Agree = +2
- Agree = +1
- Disagree = -1
- Strongly Disagree = -2
- Possible score range: **-40 to +40**

3. Set the Employer Context

- Share this benchmark with students:

*Many employers look for indicators of a strong work ethic. In general, a score of **+20 or higher** suggests traits employers value.*

- Stress that **high scores don't make someone "better"**—they simply reflect traditional workplace expectations.

4. Discussion & Reflection

- After scoring, students should:
 - Identify **3 statements they strongly agreed or disagreed with**
 - Decide which traits they believe matter most **to them**
 - Consider whether they agree with employer expectations
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Student Instructions

1. Read each statement carefully.
2. Respond honestly based on your **current beliefs**, not what you think adults want to hear.
3. Assign a score for each response.
4. Add your total score.
5. Be prepared to discuss:
 - Which statements stood out most
 - Whether you agree with how employers define “good work ethic”

Statement	Strongly Agree (+2)	Agree (+1)	Disagree (-1)	Strongly Disagree (-2)
I see work as a way to contribute, not just a way to earn money.				
I take responsibility for completing tasks I agree to do.				
I put real effort into work even when no one is supervising.				
When I commit to a responsibility, I follow through.				
I understand that reliability matters in most jobs.				
I limit distractions when I am supposed to be working.				
Being consistently late reflects poorly on a person.				
I take ownership of mistakes instead of blaming others.				
I value being dependable.				
I try to do quality work, not just the minimum.				
I stay productive even when tasks are boring.				
I don't need constant praise to do my job well.				
I take pride in work that reflects my abilities.				
I try to improve when given feedback.				
In group work, I do my part even if others do not.				
I communicate when I am struggling.				
I respect deadlines.				
I understand my actions at work affect others.				
Teamwork requires personal accountability.				
I understand effort during work time matters.				