

OVERVIEW

Our popular quotation mini-posters are often used to decorate classrooms and halls, creating awareness and encouraging students to stop and think.

To make more of an impact, use this lesson plan to help students reflect more deeply on the quotations and to share their knowledge with classmates.

MATERIALS

- Quotation Mini-Poster Pack (one poster per student)
Available from our online store at CharacterCounts.org
- One sheet of paper per student
- Writing Rubric (A or B)

Ethics is a set of standards that tells us how we should behave. It's based on moral duty and a code of values that guides our choices and actions. No person with strong character lives without such a code. Ethics is more than doing what we must do; it's doing what we *should* do. Therefore, it is an exercise in self-control.

The values of the Six Pillars of Character – trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship – are integral parts of the ethical decision-making process. Could a decision cause you or someone else to suffer physical harm or emotional pain? Could it undermine your credibility or damage a relationship? Could it impede the achievement of a goal? Oftentimes doing the right thing can cost more than we want to pay in terms of friendship, money, prestige, or pleasure. Practicing ethical decision-making, like exercising good character, takes courage.

Effective decision-making accomplishes something we want to happen. It becomes easier when we take choices seriously and recognize which decisions are important and which are not. It's easy to simply go with the flow, but sometimes a situation demands more care and thought to achieve what we want. Taking time to choose the most ethical alternative is always best.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In this lesson, students will learn good character by:

- Reflecting on an inspirational quote from a randomly assigned mini-poster
- Applying their background knowledge of ethics and values to interpret the meaning of the quote
- Turning the quote into a real-life application
- Learning more about the quote's author

ACTIVITY

1. Randomly distribute the quotation mini-posters to the students. Give them a few minutes to read the quote and to ask about any vocabulary they are unsure about.
2. Tell the class they are going to engage in a thinking activity to reflect on the meaning of the quote. Take 5 or 10 minutes to elicit student responses to their quote. Encourage the students to read the quotes aloud and discuss meanings, their reaction to the messages, and how the quotes can inspire people to live up to the Six Pillars of Character.
3. Tell them they are going to write about their quote. Distribute the sheets of paper. Give younger students (ages 9-11) Writing Rubric B. Give older students Writing Rubric A.
4. For younger students, tell them they are to divide their sheets into four equal sections. Using a ruler, draw a horizontal line halfway down the paper and a vertical line halfway across the sheet. They should have four equal squares. Have them write the following titles for each square, from top to bottom, left to right: MEANING, IN MY LIFE, SCENE, RESPONSE.
5. Encourage the younger students to think about the meaning of their quote and to write that in the top left square. They should follow the instructions on their writing rubric. Monitor as necessary. Complete the other squares in the same manner.
6. For both age groups, continually reflect on the mini-posters and the work and ask them to think about how these inspiring quotes can help them make good decisions.
7. For follow-up activities, visit our Foundations for Life page and download more inspirational quotes for elementary and secondary school students. The free writing program comes with a teachers' guide to using quotes. <http://charactercounts.org/programs/FFL/>

For older students, have them reflect on their essays and post the finished work on the wall alongside the mini-poster it relates to.

For older students, tell them they are to write an essay on the quote, using the same headings as the younger students (see above). But have them organize their information in paragraph form to complete a five-paragraph essay. As a class, read over the Writing Rubric and check for understanding. Allow 30 minutes for them to get started. Monitor progress and, if necessary, assign as homework.

WRITING RUBRIC (A)

Look at the quote on the mini-poster you received and write notes on the following questions:

- What does the quote mean to you?
- Can you think of a time when the quote related to an event in your life or in the life of someone you know?
- Can you imagine a time when this quote might be useful to someone?
- What is your overall response to the quote?

Develop your notes into a paragraph or two for each question. Follow the information given below and in the column on the right, and write how well you think you wrote according to the rubric guidelines. Give yourself a grade by circling the number on the top left of each section. Your teacher will circle the numbers on the top right of the sections. Five is excellent and one is poor.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Introductory Paragraph Motivator: Strong opening sentence Thesis Sentence: What are you going to discuss?					Teacher Comments:				
1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
First Body Paragraph Topic Sentence: Make sure this links from the intro. Specific Support Specific Support					Teacher Comments:				
1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Second Body Paragraph Topic Sentence: Did you use a smooth transition? Specific Support Specific Support: Don't forget to back up your opinions!					Teacher Comments:				
1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Third Body Paragraph Topic Sentence Specific Support Specific Support					Teacher Comments:				
1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Concluding Paragraph Reworded Thesis Clincher: What will you say to convince the reader of the points you made in the essay?					Teacher Comments:				

WRITING RUBRIC (B)

Look at the quote on your mini-poster. What does it mean to you? Think about the words used. Do they make you happy? Sad? Think about how it makes you feel and write your response in the top left square on your paper. Look at the box below titled MEANING to make sure you achieve full marks. Three is the lowest and one is the highest. Circle the number you think best matches your effort. When you finish writing in the top left box and have marked your rubric, go to the next box titled IN MY LIFE. Here, you should think about how the quote reminds you of something that has happened in your life or to someone you know. Is it a quote you might use in the future? Give an example of how this quote relates to your life. Complete the rubric as before, and move to the next box titled SCENE. Draw a picture representing the quote. Finally, the last box is for your RESPONSE. What do you think about this quote? Complete the rubric as before and hand your work in.

Name: _____ Date: _____

MEANING

1	My writing is clear and understandable, with no spelling or grammar errors.
2	My writing is clear, but the sentences don't link together and there are a few errors.
3	It is difficult to understand the meaning of my writing. Some sentences are incomplete and there are several errors.

IN MY LIFE

1	I thought carefully about how this quote reminds me of something in my life and wrote about it clearly.
2	Not enough thought was put into this section, but my writing is clear and easy to understand.
3	I didn't think about this part well and made several errors in my writing.

SCENE

1	The drawing is imaginative, skillful, and neatly done.
2	The drawing is a little imaginative but also a little messy.
3	The drawing is very messy and difficult to make out.

RESPONSE

1	My writing is clear and easy to read. I wrote a thought-provoking response with no errors.
2	My writing is a little difficult to understand and there are a few errors.
3	There are a lot of errors in my writing, it is difficult to understand, and I did not put a lot of thought into this answer.