

Lesson Plan for Middle School Honor Curriculum

Produced by Duke University Honor Council

The purpose of this lesson is to teach your students about the types of integrity violations and the importance of maintaining a personal honor code.

The following lesson is around 30-45 minutes long and includes two supplemental worksheets and a video.

1. Icebreakers and introduction (5 minutes)

- a. This section is to help frame the topic for the students and get the class involved. See page two for a list of suggested icebreaker activities.

2. Definitions and Resources Worksheet (10 minutes)

- a. This is a two-page resource providing definitions of common integrity terms, addressing FAQs, and providing resources for students. This worksheet should be kept by students as a handy resource going forward. See pages 3-4 for the worksheet.
- b. The instructor should review the content of the worksheet and field any questions.

3. Video (5-10 minutes)

- a. This is a testimonial video produced by the Duke Honor Council explaining why integrity matters and how it impacts our character.
- b. Please see video at link here:

4. Honor in Your Words Worksheet (10 minutes)

- a. This worksheet prompts students to develop their own honor code and explain why it matters to them. See page 5 for the worksheet.
- b. Instructors should conclude the lesson by having volunteers share their personal honor code.

Icebreaker Ideas

The following ideas are intended to involve students and raise ethical questions as a start for conversation.

Robin Hood

You are the only witness to a man stealing money from a bank full of money of innocent citizens, and then giving the money out to the poor on the street. Would you report the man – resulting in his arrest and restoration of the stolen money – or would you leave the crime scene and let the poor have the money?

Jean Valjean

After Jean Valjean breaks parole and successfully establishes himself as a mayor in a faraway town, he learns that another man, also named Jean Valjean, is being charged for his crimes and is facing a lifetime in jail. Should Valjean confess to save this man or should he let the man go to jail, since many of the town's workers depend on his help to survive?

Ask the students to go to one side of the room in support of one solution, and the other side in support of the opposing solution. Then, have volunteers justify their choice.

Feel free to develop additional scruples questions at your discretion.

A Guide to Honor

Definitions

Cheating: *intentionally acting dishonestly or unfairly in order to gain an advantage, especially in a game or examination*

Plagiarism: *the practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own*

Honor: *adherence to what is right or to a standard of conduct, a keen sense of ethical conduct*

Integrity: *the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles; moral uprightness, firm adherence to a code of moral values*

Honesty: *fairness and straightforwardness of conduct*

Fairness: *impartial and just treatment or behavior without favoritism or discrimination*

Responsibility: *able to answer for one's conduct and obligations, able to choose for oneself between right and wrong*

All definitions adapted from Merriam Webster Dictionary or Dictionary.com

FAQs

Q: What is the difference between collaborating and cheating?

A: Always be sure to ask your teacher when it's OK to work together on assignments or homework. If your teacher says it's fine to collaborate, a general rule of thumb is to make sure that all parties understand the material and have contributed equally to the assignment. For example, copying answers off another paper would be cheating, but working together to discuss the problems is collaboration. Another example is that working together in class on a lab is collaboration but copying each other's lab reports is cheating.

Q: What should I do if I'm not sure how to cite something?

A: Ask your teacher what the expectation is for citing outside sources. If you're in doubt about whether you should cite something, it's always fine to err on the side of caution and put it down as a reference. Generally speaking, you should cite any materials that you used to understand the topic or that gave you ideas to work with. If you're not sure how to cite a particular source, check out some of the citation resources listed at the end of this worksheet.

Q: What should I do if I see someone cheating?

A: Being honest isn't just about avoiding cheating yourself. An honorable student should always report instances of cheating or plagiarism they're aware of to a teacher. Simply approach your teacher after class or as soon as possible following the incident and describe the instance as accurately as possible. Rest assured that your identity will remain anonymous and that the teacher will do everything possible to investigate your concerns. Don't feel like you're betraying anybody; you're doing your part to uphold a culture of honesty in your school.

Q: What are the consequences of cheating?

A: Official sanctions of cheating can include a zero on the relevant assignment, referral to administration, suspension, and even expulsion. On a personal level, getting caught cheating harms your relationships with your teachers and peers, ultimately losing you respect.

Q: How does cheating hurt me?

A: When you cheat, you're depriving yourself of learning the material and harming your own education. Any future accomplishments you achieve are based on a fake premise.

Q: How does cheating hurt others?

A: A lot of people feel that cheating isn't so bad because it doesn't really hurt anyone. This is very untrue. When you cheat, you disrespect your classmates and peers who worked hard to learn the material and create an unfair classroom environment. Your teachers, who care for your education and future, are also hurt by your dishonesty.

Q: How does integrity affect my life outside of school?

A: You can't spend your entire life cheating your way through obstacles. Creating a habit of dishonesty can harm all aspects of your life, from your work to your personal relationships. School doesn't last forever, but the character and ethics you hold will follow you for years to come.

Resources

Help on citing sources:

<https://library.duke.edu/research/citing>

Format for citing MLA:

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/05/>

Tutorial and self test on recognizing plagiarism from Duke:

<https://plagiarism.duke.edu/>

How to avoid plagiarizing:

<https://library.duke.edu/research/plagiarism>

Overview of what additional information is required when quoting/paraphrasing:

<https://plagiarism.duke.edu/procedures/table.php>

What Does Honor Mean to You?

At Duke University, we have a Community Standard that every student promises to follow. Our Honor Code:

- I will not lie, cheat, or steal in my academic endeavors;
- I will conduct myself honorably in all my endeavors; and
- I will act if the Standard is compromised.

At Duke, honor is a priority both in and outside the classroom. It's something that our community values and is committed to upholding.

What is your personal honor code?

Why is this honor code important to you?

I promise to defend and uphold honor: X_____