

Excellence through Ethics™

Session 13

Ethical Job Hunting



Middle School



Junior Achievement®



Excellence through Ethics

Middle Grades

Session 13

Ethical Job Hunting

Content: Ethics, Self-Promotion, and Job Searches

Methods: Role-Playing

JA Foundational Pillars: Ethics and Work Readiness

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Acknowledgements

Sponsorship

JA Worldwide® (Junior Achievement) gratefully acknowledges Deloitte & Touche USA LLP for its commitment to the development and implementation of the supplementary program *Excellence through Ethics*. JA Worldwide appreciates its relationship with Deloitte & Touche USA LLP to develop and implement vital and innovative programs designed to foster ethical decision-making skills.

Ethical Job Hunting

Overview

Students learn the importance of marketing themselves accurately and truthfully during a job search.

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Recognize the need for realistically evaluating their suitability for particular jobs.
- Discover the importance of filling out job applications accurately and honestly.
- Learn how potential employers view false statements by applicants.

Preparation

Review the activity. Prepare the necessary copies and session materials. Make six sets of questions by cutting the questions from each Employer Question Set sheet; fold each question in half. A complete set of six questions will be distributed to each group during the activity.

Group work is incorporated into this session. You may consult with the teacher to determine how best to form the groups.

Post Key Terms and definitions in a visible place.

- **Ethics:** The standards that help determine what is good, right, and proper.

Recommended Time

This session typically takes 45 minutes to complete. Ask the teacher to help you keep track of time.

Materials

- Bobby Young's Job Search Pieces (1 per student)
- Employer Question Set (1 packet per group)
- Pens or pencils (1 per student)

Presentation

Introduction (10 minutes)

Greet the students. Ask students to recall the kind of information usually found in a newspaper employment advertisement. Ask them what kinds of jobs they would probably be interested in during high school. Then, ask students what kinds of jobs they would definitely not be interested in, and why. Point out that they won't all agree on one particular job because their interests and skills differ.

Ask students what they would do once they have found a job that appeals to them. **Possible Answer:** could include: Get a job application, fill out an application, or send in a résumé.

Have students explain why a written explanation of their abilities and experience is important. Answers could include: It will provide a first impression of the applicant; it will give the employer an idea of whether this person will be suitable for the advertised job.

Ask the class if all the employers in a city would be likely to agree on the desirability of hiring one particular student. Point out that different employers look for various skills, interests, and experiences based on different job requirements.

Ask students what would happen if an applicant was hired who claimed to have specific credentials, training, or education that he or she didn't have. What if the applicant said he or she was interested in the job, but really wasn't? Answers may include: The employee would probably have a brief and unfulfilling job experience; the employer would have wasted time and resources training that individual for the position.

Activity

Job Search Role-Playing (30 minutes)

Tell students that they will role-play employers and job applicants. The setting is a job interview. Warn students that some of them will be “put on the spot” in their role, but that they should stick to the truth.

Separate the class into four groups. Give each student a copy of Bobby Young's Job Search Pieces. Bring to students' attention the boldfaced numbers (1-6) that appear next to specific items on the application.

After they have had a chance to read the information, divide each group in half. Half of each group will play the role of the job applicant, Bobbie Young; half of each group will play the role of the employer, Mr. Ballard. To increase the effectiveness of the activity, have those playing the role of Bobbie Young face those playing the role of Mr. Ballard.

Give each group of “employers” a set of six folded questions. Make sure that each student playing Mr. Ballard receives one of these questions. Do not allow students to unfold their questions until it is their turn to do so.

Explain the following rules to the role-play:

Each folded piece of paper has a question on it. Students playing the role of Mr. Ballard will be given a chance to unfold their papers and ask a student playing the role of Bobbie Young their question. Students may not unfold their papers until it is their turn to ask a question. Each question will correspond with a numbered item from Bobbie's application. Each student playing Bobbie Young must do his or her best to answer the question posed. Everyone playing the role of Bobbie Young must be given a question. All six questions must be asked and answered.

Remind students that the company plans to invest money in a two-week training program for the person it hires, which is an expense.

Note: This activity should make those playing Bobbie Young feel uncomfortable. However, do not allow the role-play to deteriorate into personal harassment.

When all four groups have completed the set of six questions, ask students who played the role of Mr. Ballard if they would hire Bobbie Young. Have them explain why or why not. Ask them if they think Bobbie would be the “dependable, motivated worker” they wanted. Explain that if they hadn’t checked the job application before hiring Bobbie, they would not have been able to make a good hiring decision for their company.

Next, have students who played the role of Bobbie Young share how they felt during the interview. Ask if any of them felt like lying. Ask the class if that would have been a good or bad idea. Reinforce the fact that using lies to cover up other lies only makes matters worse; managers will eventually learn the truth.

Ask students if they would have completed the application differently. If so, how? Ask students if they think Bobbie would have been right for the job. Would he or she have worked hard for his or her new company? Ask them why they think Bobbie applied for the job in the first place.

Summary and Review (5 minutes)

Briefly review the vocabulary introduced in the session.

Explain to students that most employers check every statement made on an application. Employers conduct thorough background checks by examining references, employment history, credit history, licenses, driving records, and criminal history. Many companies even require drug testing.

Providing accurate information on a résumé or job application protects both the employer and the applicant. Business is about relationships. People want to do business with others they can trust. Businesses do not want to invest money in trainees if it cannot be assumed that the new employees will stay with the company for a reasonable period of time and perform duties as expected.

Not telling the truth on a job application or in an interview is unethical and unwise. If job applicants lie about qualifications, they generally are unable to perform as expected. This more often than not leads to termination, and tarnishes the person’s work history.

Session Outline

Introduction

- Greet the students.
- Ask students about the kinds of jobs that would appeal to them.
- Explain that it is important to both students and their employers that job applications are filled out accurately.

Activity

- Separate the class into four groups. Distribute Bobbie Young's Job Search Pieces and ask students to quietly read the information.
- Divide each group so that one half can role-play the untruthful job applicant and the other half can role-play the potential employer.
- Distribute one set of six questions from Employer Question Set to players who are role-playing the potential employer.

Summary and Review

- Review the Key Terms for the session.
- Make sure that students understand the drawbacks of submitting false information on a job application.
- Thank the students for their participation.

Bobbie Young's Job Search Pieces

Employment Ad

Wanted: dependable, motivated young person to fill and package orders for, busy Internet mail-order business. 20 hours per week. \$9 per hour possible after 2 weeks successful training. Call 555-2212, and ask for Mr. Ballard.

Bobbie Young's Job Application

Name: Bobbie Young Age: 18

Address: 10 S. Maple Drive, Fairfield, MN Phone: 555-7658

Education Level Completed: (1) High School, Diploma

Work Experience (list most recent job last):

Job	When	Employer	Phone
(2) lawn mowing/snow removal	2004 - 2005	Alice Smithson	
(3) stock person in supermarket	2005	Bond Foods	555-9214
(4) book shelver in school library	2005	Miss Lipscomb	555-8934
(5) pizza delivery	2006	Eazy Cheezy	555-2376
(6) auto parts delivery	this summer	Auto-Pro	555-3490

Employer Question Set



Question 1 (Please keep this folded and do not read until asked.)

Bobbie, you noted on your application that you completed high school. However, when I called your high school, they told me you still had to complete one course before you could graduate. Would you please explain?



Question 2 (Please keep this folded and do not read until asked.)

Bobbie, you didn't give us Alice Smithson's phone number, but we tracked her down. She told us that she hired you to cut her grass every week, but that she always had to call you and remind you to do the work. Sometimes she would call you after 10 days or more passed, after her grass was growing out of control. Is that why you didn't list her phone number? Do you feel that you did a good job for Ms. Smithson?



Question 3 (Please keep this folded and do not read until asked.)

Bobbie, we think your experience as a stock person would be very useful to us. However, the Bond Foods store manager told us that you only stayed on the job for six weeks. Why did you quit so soon?



Question 4 (Please keep this folded and do not read until asked.)

Bobbie, I called the pizza restaurant to see what kind of worker you were. The manager told me that you did fine, but you quit your job after two months because baseball season was starting. Did you tell them about baseball? Do you think they would have hired you if they had known you would be quitting so soon?



Question 5 (Please keep this folded and do not read until asked.)

Bobbie, I talked to your high school librarian about your work as a book shelver because that kind of precision would be useful to us. She told me that you were assigned to her after school as a punishment for missing classes. Is this true?



Question 6 (Please keep this folded and do not read until asked.)

Bobbie, we called Auto-Pro and they say they've never heard of you. Did you really work for them this summer? Please explain what's going on here.

Appendix

Welcome to Junior Achievement's *Excellence through Ethics*

As a Junior Achievement (JA) volunteer or teacher, you are joining other teachers and volunteers from across the United States in providing students with a unique educational experience. Junior Achievement's *Excellence through Ethics* offers students learning opportunities to share knowledge and information regarding ethics in business. JA strives to show students how business works, and to better evaluate organizations that conduct their operations in the right way.

Excellence through Ethics is designed to equip volunteers and teachers with supplemental, ethics-based activities for use with JA in-class programs for grades four through twelve. All these activities provide students with current and essential information about business ethics.

These activities are designed to reinforce students' knowledge and skills, teach them how to make ethical decisions, assist them in learning to think critically, and help them to be better problem-solvers. All the activities are hands-on, interactive, and group-focused to present the material to students with the best instructional methods.

Within these supplements, you will find sections to help you effectively implement the activities in your volunteer experience. Materials include: (a) an introductory discussion of business ethics, marketplace integrity, and the growing capacity of students for ethical decision-making; (b) activities and student materials that connect to and expand current classroom-based Junior Achievement programs; and (c) a functional glossary of terms relating to a wide spectrum of ethics, quality, service, and social responsibility considerations in business.

JA greatly appreciates your support of these important and exciting activities. If you have comments about the *Excellence through Ethics* program content, curriculum, and/or instruction, please access <http://studentcenter.ja.org.aspx/LearnEthics/> and choose the “*Excellence through Ethics Survey*” link located in the middle of the page.

Appendix

Introduction and Overview

- *How do I do the right thing in this situation?*
- *Should I be completely honest, even if it puts others in jeopardy?*
- *What kind of community do we want to be?*
- *How do we do what's best for the long term?*
- *Who should cover the cost of "doing the right thing"?*

These are all questions having to do with business ethics. They are valid and necessary questions, and good business people have asked them for generations. They form the backdrop of vital discussions as business, community, and political leaders grapple with significant issues. Many students would ask these questions, even if Junior Achievement hadn't developed this ethics curriculum.

Business Ethics Discussions Are Here To Stay

Business ethics has been in the spotlight for much of the past decade, especially as examples of wrongdoing come to light in the media. New technologies and international competitive pressures cause a steady focus on the question, "Is it possible to be competitively successful in business today and still operate in an honest and ethical manner?" The past decade has seen individuals search for deeper personal meaning in the workplace, which has contributed to lively ethics discussions in the business realm. For these reasons, the discussion of business ethics is not a passing fad; it's here to stay.

Many graduate schools of business have either required ethics coursework or integrated ethics principles throughout all areas of study. That is commendable. We believe this vital area of exposure and instruction also should happen at earlier ages and continue throughout the students' educational journey. Many of today's students haven't had access to a well-rounded education in economics and free enterprise or have come to see these in a very negative light. They have limited awareness of the extent to which good business leaders engage in the challenging exercises of ethical decision-making amid heavy competitive pressures. As students learn the general principles of economics and business, it's critical that these be underpinned with a strong foundation in ethics. This will accentuate the best in American business traditions, while laying the groundwork for students' continued evolution into future generations of leaders.

Integrity in the Marketplace?

Many adults and young people choose to believe that the marketplace is driven only by greed. They view it as bringing out only the worst in human behavior, demoralizing the human spirit, and driving out any sense of idealism. While elements of greed and extreme self-interest among some individuals cannot be denied, solid research has shown time and again that companies with a long-term focus on ethics and a broad consideration of stakeholders' interests are much more profitable than those lacking such a focus.

James A. Autry, in his book *Love and Profit: The Art of Caring Leadership*, said it well: "I do not doubt the presence of greed in the marketplace because I do not doubt the presence of greed in people. But, I also do not doubt the ennobling aspects of work, of the workplace, of the community, of endeavor, of

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the marketplace. So I choose to believe that most of the marketplace is driven by people who want to do good work for others and for themselves.”

Excellence through Ethics accepts the challenge of educating youth in the basics of economics and business while establishing a positive balance on the side of well-informed, ethical business practice. This may appear to place a heavy burden on Junior Achievement volunteers, who are not trained ethics experts. The following informational pages will not turn you into an ethics expert. That’s not what we’re striving for here. What students need most is meaningful interaction with people who are willing to engage in a discussion of these vital issues.

Lively Practitioners Rather Than Dry Theorists

This program is more about day-to-day ethics practice than the nuances of ethics theory. Some believe that working in business requires a disconnect from one’s personal ethics. We do not believe this is the case. Students need to know that what they learn about fairness and honesty in general also applies to business. While business ethics may address some specific areas of business practice, it’s not a separate and distinct specialty to be set apart from the general ethical principles that apply in other areas of life. Young people need to encounter the wisdom of age and experience that volunteers bring to the classroom.

Students’ Growing Capacity for Ethical Decision-Making

Excellence through Ethics is designed to foster discussions at the appropriate level for each age group. The curriculum developers have designed the ethics activities with sensitivity to student’s mental maturity. At the late elementary and middle-grades levels, students’ capacities for ethical reasoning tend toward good personal behavior as determined by adult rules and authority. In relationships, personal trust, loyalty, and respect are of paramount importance. For these students, corporate ethical behavior is viewed in much the same light as their own personal behavior: it’s governed by rules.

As students advance into high school, their ethical decision-making moves into the larger arena of social contracts and systems that guide and govern societal and group behavior. Here the rationality and utility of laws are scrutinized, as students become more capable of higher-ordered, principled thinking. Students are increasingly aware of the diversity of values among different cultures and communities. At this level, students’ capacities for processing the complex, ethical dilemmas that may be encountered in business are greatly enhanced.

You will gain confidence as you come to realize that conducting a robust, provocative discussion with students is more important than “having the right answer.” The activities have been designed to leave room for lively discussion and multiple points of view. Having the courage to share your own experiences is very valuable to students.

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You don't have to apologize for the excesses students may see in business. Don't assume responsibility for actions that are not your own, and do not try to defend the indefensible. While accentuating the fact that most businesses operate ethically, it's okay to scrutinize the unethical players in the marketplace who give business in general a bad name.

Continuing Education

Teaching this material to students will no doubt strengthen and enhance your own ethics awareness and continuing education. Some students will challenge your best reasoning capacities. Having your own support network of professional colleagues with whom you can share and discuss some of these issues is very valuable. It's also helpful to seek out colleagues with philosophical views that differ from your own. This serves as a valuable "cross-pollination" function because you will be able to understand and discuss a variety of views with students, as well as share students' perspectives with your colleagues. In this way, everyone learns.

Finally, please be assured that your contributions here have tremendous value to students and will serve to upgrade business ethics in the future. We're dealing with the future generation of leaders in their formative years. We can take pride in the fact that we've had a hand in shaping the very people who will be responsible for business ethics and social responsibility in the future.

Appendix

Acknowledgements

Many educators, economists, businesspeople, and consultants have contributed to the development of *Excellence through Ethics*. We would like to acknowledge the following individuals and groups for their efforts, creative talents, and support in creating these materials:

Deloitte & Touche USA LLP

Junior Achievement Blue Ribbon Panel on Ethics

Charles E. Abbott, Director, Ethics and Compliance, Textron Inc.

James D. Berg, Director, Ethics and Business Practice, International Paper

Arthur P. Brief, Ph.D., Lawrence Martin Chair in Business, Director of Burkenroad Institute, A.B. Freeman School of Business, Tulane University

Frank Daly, Corporate Director of Ethics and Business Conduct, Northrop Grumman Corporation

Gary L. Davis, Executive Vice President, Chief Human Resources and Administration Officer, J.C. Penney Company, Inc.

Jacquelyn Gates, President and CEO, SOARing LLC

Patrick J. Gnazzo, Vice President Business Practices, United Technologies Corporation

Frances Hesselbein, Chairman, Leader to Leader Institute (formerly the Peter F. Drucker Foundation)

Evelyn Howell, Executive Director, Business Practices & Compliance, Sara Lee Corporation

William A. McCollough, Ph.D., Director, Business Ethics Foundation and Research Center Administration, Warrington College of Business, University of Florida

John H. O'Byrne, Vice President, New York Life Insurance Company

John Pepper, Chairman, Executive Committee of the Board, The Procter & Gamble Company

Eric Pressler, Director of Legal Compliance and Business Ethics, PG&E Corporation

Jack Robertson, Ph.D., Charles T. Zlatkovich Centennial Professor in Accounting, Department of Accounting, University of Texas–Austin (retired)

Harold Tinkler, Chief Ethics Officer, Deloitte & Touche LLP

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Motion Picture Association of America Public Relations Council

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Appendix

Excellence through Ethics Evaluation

Junior Achievement has discontinued all paper versions of program surveys. However, we greatly appreciate your comments and feedback about *Excellence through Ethics*. Please help us improve the quality of *Excellence through Ethics* by sharing your comments through our new online survey process. The online survey should take less than 10 minutes to complete.

If you have comments about the *Excellence through Ethics* program content, curriculum, and/or instruction, please access <http://studentcenter.ja.org/aspx/LearnEthics/> and choose the *Excellence through Ethics* Survey link located in the middle of the page.

Thank you for participating in JA!



Excellence through Ethics Volunteer Survey

1. Including this session, how many individual sessions of Excellence through Ethics have you presented? _____

2. Do you feel that the students were engaged through this session?
 - A. Not at all
 - B. Somewhat engaged
 - C. Engaged
 - D. Very Engaged
 - E. Unsure

3. Do you feel the session was relevant to students?
 - A. Not relevant
 - B. Somewhat relevant
 - C. Relevant
 - D. Very relevant
 - E. Unsure

4. Do you feel students are more prepared to make ethical decisions after participating in this session?
 - A. Significantly more prepared
 - B. Somewhat more prepared
 - C. Somewhat less prepared
 - D. Significantly less prepared
 - E. Unsure

5. On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being excellent), how would you rate the overall quality of the Excellence through Ethics session? _____

6. After this JA experience, how likely are you to volunteer for JA again?
 - A. More likely to volunteer
 - B. Less likely to volunteer
 - C. No more or less likely to volunteer
 - D. Unsure

7. What comments or suggestions do you have regarding the overall session (including format, content, etc.)?

Optional: City _____

State _____ Country _____

Email _____

Excellence through Ethics Student Survey

1. What grade are you in? _____

2. Please fill in the circle that best describes how you feel about the following statements.

There is no right or wrong answer.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
This topic is very important.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am able to apply what I learned in this session to the real world.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The activities were interesting.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I learned something about ethics from this session.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. Do you feel more prepared to make ethical decisions after participating in this session?

- A. Significantly more prepared
- B. Somewhat more prepared
- C. Somewhat less prepared
- D. Significantly less prepared
- E. Unsure

4. I saw someone at my job taking money from the cash register, I would:

- A. Ask someone I trust what I should
- B. Tell a supervisor
- C. Talk to the person taking the money
- D. Do nothing
- E. Not sure

5. To help us better understand who you are, please answer the following questions: How do you describe your ethnicity (family background)? (Fill in all that apply)

- A. African American
- B. Asian American
- C. Latino (a) or Chicano (a)
- D. European American (white)
- E. Native American
- F. Other – how do you identify yourself? _____

6. Do you have any additional comments regarding this session?

Optional: City _____ State _____ Country _____