

Lesson Plan

Initiative and Self-direction: Exhibiting Motivation



Objective: Students will explore the relationship between exhibiting motivation and the concept of initiative.

Workplace Readiness Skill: **Demonstrate initiative and self-direction.**

Demonstration includes

- *recognizing the importance of proactive, independent decision making*
- *identifying workplace needs*
- *completing tasks with minimal direct supervision*
- *applying solutions.*

Correlations to Other Workplace Readiness Skills:

- Demonstrate integrity.
- Demonstrate work ethic.
- Demonstrate conflict-resolution skills.
- Demonstrate customer service skills.
- Collaborate with team members.
- Demonstrate big-picture thinking.
- Demonstrate career- and life-management skills.
- Demonstrate professionalism.

Correlations to Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL):

- English: 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.7, 6.8, 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.7, 7.8, 8.2, 8.7, 8.8, 9.1, 9.6, 9.7, 10.1, 10.6, 10.7, 11.6, 11.7, 12.6, 12.7
- History and Social Science: CE.4, CE.14, GOVT.16

Instructional Steps:

1. **Review the concept of work ethic.** Work ethic is demonstrated through a variety of characteristics, such as being punctual, focusing on work-related tasks, taking direction willingly, exhibiting motivation, and taking initiative. Discuss the idea of initiative, motivation, and positive attitudes as they relate to work. Why would these things be important to an employer? Brainstorm reasons.
2. **View the three-minute video from the U.S. Department of Labor titled “Soft Skills: Enthusiasm and Attitude”** (https://youtu.be/-vk-99seC_I). Discuss the scenarios in the video. While the two examples of job interviews are very different, they illustrate an important point about the importance of enthusiasm and attitude.
3. **Ask students to watch the video a second time and complete Handout #1: Recognizing Attitude.** Discuss student responses.

4. **Demonstrate initiative and positive attitudes.** Break into small groups, practice the role-play scenarios on Handout #2: Demonstrating Positive Attitudes, and take turns role playing for the class. Discuss each scenario, and how the role play demonstrated positive attitudes.
5. **Reflect on the lesson.** Ask students to reflect in writing on the importance of initiative and positive attitude. Use the following prompt:

A friend has a new job with a company that offers internal promotions and training to employees who exhibit initiative, motivation, and attitudes for success. What tips might you offer to your friend, based on what you've learned in this lesson, to help him or her demonstrate these characteristics?

Formative Assessment:

- Gauge student understanding about the importance of motivation and attitude during the discussion of the video, "Soft Skills: Enthusiasm and Attitude."
- Evaluate student responses as recorded on Handout #1: Recognizing Attitude (sample student responses can be found at the end of this document).
- Ask peers to assess each other informally during the presentations of the role-playing scenarios by ranking each group on a scale of one to five on their demonstration of motivation and positive attitude.
- Use the "Journal Assessment Rubric" to assess student understanding of the concept as demonstrated in writing.

Options for Adaptation/Differentiation:

- To offer scaffolding to students, complete a whole-group walk-through of Handout #1: Recognizing Attitude.
- To offer an extension option to students, conduct mock interviews so that students can practice demonstrating positive attitudes and motivation. Engage a community partner to accomplish this if possible.

Suggestions for Follow-up:

- Ask students to read Carol Dweck's book, *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. Discuss the importance of a positive mindset to career success, as well as to success in life. Share a report on lessons learned from the book with another class.
- Ask students to complete activities associated with the lesson on page 36, "Never Underestimate the Power of PMA," in [Soft Skills to Pay the Bills — Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success](https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills/) (<https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills/>), from the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy.

Teacher Resources

Mindset: The New Psychology of Success by Carol S. Dweck

[Soft Skills to Pay the Bills — Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success](https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills/)

(<https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills/>), U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy.

[Workplace Readiness Skills \(WRS\) Assessment: Virginia Overview](https://www.ctecs.org/virginia/virginia-overview) (<https://www.ctecs.org/virginia/virginia-overview>), Career and Technical Education Consortium of States (CTECS).

[Workplace Readiness Skills \(WRS\) for the Commonwealth: Instructional Resources](http://cteresource.org/wrs/index.html)

(<http://cteresource.org/wrs/index.html>), Career and Technical Education (CTE) Resource Center.

Handout #1

Recognizing Attitude



Watch the video, "Soft Skills: Enthusiasm and Attitude" (https://youtu.be/-vk-99seC_I). Pay attention to the details of each interview. Record observations on the chart below, then answer the questions that follow.

Travis Wilson interview #1

Travis Wilson interview #2

Put yourself in the interviewer's shoes. What message did each interview convey to her?

At the conclusion, the video points out that a positive attitude makes "all the difference." Why?

What can you do to demonstrate a positive attitude the next time you have a job interview?

Handout #2

Demonstrating Positive Attitudes



Use the following scenarios to role play workplace situations. In each, the employee should display a positive work ethic by demonstrating motivation and positive attitudes. Think about how verbal language, body language, eye contact, and facial expression communicate a person's attitude.

Scenario 1: June's employer calls to let her know that he will be running late due to a family emergency. The business is supposed to open at 8:00 a.m., but June is not scheduled to begin work until 10:00 a.m. How can June demonstrate motivation and a positive attitude?

Scenario 2: Carlos has a new job as an assistant in an accounting office. Carlos thinks he might want to study to become an accountant someday. One of the firm's vice-presidents offers to walk through some aspects of an accountant's career with Carlos, but Carlos will have to stay after work to do this. How can Carlos demonstrate motivation and a positive attitude?

Scenario 3: Tameka has a job interview. While it is not her dream job, it is close to her family's home, the work hours suit her school schedule, and the pay will allow her to save for a car. The interviewer, Robin, calls Tameka in for the interview. Tameka doesn't know much about the company. How can Tameka demonstrate motivation and a positive attitude?

Scenario 4: John is leaving work on Friday night and heading out to meet friends. As he leaves, he notices the company sign at the front of the building has been damaged. How can John demonstrate motivation and a positive attitude?

Scenario 5: During a performance review, Pari's boss, Cheryl, tells Pari that she needs to improve the quality of her work. Cheryl explains that Pari sometimes makes careless mistakes when counting money in the cash register or when filing receipts. At first, Pari is surprised. How can Pari respond and demonstrate motivation and a positive attitude?

Scenario 6: Lee is getting ready for work at a veterinary office when he gets a call from his girlfriend. During the call, his girlfriend breaks up with him, and he is very upset and angry. Lee considers calling in sick, but he knows the veterinarians are short-staffed that day and are counting on him to show up. Despite feeling upset, how can Lee demonstrate motivation and a positive attitude?

Exhibiting Motivation

Journal Assessment Rubric



	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Fair (2)	Poor (1)
Student displays conceptual understanding.	It is obvious from the writing that the student understands various facets that make up work ethic.	The student demonstrates an understanding of most of the facets that make up work ethic.	Student understanding is spotty or unclear; student partially grasps the facets that make up work ethic.	The student did not demonstrate a conceptual understanding of work ethic.
Written ideas are fully formed.	Ideas within the journal are developed and clear to the reader.	Ideas within the journal are somewhat developed and clear to the reader.	Ideas within the journal are incomplete or unclear to the reader.	Ideas within the journal are not developed.
Writing is organized and clear.	Student journal is organized in paragraphs and clearly conveys all ideas.	Student journal is somewhat organized in paragraphs and conveys most ideas.	Student journal requires additional organization and attention to detail.	Student journal is not organized and does not convey ideas.
Student uses good vocabulary and language choices.	Choice of vocabulary is specific, professional, and appropriate to the audience (teacher).	Choice of vocabulary is somewhat specific, professional, and appropriate to the audience (teacher).	Choice of vocabulary needs to be improved so that it is specific, professional, and appropriate to the audience (teacher). Some slang or simplistic words should be replaced.	Choice of vocabulary is not specific, professional, and appropriate to the audience (teacher). Slang or simplistic words replace those that would better convey student ideas.
Student attends to grammar, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.	There are no grammar, spelling, capitalization, or punctuation errors.	There is one grammar, spelling, capitalization, or punctuation error.	There are two grammar, spelling, capitalization, or punctuation errors.	There are more than two grammar, spelling, capitalization, or punctuation errors.

Handout #1

Recognizing Attitude

SAMPLE STUDENT RESPONSES



Watch the video, "Soft Skills: Enthusiasm and Attitude" (https://youtu.be/-vk-99seC_I). Pay attention to the details of each interview. Record observations on the chart below, then answer the questions that follow.

Travis Wilson interview #1

Travis is not dressed professionally. He is also wearing headphones and has his phone out.

Travis has instructions for where to go on a crumpled up piece of paper in his pocket.

Travis saunters around the building, peering into people's offices.

Travis takes a large handful of candy and puts it in his pocket prior to the interview.

Travis uses words such as "like," "hey," and "dude" when addressing the interviewer.

Travis arrives late and doesn't introduce himself.

Travis answers his cell phone during the job interview.

Travis Wilson interview #2

Travis is dressed professionally in a jacket, tie, and dress slacks.

Travis has instructions for the interview, along with an extra copy of his résumé, in a portfolio.

Travis waits patiently to be called for his interview. He is on time, shakes the interviewer's hand, and introduces himself.

Travis uses professional language (he refrains from slang) and makes eye contact with the interviewer.

Travis thanks the interviewer when the interview has concluded.

Put yourself in the interviewer's shoes. What message did each interview convey to her?

The first Travis sent Ms. Madison the message that he didn't respect her at all—not her time, not her office, not the position he was interviewing for. The second Travis respected Ms. Madison's time by being on-time, demonstrated through the way he dressed and spoke that he was serious about the job, and was courteous and pleasant.

At the conclusion, the video points out that a positive attitude makes "all the difference." Why?

Attitude makes up a huge part of the impression that we leave with others. If an employer walks away from an interview with a person thinking that that person is disrespectful or not focused, that person will not get hired.

What one thing can you do the next time you have a job interview to demonstrate a positive attitude? **Answers could include: Be on time. Dress professionally. Do not chew gum. Put my phone on silent mode and put it away. Smile. Make eye contact. Ask appropriate questions. Think about the interview ahead of time.**