

ADVANCING ON THE JOB



AGENDA

- Starter
- The Numbers Game
- Strategy
- Moving On
- Conclusion
- Student Assessment

Objectives

Students will develop a strategy for job advancement.

Students will demonstrate how to ask for a promotion.

Students will determine how to leave a job properly.

Materials Needed

- A blanket (Starter)

Starter (2 minutes)

Before students arrive, select a typical classroom object, such as a book or file cabinet, and cover it with a blanket. Make sure that the covered item's form does not reveal what is underneath the blanket.

After students have arrived, ask them, "What is under this blanket?"

Let the students guess for a while. Then, ask them to formulate questions to ask that will reveal what is under the blanket. Lead them to understand that questions such as "May I see what is under the blanket?" or "May I have what is under the blanket?" would reveal the answer.

Explain to students that asking the right question at the right time can be a key to advancing in the workplace. It may not be any more difficult than asking to look under the blanket.

Part I The Numbers Game (10 minutes)

Purpose: Students recognize the need to plan ahead.

1. Students participate in a numbers game.

Divide students into pairs. Explain to students that they are going to play a numbers game. The rules of the game are as follows:

- Each partner will take turns counting out loud. The winner is the person who reaches 30 first.
- You can say one or two numbers per turn. For example:
 - Player A: "1"
 - Player B: "2, 3"
 - Player A: "4, 5"
 - Player B: "6"
 - Player A: "7"

Allow students to play a few rounds.

2. Students understand the meaning of the numbers activity.

Ask students to identify the trick of the game. (Students should respond that the trick is to get their partners to say either 28 or 29 so that they can say 30.)

Tell students that they can win if they figure out the strategy: plan ahead and play smart. Point out that this is the same strategy they should use to get a promotion.

Part II Strategy (20 minutes)

Purpose: Students learn how to ask for a promotion.

1. Students define “promotion.”

Explain to students that you talked about asking the right questions in the starter and about the need for a strategy in the first activity. Explain that you’re now going to combine those into a plan to request a promotion.

Ask students to define “promotion.” (Students might respond: job advancement, increased responsibilities, sometimes an increase in pay, etc.)

2. Students review the characteristics of a good employee.

Tell students that they’ve already discussed the need for a long-term strategy to get a promotion. Ask them to name some things that might be part of that strategy. Lead students to understand that part of their strategy could be keeping a checklist of what good employees do and making sure that they do those things. Ask students to recall from past classes some of the characteristics of good employees. (Students might respond: ability to manage resources effectively, communicating well with coworkers, being honest, getting to work on time, following company rules, etc.) Write student responses on the board.

3. Students discuss some of the guidelines they need to follow to be considered for a promotion.

Tell students that in addition to these examples of good employee behavior, there are some guidelines that they need to follow. Ask students to name some of the guidelines that they have discussed in previous sessions. Elicit from students the following guidelines:

- Use good listening and communication skills on the job.
- Ask for feedback from your supervisors. Be open to comments and constructive criticism.
- Look for a person who has been at your job longer than you have. Ask that person to teach you about the job and listen to their advice—their experience can help you avoid mistakes.
- Since a strategy is a long-term plan, it’s important that you continue to reevaluate and ensure that your strategy is working.

Write student responses on the board.

4. Students find ways to show their boss that they deserve a promotion.

Ask students to think of additional ways that they can show their boss that they are ready to be promoted. Write student responses on the board.

Explain to students that another part of their strategy for advancement might be to ask for increased responsibility. This shows that they're eager to learn and work hard. It also shows that they believe in their own abilities.

5. Students learn how to ask for a promotion.

Explain to students that even when they prove themselves worthy of a promotion, their boss may not realize how well they are doing. Supervisors have a lot of responsibility and might need to be reminded of an employee's worth to the company.

Ask students what they think would happen if they went into their boss's office and said, "I deserve a raise. I expect more weekends off, money tomorrow, and a new car."

Help students to recognize that aggressive behavior will not lead to success when asking for a promotion. Explain that the best way to let their boss know about their skills and accomplishments is to be assertive and to tell them about how they have handled their increased responsibility. One suggestion is to outline the steps they've taken and what they've achieved for the boss.

6. Students role-play requesting a promotion and recognize the importance of timing.

Ask for two volunteers to come to the front of the class and role-play asking for a promotion. Tell one volunteer to play the owner of an ice cream parlor. Tell the other volunteer to play an employee who wants a promotion to the manager position.

Tell the volunteers to begin the role play and ask the class to observe how the employee tries to convince the owner that they are worthy of a promotion. After the volunteers have finished their role play, have the class share their observations.

Tell students that they are going to watch another role play. Ask for two new volunteers. Tell the new volunteers that the roles and situation are the same, except that it is the afternoon and there are groups of children screaming for ice cream. The owner has just run out of ice cream cones. Tell the volunteer playing the employee to ask for the promotion. If the role play doesn't demonstrate the situation well, give the two students additional directions to make the scene more stressful (e.g., the freezer broke and the ice cream is melting, the cash register will not open).

When the second set of volunteers finish their role play, ask the class to explain what was wrong with the employee asking the owner for a promotion when they did.

Lead students to recognize that timing is an extremely important part of their strategy. Tell them to make sure that their boss is in a receptive mood, that operations are running smoothly, and that the boss isn't too busy and is able to listen to what they're saying.

Part III Moving On (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students learn how to leave a job properly.

1. Students discuss when it's time to leave a job.

Ask students to imagine that they have done everything they can to move ahead at their current job, but their boss still hasn't given them a promotion. What should they do?

Ask students what the consequences would be if they quit. Point out that if they quit, they won't be getting a paycheck. If their strategy for advancement within their current company isn't working, they need to rethink their overall strategy and create a plan for advancement outside the company.

Ask students if they think that it is easier to find a new job if they are not working. Have them consider this from the perspective of an employer by asking, "If you were an employer, would you be more likely to hire someone who is working or someone who isn't? Why?"

Remind students that employers look for someone who can work hard and show responsibility. Point out that having a job and good references makes it easier for them to demonstrate those qualities.

2. Students learn the proper way to leave their current job.

Have students imagine that they have been offered a new job at a different company. Ask students what they should do about their current job once they've accepted the new job.

Emphasize to students the need for good references. Since they have been good employees, they should not lose the opportunity to use their current boss as a reference. Explain that it is important that they treat their current boss and company with respect no matter how unhappy they are with the job. Employees should generally give two weeks' notice when leaving a job.

Tell students that when they decide to leave a job, they should go to their boss and explain their plans. They should be prepared to explain their reasons for leaving. If they have to resign in writing, they should take care to use good written communication skills to explain their reason for leaving.

Conclusion (2 minutes)

Ask students to explain how and when to ask for a promotion. Elicit from students the following **key points** that were taught in this lesson:

- Planning ahead is important when considering a job change.
- Timing is an important part of the strategy of asking for a promotion.
- When leaving a job, it's important to treat your boss and your company respectfully.

Student Assessment

1. List five characteristics of a good employee.
2. List three things you can do to show your boss that you deserve a promotion.
3. Describe how you could appropriately and effectively ask for a promotion.

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Using Quotations

“Advancement only comes with habitually doing more than you are asked.” —Gary Ryan Blair

Tell students that it is a good idea to periodically make a list of their accomplishments on the job. Have them list skills that they have learned and recent projects that they have handled successfully. Ask them to consider ways that they can improve their performance or handle more responsibility. Discuss the value of keeping track of success at work.

Addressing Multiple Learning Styles

Read these quotes to students:

“Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work.” —Thomas Edison;

“Diligence is the mother of good luck.” —Benjamin Franklin;

“The world is full of willing people; some willing to work, the rest willing to let them.” —Robert Frost;

Have students interpret these quotes (or others) by creating drawings, songs, etc.

Writing in Your Journal

Show students a job board with local openings. Have students write their own posting describing their skills, the kind of job that they would like, and where they would like to work.

Using Technology

Have students type emails to a supervisor, either thanking that person for an experience or sharing an achievement.

Have students send the messages to each other and respond to them. Discuss the effects of praise and recognition in the workplace.

Homework

Have students research what positions are available in the career they wish to pursue.

Have students draw flowcharts that depict advancement within a chosen career.

Additional Resources

Have students read *I Could Do Anything If I Only Knew What It Was: How to Discover What You Really Want and How to Get It* by Barbara Sher.

Have students describe their goals and what they really want out of a job and life.

GLOSSARY

accountable: responsible for; required to account for one's conduct.

company policy: the standards and procedures set by a business organization to influence and determine decisions and actions.

credibility: the quality of being trusted and believed in.

demeanor: 1. the way in which a person behaves. 2. the attitude with which one carries oneself.

ethical behavior: behaving in accordance with the accepted principles of right and wrong that govern the conduct of a person or the members of a profession.

jeopardize: to expose to loss or injury.

legible: possible to read or figure out; clear.

mandatory: required; necessary.

notation: a brief note or summary used for convenience.

personal ethics: a person's own set of principles of conduct.

recommendation: a favorable statement concerning a person's character or qualifications.

slang: a kind of language occurring mainly in casual or playful speech.

verify: to determine or test the truth or accuracy of something.

work ethic: a set of principles of conduct that involve respect for the rules of the workplace.