Lesson Plan

Demonstrating Customer Service Skills  
Researching Excellence in Customer Service

Objective: Students will explore the concept of customer service and research companies known for excellent customer service.

Workplace Readiness Skill: **Demonstrate customer service skills.**

*Demonstration includes*

* *defining* ***customer service*** *(e.g., internal customer service; external customer service)*
* *identifying the benefits of providing helpful, courteous, and knowledgeable customer service*
* *prioritizing customer service (both within an organization and to external customers and stakeholders)*
* *anticipating needs of customers and coworkers*
* *demonstrating how to provide helpful, courteous, and knowledgeable service to address customer and/or coworker needs.*

Correlations to Other Workplace Readiness Skills:

* Demonstrate work ethic.
* Demonstrate conflict-resolution skills.
* Demonstrate listening and speaking skills.
* Demonstrate big-picture thinking.
* Demonstrate career- and life-management skills.
* Demonstrate professionalism.

Correlations to the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL):

English: 6.2, 6.7, 7.1, 7.2, 7.7, 8.2, 8.7, 9.1, 9.6, 10.1, 10.6, 11.1

History and Social Science: CE.1, CE.4, CE.14, GOVT.1, GOVT.16

Instructional Steps:

1. ***Introduce the lesson by asking students, “Have any of you had a memorable customer service experience— either positive or negative— when shopping at a store, visiting the doctor or dentist, or when interacting with a service provider?”*** Discuss examples from students (as well as your own).
2. ***Create a “T” chart and record characteristics of positive customer service vs. negative customer service, based on student experiences.*** What worker behaviors characterize a positive experience for customers or clients?
3. ***Explain to students that no matter what field they are considering entering—from health care to retail; from IT to automotive repair—customer service is a vital component of employee success.*** Tell students that today they will be researching companies known for excellent customer service to determine what mindsets and behaviors factor into successful customer service.
4. ***Divide students into research groups.*** Assign each group a company known for excellent customer service to research. Examples that you may want to use include Disney, Wegmans, Zappos, The Apple Store, and The Ritz-Carlton (but feel free to add other companies known for excellent customer service). Ask students to use Handout #1: Excellence in Customer Service to record their findings. Discuss appropriate keyword searches to ensure that students get the best results via the Internet.
5. ***Allow time for research and group work.*** Circulate among students and offer assistance as needed.
6. ***Hold class discussion to share research findings.*** Ask each group to present their findings about great customer service. Create a list of elements required for excellent customer service.
7. ***Reflect in writing.*** Based on the day’s activity, ask students to reflect in writing on the following journal prompt:

*Why do you think customer service is important to the success of a business? What outcomes do businesses experience when they make customer service a priority? What outcomes may companies experience when customer service is not a priority?*

Formative Assessment**:**

* Assess student understanding and participation as demonstrated in the class and small group discussions.
* Evaluate student understanding of concepts within the lesson as demonstrated by the findings recorded on Handout #1: Excellence in Customer Service.
* Evaluate student presentations of research.

Options for Adaptation/Differentiation:

* To offer student scaffolding for this activity, research just one company together, completing Handout #1: Excellence in Customer Service as a whole class.
* To extend this activity and provide further enrichment, ask students to use their notes to create a PowerPoint presentation about their chosen company. What philosophies and behaviors are behind the company’s success when it comes to customer service?

Suggestions for Follow-up:

* Invite a manager or business owner to discuss the importance of good customer service.
* Many elements of good customer service (e.g., listening skills, conflict-resolution skills, resourcefulness) are skills that align with overall workplace readiness, as well as with success in the classroom. Ask students to create a bulletin board of “tips for success” that incorporate some examples from student research.

Teacher Resources:

**[Every Employee Needs Customer Service Training—Here’s Why](https://www.forbes.com/sites/shephyken/2017/02/18/every-employee-needs-customer-service-training-and-heres-why/" \l "13fbcd9d4f93" \t "_blank)**, Forbes, 02/18/2017

**[Determine Potential Customers](http://www.uen.org/Lessonplan/preview.cgi?LPid=22904" \t "_blank)**, Utah Education Network

**[Dealing With Unhappy Customers: Turning a Challenge into an Opportunity](https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/unhappy-customers.htm" \t "_blank)**, MindTools