





communication

awareness

flexibility/
adaptability

decision making

professional
growth

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



The LifeKnowledge Center for Agricultural Education is made possible by the generous support of our founding and supporting partners, as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.

FOUNDING PARTNERS:



MONSANTO



SUPPORTING PARTNER:



The FFA Mission: FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education.

The Agricultural Education Mission: Agricultural education prepares students for successful careers and a lifetime of informed choices in the global agriculture, food, fiber and natural resources systems.

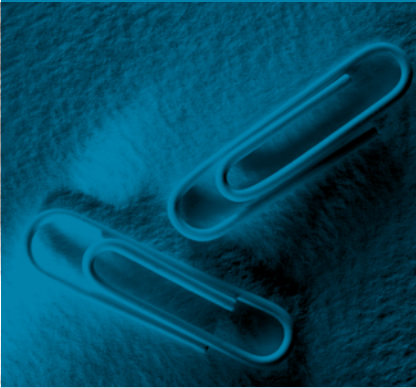
professional growth



Employers seek employees that are capable of adding to the organization through their ability to adapt to change, durability in the face of adversity, uniqueness to the organization and commitment to continuous personal and professional growth.

activity

1



Note to teacher:

As an extension activity, create a mission statement with each of your classes and post these around the room. Have students create a personal mission statement of their own.



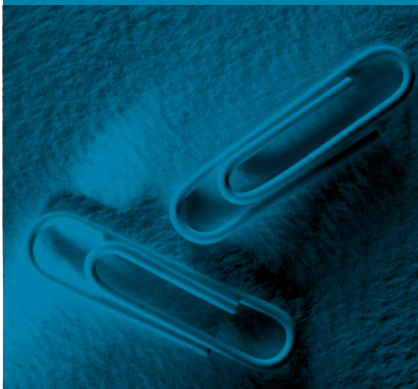
Lessons to use:
AHS.4 and AHS.6

Oftentimes a mission statement is used as a guide post for businesses, organizations and academic institutions when making decisions. The mission statement can steer the direction of the business or keep it on its course.

Locate your school's mission statement and write it below:

Evaluate the work that you, your teachers and administrators are asked to do and determine the effectiveness of the mission statement. Should the mission statement fit the type of work that's completed or should the type of work fit the mission statement? Defend your answer.

2



Note to teacher:

Have students determine how they can improve their records in an effort to strengthen their resume.



Lessons to use:

AHS.8, AHS.9 and HS.39

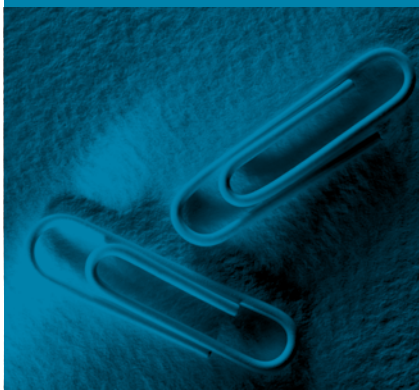
How is your performance at school an indicator of your performance in the workplace? If you were going to apply for your dream job right now, what would it be?

If this employer was going to hire you based only on your school attendance record, your level of involvement and your grades, would you get the job? What could you highlight from your school records and include in a resume?

Would you hire you?

activity

3



Note to teacher:

Have students use their parents' careers to create job profiles. Post these around the room for students to consider.



Lessons to use:
AHS.9 and AHS.18

Most often it's the environment in which you work, not the work that you do, that establishes a high level of job satisfaction. You might not know at this moment what you want to do for the rest of your life but, you know yourself well enough to know the kind of working conditions that best suit your personality.

Consider the following: desire for change, level of or need for activity, ability to work around distractions or interruptions, the demands of a work schedule, preference to work indoors or outdoors, desire to work with people, things or technology, etc. Determine how important these or other working conditions are to you by writing them in the priority column accordingly. Then rank these priorities by placing a check mark in one of the categories.

PRIORITY	LEVEL OF IMPORTANCE			
	Must have	Nice to have	Could do without	Not at all
Ex: Desire for change	✓			

4

Note to teacher:

Play a game of charades using these words as the answers, or discuss why it is important to model these behaviors now.



Lessons to use:

MS.20 and HS.35

What is professionalism?

Find the words that describe professionalism inside the jumbled letters and circle them. Words appear horizontally, vertically, diagonally, forward and backward.

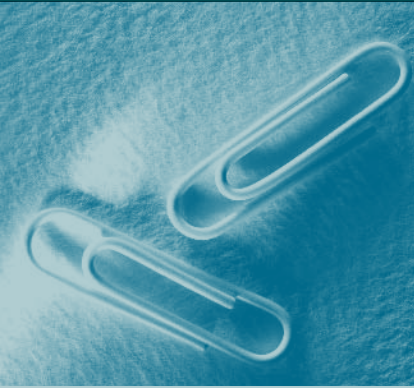
KNOWLEDGEABLE
COURTEOUS
TRUSTWORTHY
SUPPORTIVE
ACCOUNTABLE
COACHABLE
MATURE
RESPECTFUL
ETHICAL
LOYAL

L A C H T E N F M M R L Z T
N K D I P R W A N D A F S U K R C
G E Z P M N T A F S U K R C
E L P E V G U I L T A S R C A
Y L U X V R E P C O T R R C Q
E L B A E G D E L W O N K O W
O S B A W W P M O I P X L U E
H U K G H S T R L B Y B O N Z
L O T E E C T B S C P Y Y T K
G E U R R H A F D S P O A A W
R T Z I Y I M O I F G K L B S
X R G J Z P D Z C L D N R L E
S U P P O R T I V E Y Y I E F L
D O V D Q L F H W S E J G F L
Z C C V V A W B L L A O Y L X

communication



The key ingredient of successful problem solving and managerial skills is communication. Customizing messages to specific audiences is essential for marketing new products, obtaining careers, changing attitudes, resolving community problems and educating consumers.



Note to teacher:

Ask students to provide examples of when they would want to use jargon.

Answers:

1. Legal profession
2. Restaurant industry
3. Education
4. Stock market trading



Life Knowledge

Lesson to use:

MS.40

Jargon is the specialized language of a professional, occupational or other group and it's often meaningless to outsiders. If we want to communicate within a professional group, we have to speak the language. Can you guess which profession uses the jargon in the examples below?

1. A fortiori, abstract, abuse of process, amnesty, burden of proof, corpus juris, dismissal, forbearance, extradite and grand jury.

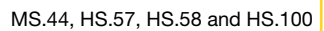
2. Front of the house, 86, in the weeds, triple sat, side work, eight top.

3. Ability grouping, anticipation guide, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, benchmarks, deductive thinking, extrinsic motivation, methodology, objectives, standards and assessments.

4. Indexing, margin, commission, market price, dividend, volume, bull market, mutual fund and close

2

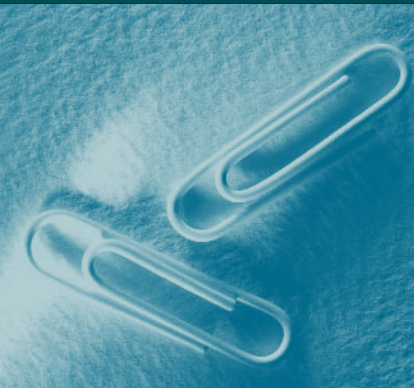
Discuss the characteristics of each communication method and the method that is most suitable for the type of business students choose.



Effective business communication is about delivering a clear, concise message about the services that are offered.

If you had your own business right now, determine the service(s) you would offer to the general public. Then, brainstorm a list of questions that potential customers would have about your business. Creatively answer these questions by either designing the homepage of your website, a brochure or mailing that sends a clear, concise message about the service(s) you could offer.

3



Note to teacher:

Encourage students who make strong arguments to propose these ideas to their student council, administration or school board. Help students create a plan.



Lessons to use:
AHS.7 and AHS.9

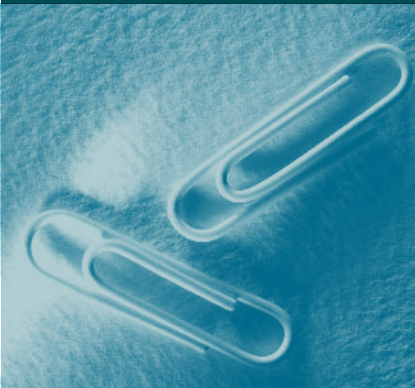
Research has shown that one of the leading motivators for job satisfaction is having an employee recognition program. Employees will strive harder and apply themselves better if one is in place. Therefore, having this program can lead to happier employees who stay devoted and remain with the company for a long time.

If your school has a student recognition program such as Student of the Month, what improvements would you like to make to it?

How could these improvements be more inclusive and reflective of the achievements of the student body?

What if you could add a new recognition program to meet a current need? What should be added and why?

Would a new or revised program be more reflective of the student body's values?

**Note to teacher:**

Have conversations with your class about the danger of agreeing to anything without fully understanding the details. Talk to them about the power of practicing patience.

**Lessons to use:**

HS.84 and HS.97

Reading for pleasure and reading to understand are two different mindsets—one takes more focus than the other. Technical content, like that found on a credit card application, is weighted down by the amount of details and tough vocabulary. However, it is important to understand these details before signing your name on the application. Test yourself: While you read the excerpt below that's been taken from a credit card application, underline all the details you don't fully comprehend.

How interest charge is calculated:

For each segment of your account, we calculated your total interest charge by multiplying your average daily balance by the daily periodic rate and multiplying the result by the number of days in the billing period. Due to rounding or a minimum interest charge, this calculation may vary slightly from the interest charge actually assessed.

We determine your daily periodic rate by dividing the corresponding Annual Percentage Rates by 365 and round to the nearest $\frac{1}{100,000}$ th of 1%, not to exceed the maximum allowed by applicable law. If the daily periodic rates and corresponding Annual Percentage Rates increase, the interest charge will increase and your minimum payment may be greater.

To determine your Daily Balance for each segment: 1. take the beginning balance and add in new transactions and the periodic interest charge on the previous day's balance. 2. Subtract any payments and credits for that segment as of that day. However, if you paid your previous month's balance in full (or if your balance was zero or a credit amount), new transactions which post to your purchase or special purchase segments are not added to the daily balances. Also, transactions that are subject to a grace period are not added to the daily balances.

To determine your Average Daily Balance: 1. add the daily balances together and 2. divide the sum by the number of days in the billing cycle.

Assess the amount of underlines you made. Would you sign your name on the application even if you didn't understand everything?

awareness



The most enduring source of an individual's competitive advantage is knowledge. What is learned by emersion in a particular topic helps individuals become more useful in their work and community roles. It all begins, of course, with the quest for purposeful understanding.

1

Implement this activity as an exercise in problem solving. Pick a hot topic, divide students into diverse work groups and have them reach a solution.



Lessons to use:

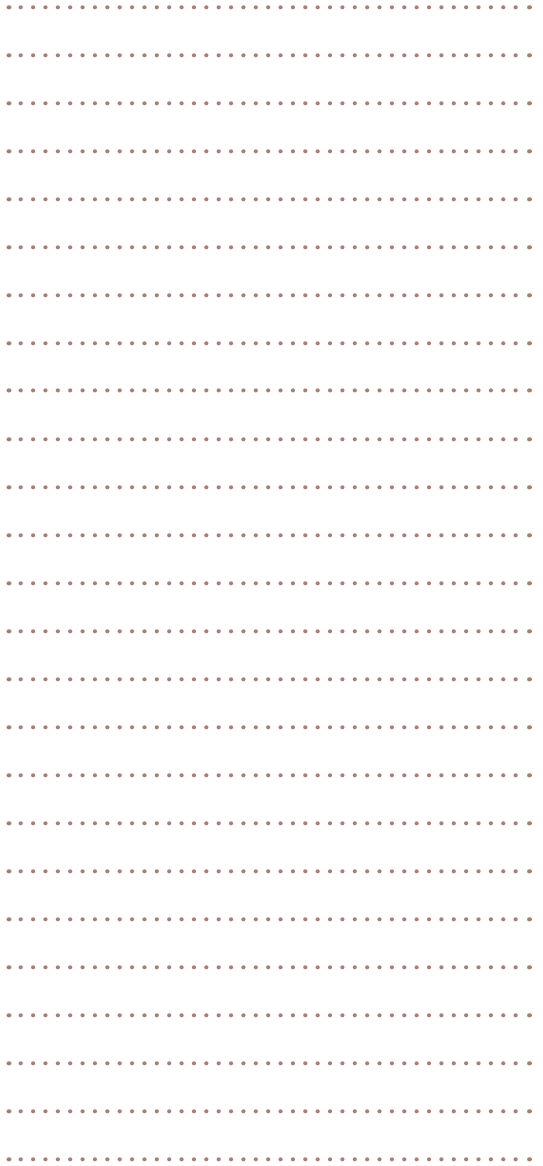
HS.68, HS.70 and HS.81

When you define “community” do you say it’s a location—your town, state or country? Can a group of people who share a set of common characteristics, attitudes and qualities also be defined as a community? Sure! A community is all of these things and they exist inside and outside the workplace, and in virtual worlds, too!

Imagine that you are the representative for the community that you identify with the most. Explore some of the barriers that could arise when working with representatives from other communities. Write down these barriers in addition to some common attitudes or qualities you most likely share with these representatives.

Finally, how could you, as a leader, use the attitudes and qualities your group of representatives has in common to break down the barriers you identified?

2



Extend this activity by taking a needs assessment of your community, or have students assess the needs in their households.

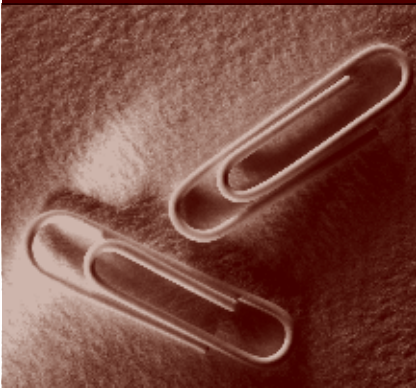


HS.106, HS.107 and HS.108

As you grow older, you will discover that you have two hands — one for helping yourself, and the other for helping others. Why is it important not only to find ways to help yourself but also to help members in your community?

Brainstorm the assets that you have and could put toward helping your community. Then list the assets your community could use to help other communities. Explain how the contribution of one person's assets can make an impact on a global scale.

3



Note to teacher:

Brainstorm a list of qualities customers expect from a brand name item (fair price, taste, freshness, quality) and explain how this is equivalent to students' personal and professional qualities. Ask students if their brand changes depending on the population they are serving.



Lesson to use:

HS.57 and AHS.42

If you were going to buy a pair of jeans, what brand would you buy? Think about the food items you see in your house consistently. What kind of cereal, chips or bread do you eat? High profile brand name companies, including franchises, depend on your loyalty to their product(s) or services to keep them in business. They have built strong customer loyalty because they consistently follow through on their guarantees and their customers' expectations.

If YOU were a brand, what guarantees have you made to others, what have they grown to expect from you and how have you shown them what to expect? Think about what others "know you as" and what they would say about you. Consider your reputation in the following populations as you answer those questions:

Your parents

Your co-workers

Your teachers, principals, coaches and supervisors at work

Your community, church or club members

Your close friends

Your siblings or grandparents

4

Ask students how they can stand up for their beliefs with dignity while maintaining respect for themselves and others.



Lesson to use:

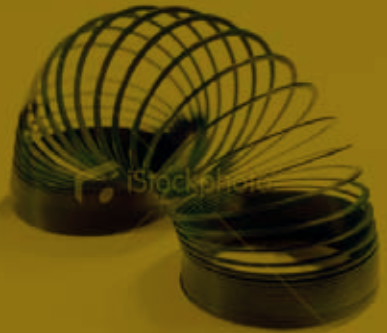
MS.24

Is there a particular issue, struggle or population that you are sensitive to? When a comedian begins making fun of a certain type of person do you find yourself unable to find humor in that joke? When you hear a group of kids at school bullying someone, do you feel sorry for that person being mistreated?

When someone begins imposing their opinions on you about civil rights issues, gun control or religion for example, do you try really hard not to get upset?

How can you use your sensitivity to such things to teach others about appreciating diversity?

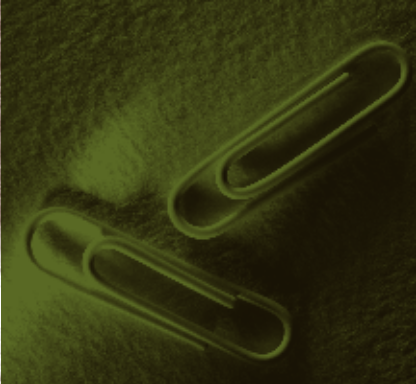
flexibility/ adaptability



Employees are faced with new challenges, changes, opportunities and obstacles at a rapid rate as we become more global, more connected and more specialized. In the midst of the changes of our work environments remains the need for flexibility and adaptability in our human interactions within the workplace.

activity

1



Note to teacher:

Have students write three SMART goals to enrich their skills for a specific hobby or team.



Lessons to use:

AHS.13, HS.32, and MS.29

Think about the organizations, teams and hobbies in which you are involved.

What do you do to immerse yourself in bettering your skill sets in these areas?

What do you practice and how much time do you devote to strengthening your skills?

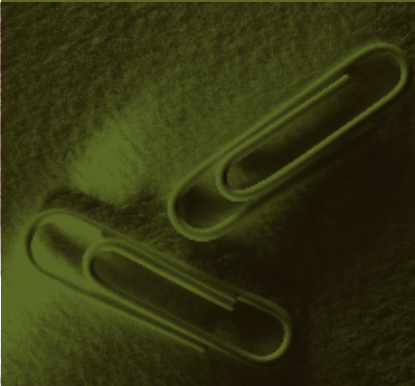
What resources do you consult to help you learn more?

What relationships have you formed with those who are just as passionate about this?

What are the benefits to you and to your social and professional communities when you enrich your skills?

activity

2



Note to teacher:

Turn the scenario into something that students could currently relate to such as running for chapter president, captain of a sports team or a role in a play.



Lessons to use:

AHS.22, AHS.23 and HS.32

When is taking risks appropriate and who should take them?

There is an open position at your workplace and you would like to apply for it. If you were to get this position it would be a big promotion for you. After talking to a friend, who also works there, you learn that he is going to apply for this position as well. Do you still apply? Determine some of the risks involved and explain why you would or would not apply after assessing the risks.

activity

3



Note to teacher:

Print a copy of
Linda Alvarado's short bio from
[http://www.answers.com/topic/
linda-alvarado](http://www.answers.com/topic/linda-alvarado)
and distribute to your class prior
to completing the activity.



Lessons to use:

MS.53, MS.54 and AHS.19

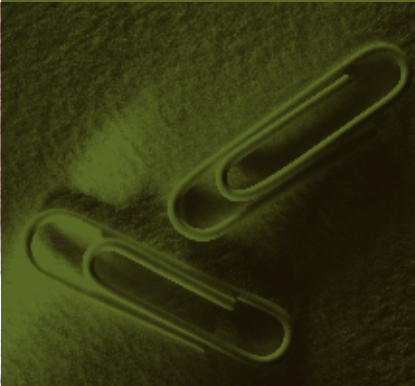
What will your professional biography say?

Being a smart risk taker has its benefits. Read the article about Hispanic-American entrepreneur Linda Alvarado, who entered the construction industry in the 1970s as a pioneer for women in her field, and who later became an owner of the Colorado Rockies, Denver's Major League Baseball team.

Craft an article that could be written about you in 30 years. Using the article about Linda Alvarado as an example, be sure to highlight the smart risks you took to grow professionally.

activity

4



Note to teacher:

Ask students to outline the factors that determine how well they accept criticism, e.g. depends on the source, timing or relationship with that person.



Lessons to use:

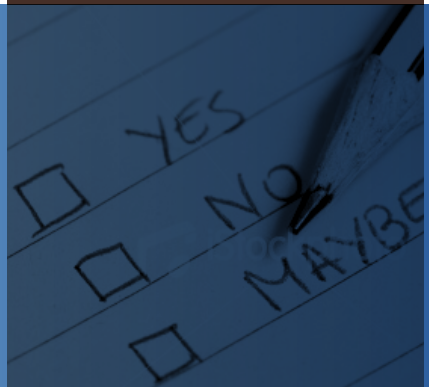
MS.53, HS.33 and AHS.16

A large part of professional growth is accepting constructive criticism. Another way to describe this is to be coachable. Think about how you react when your teacher returns your essay to you with a bunch of red ink, i.e. revision marks. Knowing that you have the opportunity to revise for a better grade, how do you respond? Using the options below, circle how likely you are to react in that manner:

	Highly likely	Somewhat likely	Not at all likely
Meet with your teacher to gain a better understanding of these marks and get advice.			
Just make the changes you see in red and turn it in.			
Make the changes but also evaluate where you are making similar mistakes in other assignments.			
Give up and don't make any changes to the assignment.			

Which option sends the message that you are coachable?

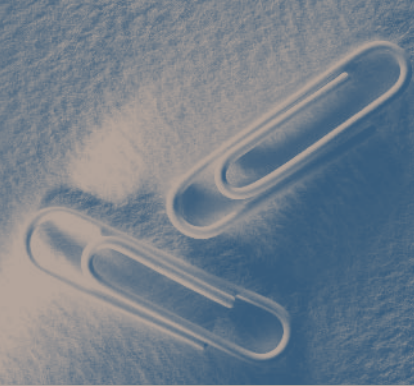
decision making



Learning how to process knowledge, reason and think critically and creatively is critical. The perpetuation and growth of an industry depends upon those skills. But only after having mastered those skills can we expect students to reach proficiency in decision-making and problem solving.

activity

1



Note to teacher:

Have students consider the lifestyle they want to live before they choose an option.



Lessons to use:

HS.3, HS.20 and HS.97

Earning a college degree takes money and climbing the corporate ladder without a degree takes time. Which direction would you take to secure your financial future?

Attend a four-year college on a \$40,000 federal student loan, which would take 20 years to pay off, and earn an annual salary of \$27,104.40 in the first job you land after graduation.

-OR-

Not attend college and work for 10 years in the same position before earning an annual salary of \$27,104.40.

Consider the following student loan repayment schedule before making your decision:

Loan Calculator		<i>Note: The monthly loan payment was calculated at 239 payments of \$225.87 plus a final payment of \$224.24.</i> It is estimated that you will need an annual salary of at least \$27,104.40 to be able to afford to repay this loan. This estimate assumes that 10% of your gross monthly income will be devoted to repaying your student loans. This corresponds to a debt-to-income ratio of 1.5. If you use 15% of your gross monthly income to repay the loan, you will need an annual salary of only \$18,069.60, but you may experience some financial difficulty. This corresponds to a debt-to-income ratio of 2.2.
Loan Balance:	\$40,000.00	
Adjusted Loan Balance:	\$40,000.00	
Loan Interest Rate:	3.20%	
Loan Fees:	0.00%	
Loan Term:	20 years	
Minimum Payment:	\$50.00	
Degree Program:	Bachelor's Degree	
Total Years in College:	4 years	
Average Debt per Year:	\$10,000.00	
Monthly Loan Payments:	\$225.87	240
Number of Payments:	\$54,207.17	
Cumulative Payments:	\$14,207.17	
Total Interest Paid:		

2

Change the scenario so that the friend seems overly happy. Students should answer the same processing questions.

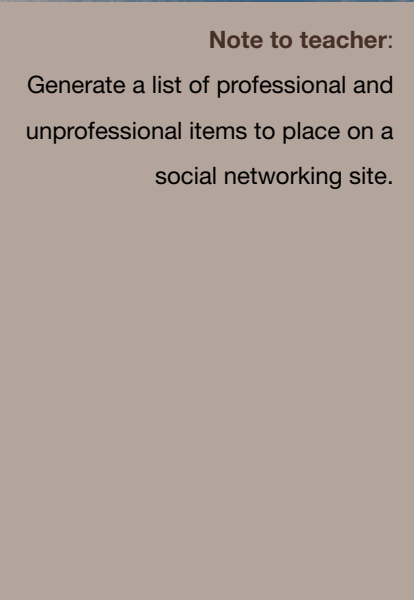


Lessons to use:

HS.13, HS.33 and HS.39

Gossiping is as prevalent in the workplace as it is in school and is usually considered to be unethical. Generally, there are two types of gossipers: the ones who don't know when to stop gossiping and the ones who only share what is "true." Imagine your best friend has been going through a tough time and she has been acting unlike her normal self at school. It's becoming obvious to your friend's favorite teacher and he asks you if you know what's going on. What do you do? Do you share some, all or no information with the teacher? If you share what you know, is that gossiping and would your friend perceive it as ethical? Explain your thoughts.

3



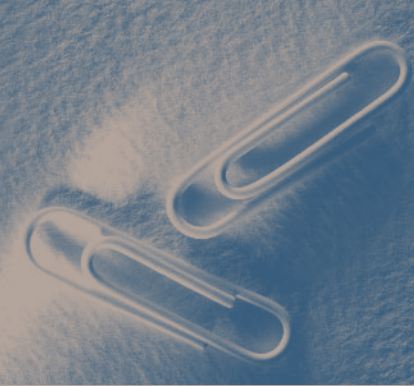
Generate a list of professional and unprofessional items to place on a social networking site.



MS.35

What seems appropriate today may not be appropriate tomorrow or five years from now. Social networking has taught us this. If you were hiring someone and looking at the applicant's social networking site, what sort of things would you be looking for? What kinds of posts, pictures and interests would immediately disqualify the applicant for the job?

Explain how this scenario applies to you, especially if an employer was reviewing your site.

**Note to teacher:**

Discuss with your class the importance of evaluating the potential outcomes before making a final decision.

**Lesson to use:**

MS.40

Decide which form of communication is appropriate for the message being sent. Match the items in the right column to the appropriate forms of communication in the left column.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| _____ 1. Handwritten letter | A. Remind others of an upcoming deadline |
| _____ 2. Email | B. Express desire for an open position |
| _____ 3. Phone call | C. Check on the status of your order |
| _____ 4. Letter of interest | D. Congratulate someone for a job well done |

Explain how you know which form of communication to use for the intended message.
