

Literacy Volunteers of Maine
ESoL/ EL Civics/ABE Curriculum Development Project

Lesson Title: Workplace Behaviors & Cultural Differences in the Workplace

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Literacy Program: Literacy Volunteers-Androscoggin

Program Address: 15 Sacred Heart Place, Auburn, ME 04210

Job Type: Entry level housekeeping, retail, light industry/manufacturing

Overview: This lesson introduces/reviews American cultural habits commonly used in the workplace.

This lesson plan is for a segment of a session spent with a workplace literacy student. See full curriculum at: <http://adultresource.coabe.org/resources/workplace-literacy-curriculum>

This is a sample lesson plan of activities to help ESOL students prepare for entry-level jobs in our community. Pick and choose activities suitable to your student's goals and skills. These activities are designed to be adaptable to varying levels and easily modifiable to fit your unique student's skills. Start off each meeting by talking with your student, informally determining how much of the previous meeting they recall and what they want out of that day's meeting. This is also a chance to practice and assess your student's greetings and small talk skills, critical components of getting along with coworkers. This informal "chit-chat" could take anywhere from 5-10 minutes of a one hour meeting.

Each meeting might include two to four topics and should incorporate a variety of activities to develop the student's reading, speaking, and listening skills in English. Be aware that some activities may be tiring because of the amount of language included. It is okay to cover a topic repeatedly for shorter periods of time, ensuring long-term comprehension. Unfortunately some activities are straight memorization and cannot be made as engaging as other topics. Be aware of your student's engagement level and fatigue. If you are having success with an activity, do not feel like you need to stop after a given amount of time. An engaged and happy student will be a better learner!

Basic Materials that may be useful in addition to materials for activities: whiteboard with markers, notebook to take notes during your lesson and to store lesson plans for planning future sessions, index cards (covered in contact paper to preserve them for regular use), baggies, sharpies

Learning Goal(s): Understanding US cultural practices in the workplace.

Curriculum Area(s): Language, English, US Culture, Workplace Literacy

Time required: 20 minutes, or as fits the student's needs

Materials needed: Images (page 6), printout of *US Work Habits and Expectations of Workers by Employers* (page 4).

How will I present the information? Images, Discussion, whiteboard demonstration and practice

As a result of this lesson/unit students will...

Understand The behaviors expected in most US workplaces.

Know: The actions necessary to be an employee with a positive attitude and what an employer in the US might see as good work habits.

Do (Skills): Be able to speak with coworkers, including management and know what is expected of a US employee.

Pre-Assessment

Learning your student's work history and skill sets is important to know where to begin with a student. Have a discussion with your student on past experience, which might include skills that may be put to use in the workplace. Examples: Have you had a job? Have you done any volunteer work?

Discuss skills that may have been used at home that could be used in the workplace, i.e. cleaning, childcare, caring for livestock. Talk about the responsibilities that are a part of these and how they can be useful to an employer.

Activity – Workplace Behaviors

Have your student(s) use the checklist on the next page to see what behaviors they think American employers value and see as respectful. (Source: *North Carolina Curriculum Guide, Domain: The World of Work, Lesson: Work Relationships*
<http://www.nc-net.info/ESL/guide.php>)

US Work Habits and Expectations of Workers by Employers

Select True or False for each statement.

- Be competent in your job skills.
- Ask questions if you do not understand something.
- Work without supervision.
- Follow directions.
- Be honest.
- Be a good problem solver.
- Learn to follow workplace rules.
- Be dependable.
- Dress appropriately for the job.
- Always call in when sick or late.
- Respect others' privacy.
- Possess basic reading and math skills.
- Take work assignments respectfully.
- Have good attendance.
- Be eager to learn.
- Speak clearly
- Offer to help co-workers when you finish your work early.
- Show up late for work.
- Always be late.
- Be a good worker.
- Be on time.
- Accept other people's life styles
- Be courteous and polite.
- Maintain a good appearance.
- Respond angrily to constructive criticism.
- Do not get along with others.
- Take home pencils and paper from work.
- Be irresponsible.
- Fall asleep at work.
- Goof off. Be lazy.
- Take extra time for break.
- Refuse to help do a job.
- Leave early often.
- Spread rumors about another worker.
- Be dishonest.
- Do not listen.
- Do not follow directions

Activity – Examining Gender Issues in the Workplace

Using the images provided at the end of the lesson or images you find, ask students to pick out who they think could look like their boss at their new job. Is a male boss better than a female boss? Discuss how supervisors in the American workplace can be either male or female and they need to be respected regardless of gender. Initiate a conversation on what Americans mean by respect.

Note: This may be a very easy concept for some students and may be very challenging for others. *Culturally*, the concept of a man accepting directions from a woman might be difficult, but this does not have a basis in religion.

Wrap up: Express the positives that the student(s) have achieved.

Post-Assessment: Review what the student has learned and what will be the next step to continue with cultural workplace situations.

Additional Resources: *Workplace Literacy Curriculum; and the ITESL Journal* – This website puts forth starter questions that can be used in discussing gender roles:

<http://iteslj.org/questions/gender.html>.

