NAF Professional Ethics

Lesson 7

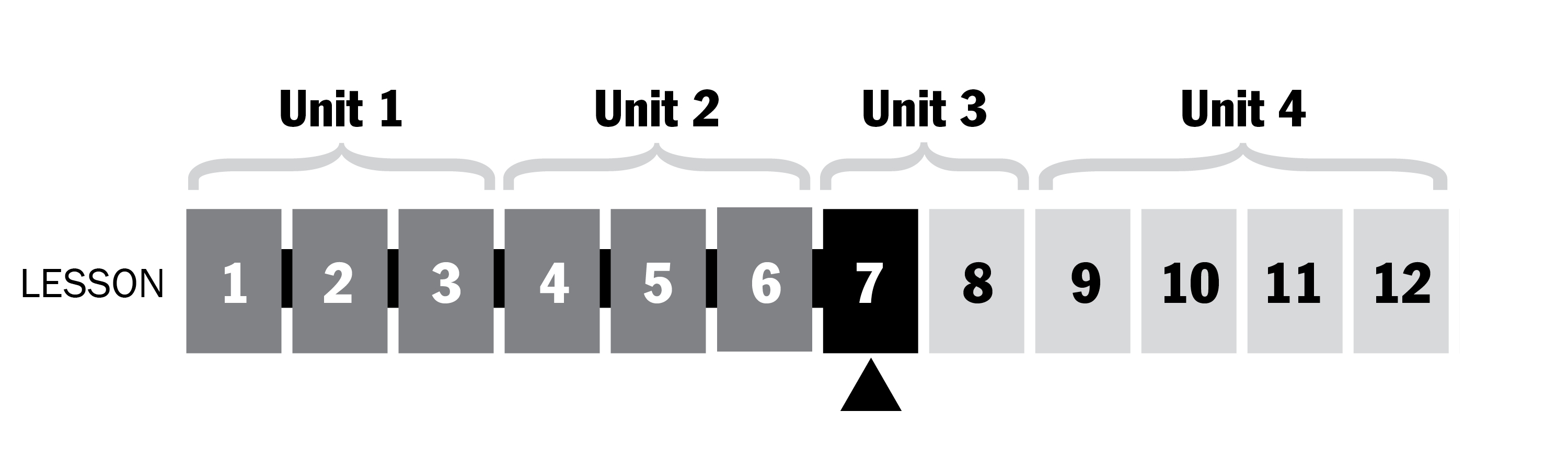
Ethical Misconduct in the Workplace

In this lesson, students consider ethical issues that arise in the workplace. Students begin by thinking about the legal implications of unethical behavior as they study government regulations. Turning to a more proactive approach to ethical business behavior, students also look at corporate social responsibility programs and the positive effect those can have on both employees and the community. Students then take a quiz on what they have learned. After the quiz, students continue to expand their understanding of ethics by considering the ethical issues involved in globalization. They conclude the lesson by doing research on a specific example of ethical misconduct in their NAF Academy career field.

Advance Preparation

* Students will need computers with Internet access in Class Periods 4–6, and access to a printer in Class Periods 5–6. If access to a printer will be difficult, students can complete the assignment solely on the computer, with a few adjustments.
* In Class Period 6, students watch a YouTube video. If your school does not allow access to YouTube, you may wish to download the video to your computer in advance using KeepVid (see [www.keepvid.com](http://www.keepvid.com/)) or a similar program.

This lesson is expected to take 6 class periods.



Lesson Framework

Learning Objectives

Each student will:

* Identify and explain some of the ways the US federal government regulates business for ethics and legal compliance\*
* Explain how the seven minimum requirements of the US Federal Sentencing Guidelines relate to common principles in business ethics\*
* List and compare some of the ethical issues involved in setting up or doing business abroad\*
* Evaluate some of the ethical questions that arise in an increasingly global marketplace\*
* Identify stakeholders who might be affected as a result of unethical business behavior
* Display understanding of the importance of ethical corporate practices

\*This is one of the 16 key learning objectives assessed by the NAFTrack Certification end-of-course exam for this course.

Academic Standards

* Act as a responsible and contributing citizen and employee (Career Ready Practices, Common Career Technical Core 2012)
* Communicate clearly, effectively, and with reason (Career Ready Practices, Common Career Technical Core 2012)
* Consider the environmental, social and economic impacts of decisions (Career Ready Practices, Common Career Technical Core 2012)
* Understand various meanings of social group, general implications of group membership, and different ways that groups function (McREL Behavioral Studies Standards, undated, Standard 2)
* Understand issues regarding personal, political, and economic rights (McREL Civics Standards, undated, Standard 25)
* Describe the factors that define what is considered ethical and socially responsible business behavior in a global business environment (NBEA National Standards for Business Education 2013, International Business IV, Global Business Ethics and Social Responsibility)
* Examine the role of ethics and social responsibility in decision making (NBEA National Standards for Business Education 2013, Management V, Ethics and Social Responsibility)

Assessment

| Assessment Product | Means of Assessment |
| --- | --- |
| Quiz on government regulation and social responsibility (Teacher Resource 7.1) | Answer Key: Government Regulation and Social Responsibility Quiz (Teacher Resource 7.2) |

Prerequisites

* Knowledge of basic concepts in ethics
* Familiarity with common ethical issues in one or more professional fields

Instructional Materials

Teacher Resources

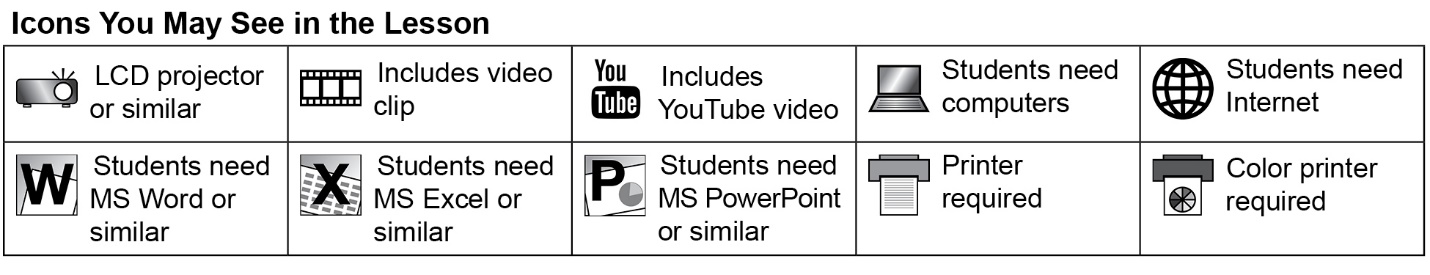
* Teacher Resource 7.1, Quiz: Government Regulation and Social Responsibility
* Teacher Resource 7.2, Answer Key: Government Regulation and Social Responsibility Quiz
* Teacher Resource 7.3, Presentation and Notes: Globalization (includes separate PowerPoint file)
* Teacher Resource 7.4, Answer Key: Globalization Anticipation Guide
* Teacher Resource 7.5, Guide: Misconduct Research
* Teacher Resource 7.6, Key Vocabulary: Ethical Misconduct in the Workplace

Student Resources

* Student Resource 7.1, Reading: Government Regulation
* Student Resource 7.2, Reading: Corporate Social Responsibility
* Student Resource 7.3, Notes: Corporate Social Responsibility
* Student Resource 7.4, Anticipation Guide: Globalization
* Student Resource 7.5, Reading: Globalization
* Student Resource 7.6, Assignment: Professional Misconduct Research

Equipment and Supplies

* LCD projector and computer for PowerPoint presentation and video
* Whiteboard, blackboard, or flip chart
* Computers with Internet access (ideally, one per student)
* Printer (optional)



Lesson Steps

| Step | Min. | Activity |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | class period 1 |
| 1 | 20 | Discussion: Breaking the Law  This springboard discussion gets students thinking about the consequences of not following the law, in the context of the workplace. It also focuses on the following college and career skills:  Demonstrating the ability to listen effectively  Demonstrating the ability to speak effectively  Asking appropriate and effective questions  Before class, write on the board (or project) a headline and a brief article synopsis from a news story about a business being charged with breaking the law. Provide online time for students to research a recent event aligned to their academy theme  Have them respond briefly in their notebook to the following questions  What is the wrong involved in this case?  What consequences do you think the accused business might face for violating the law? Why?  Generate a class discussion around these questions and have students respond based on the case they researched. If it does not come up, note that the law only offers a minimum standard of behavior. Breaking the law is clearly wrong, and people who do so are not considered good citizens. But a person can be unethical without breaking the law as well, and therefore not a good citizen. In the same way, companies and organizations are held to a minimum standard of ethical behavior via laws, codes, and regulations. However, we often expect better ethical behavior than merely complying with the law. |
| 2 | 30 | Active Summarizing: Government Regulation  This activity helps students practice summarizing a reading while familiarizing them with some basic information about government regulation.  Write the word *summary* on the board and ask students if they know what it means. Refer to any summaries the students might be familiar with (they may have used SparkNotes or CliffsNotes in an English class, for example). Emphasize that the goal of a summary is to identify the key points, not to include every detail. Professionals in every field rely on summaries of lengthy reports, analyses, and other documents, and in college being able to summarize is an important skill. Tell students that they are going to practice summarizing a reading about government regulation.  Explain to the students that they will be working—first alone, and then with a partner—to summarize the key points of Student Resource 7.1, Reading: Government Regulation. Write the following prompts on the board:  The two main purposes of government regulation are…  The Sarbanes-Oxley Act (SOX) is…  The three levels of SOX are…  The Federal Sentencing Guidelines include…  Ask students to begin by reading the assignment alone, keeping these prompts in mind while they read. Explain that when they finish reading, they should turn over or cover their reading assignment and write a summary in their notebook. Each sentence of the summary should start with one of the prompts provided for them. Emphasize that the goal is to write a first draft of their summary from memory. What stuck from their first read-through?  When they have finished their draft summary, tell students to compare it with their reading assignment. Did they miss anything? Encourage them to revise or add to their summary as necessary.  Next, divide the class into pairs or small groups. Have students share their summary with their partner or group mates. Encourage students to add to or revise their summary based on peer feedback.  When the groups have finished that process, ask the class to work together to help you complete the prompts on the board with the best possible answer. As students volunteer their responses, tell the rest of the class to be checking their summary against the one they are writing as a class and to revise their summary if they see something missing or if they realize that they have included too much detail.  As you work through the prompts as a class, take this opportunity to review the vocabulary words introduced in this reading using Teacher Resource 7.6, Key Vocabulary: Ethical Misconduct in the Workplace. Encourage students to add these words and/or their definitions to their summary as necessary.  Make sure to answer any questions before the end of the class period. To gauge student understanding, you may choose to assess the students’ summaries on a credit/no-credit basis. |
|  |  | CLASS PERIOD 2 |
| 3 | 30 | Reading: Corporate Social Responsibility  Students learn about how businesses can “do good” through corporate social responsibility programs.  Ask students:  If you drop a piece of trash on the floor, do you always pick it up?  If you use a lot of scratch paper in class, do you recycle it every single time?  Student answers will vary. Then ask:  If there was someone in class with you that you were interested in—someone you might want to go on a date with—and you knew that person was really concerned about things like recycling and picking up trash, would you recycle or pick up your trash more if they were looking?  Tell students that they have just identified two of the reasons people do good things:   1. Because of a personal belief in the value of that action (I think recycling is worthwhile, so I recycle.) 2. Because of the beliefs of people who matter to us (That person I like is into recycling, so I will do it to impress that person or make him or her happy.)   Point out that corporations and organizations often have similar reasons for their “behavior.” In some cases, a corporation simply believes in doing business in a certain way. For example, Panera Bread, a restaurant and bakery chain, donates all leftover baked goods to local food banks every day. This is something Panera has done for a long time and it is part of their corporate identity.  Corporations also choose to “do good” or to behave in ethically admirable ways because it may attract customers. For example, in 2015 Panera began a marketing campaign promoting its antibiotic-free ingredients that are sustainably sourced. While that has also been a long-term component of Panera’s identity, the marketing campaign is using that ethical corporate behavior to try to attract new customers.  Call students’ attention to Student Resource 7.2, Reading: Corporate Social Responsibility, and Student Resource 7.3, Notes: Corporate Social Responsibility. Ask students to read Student Resource 7.2; as they read, students should use Student Resource 7.3 to take notes.  When students have finished the reading, move them into small groups and ask them to compare their examples for the different types of corporate social responsibility. You may find it helpful to have your own examples available to share with students, based on local companies and events—particularly any social responsibility programs that have benefited your school or community.  Let students know that in the next class period, they will be taking a quiz, so they should make sure their notes are detailed and complete. |
| 4 | 20 | Group Work: Review for Quiz  Students review their notes and materials in preparation for the quiz they will take in the next class period.  Tell students they will take the rest of this class period to begin reviewing for their quiz. Have students remain in their same groups from the end of the previous activity, or move students into new groups if you think they will work more effectively.  Instruct students to get out the summaries they wrote about government regulation during Class Period 1, as well as Student Resource 7.1, Reading: Government Regulation. Students should already have out Student Resources 7.2 and 7.3, which they worked on earlier in this class period.  Tell students to take turns quizzing each other, using their summaries and student resources. To help students get started, you may wish to offer a few example questions, such as:  What is the Sarbanes-Oxley Act?  Explain the idea of social responsibility.  While students quiz each other, circulate around the room to clear up any misunderstandings and keep students on task. When the class period comes to an end, ask students to continue studying for homework. Remind them that the quiz will take place in the next class period. |
|  |  | class period 3 |
| 5 | 35 | Quiz: Government Regulation and Social Responsibility  The purpose of this activity is to allow students to apply what they have learned about ethics and legal compliance.  Instruct students to complete Teacher Resource 7.1, Quiz: Government Regulation and Social Responsibility.  After they have finished, collect the quizzes for assessment using Teacher Resource 7.2, Answer Key: Government Regulation and Social Responsibility Quiz. Next, go over each quiz question as a class. Call on volunteers to share what they believe to be the correct response. Be sure to clarify any questions or misconceptions students may have about the material. |
| 6 | 15 | Anticipation Guide: Globalization  Students explore what they already know (or think they know) about globalization in preparation for the presentation they will view in the next class period.  Tell students that domestic laws and regulations hold American companies accountable. But once a company starts doing business in another country, a whole host of new ethical issues comes to the forefront. Review Student Resource 7.4, Anticipation Guide: Globalization, with students. Tell students to read each statement and circle “I agree” or “I disagree,” and then give an explanation for their choice in the “My reason” section. Explain that in the next class period, they will learn more about globalization and will revisit Student Resource 7.4 at that time. |
|  |  | class period 4 |
| 7 | 35 | Presentation: Globalization  This activity gives students an in-depth look at globalization and some of the ethical issues that arise in a global business environment. It also develops students’ listening and note-taking skills.  To prepare, make notes to guide class discussion using Teacher Resource 7.3, Presentation Notes: Globalization. Have Teacher Resource 7.3, Presentation: Globalization (separate PowerPoint file), ready to show as a full-screen slideshow using an LCD projector.  Ask students to take out Student Resource 7.4, Anticipation Guide: Globalization, which they started in the last class period. As they view the presentation, tell students to complete the “I learned” section of their anticipation guide by writing down correct information if their previous information was incorrect, or by supplementing their correct prediction with additional details.  Present the slideshow. Use the notes you prepared and the questions on the slides to encourage class discussion.  This presentation is duplicated as Student Resource 7.5, Reading: Globalization. If an LCD projector is unavailable, students can read the presentation, answer the discussion questions in their notebook, and discuss their answers as a class. This student resource is also useful for review.  After the presentation, divide the class into pairs or groups of three and have them compare their notes for completeness and accuracy. Invite each pair or triad to share their thoughts and questions.  Conclude by inviting students to share their own personal attitudes toward globalization. Do they think it is a good thing or a bad thing? Why?  Acknowledge that globalization is a complex issue with many positive and negative aspects, but, for better or worse, it is a factor in today’s business environment. |
| 8 | 15 | Research: Professional Misconduct  This activity gives students a chance to build their online research skills while familiarizing themselves with ethical issues in their academy field.  Before beginning this activity, review Teacher Resource 7.5, Guide: Misconduct Research, and, using the starter topics provided in Teacher Resource 7.5, prepare your own list of potential ethical issues or topics. Also evaluate your students’ skill level with Internet research. If students have limited experience with it, you may wish to take additional class time to teach students how to fulfill your expectations (see Teacher Resource 7.5 for specifics).  Tell students that they are now going to take some time to do research on ethical misconduct in their academy career field. Review Student Resource 7.6, Assignment: Professional Misconduct Research, with the class. Invite students to list any examples of ethical misconduct they may already be aware of from other academy courses they have taken. Write student suggestions on the board, and supplement their suggestions with the list of starter topics you generated or the ones listed in Teacher Resource 7.5. Ideally, your class will have a list of about 8–10 topics to use for this activity.  If students are struggling to generate a list of topics, you can always have them begin their research by searching on general terms, such as *ethics in [name of industry]*. However, that will add more time to this research activity. Another way to get ideas going is to have the students ask themselves:  What stakeholders does the professional interact with? What is the nature of this interaction?  Where might there be an ethical violation in these relationships?  How might a professional in this field act unethically based on relationships unique to this profession?  Once students have copied their topic list onto Student Resource 7.6, help them to think up search strings (Step Two). Students should work individually to create a list of search strings, but you may wish to invite volunteers to share one of their best search strings with the class, so that struggling students can borrow an idea or two from their classmates.  Briefly discuss your expectations with students for this assignment, including what search engine(s) students can use, how recent the articles need to be, and so forth. Let students know they will do their research in the next class period. |
|  |  | class period 5 |
| 9 | 50 | Research: Professional Misconduct (Continued)  Students research examples of professional misconduct. This activity focuses on the following college and career skills:  Locating, evaluating, and applying information  Utilizing time efficiently when managing complex tasks  Effectively using technology relevant to a profession  Begin class by briefly discussing the difference between a mistake and misconduct (see Teacher Resource 7.5, Guide: Misconduct Research, for one example). Remind students that as they do their research today, they need to be thinking about whether they are reading about a mistake, misconduct, or a combination of the two.  Let students know that this will be their only class period to conduct their research and select one or more articles (Steps Three and Four on Student Resource 7.6, Assignment: Professional Misconduct Research). Assign each student to a computer; if there are not enough computers, pair students who chose the same (or a very similar) topic.  While students are working, circulate around the room to answer questions and keep students on task. Some students may discover that their topics or search strings do not generate enough high-quality information; reassure students that this happens sometimes during research, and help them start over with a new topic or search string.  When approximately 15–20 minutes have passed, ask students to pause their research to look at Step Four (“Choose an Article”) on Student Resource 7.6. Make sure students understand that their article or articles need to give them enough information so that they can answer the three questions under Step Four. Remind them of any additional criteria you set (for example, the articles must be published within the last five years, etc.). Tell students that when they have found an article or articles that meet the criteria, they should print a copy of the article (or save a link to it, if they will be sharing their final work on the computer). Answer any questions before instructing students to return to their research.  When approximately 10 minutes remain in class, ask students to begin wrapping up their research. Students need to have answered the three questions under Step Four of Student Resource 7.6. If students have not completed enough research or have not been able to answer the questions, they will need to complete the assignment for homework, as they will be sharing their research in the next class period. |
|  |  | class period 6 |
| 10 | 30 | Group Work: Sharing Misconduct Research  Students share the results of their research.  Before class begins, decide how to group students to share their research. As much as possible, students should be in a group made up of other people who researched different topics or examples. Each group can have 3–5 students in it.  Begin the class by giving students a few minutes to print out their articles (if they did not do so in the last class period) or to pull up their articles on a computer (if you will not be printing articles). Then assign students to their groups and have them sit with their group mates.  Ask students to take turns sharing their article(s) with the rest of the group. They should display their article(s), state the search string they used to find the article(s), and use the three questions they answered on Student Resource 7.6 to give a brief explanation of what misconduct they researched.  When everyone has had an opportunity to share with their group, lead a class discussion using the following questions (or other questions that present themselves to your class):  Did any of you use different search strings but find the same information?  Which search strings seemed to be the most helpful?  Which examples of misconduct do you think were the worst? Why?  Do you think people learn from these examples of misconduct? Why or why not?  Allow students time to speak, and then wrap up the discussion, being sure to leave enough time for the video in the next activity. If necessary, you may add some questions to the ongoing Question Wall you started earlier in the course.  To gauge student understanding, you may wish to collect Student Resource 7.6 and the printed copies of the articles to assess on a credit/no-credit basis. |
| 11 | 20 | Video: Why Do We Lie?  Students watch a brief video that explains the behavioral science behind why people lie.  Point out that many of the unethical behaviors students have seen in this lesson involve lying, whether it’s a direct and deliberate lie, lying to cover up a mistake, or lying “by omission” (e.g., not reporting something). Tell students they are now going to see a brief video by the Behavioral Science Guys (also called the BS Guys) that explains part of the science behind why people lie.  Show the video, available online at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BvLf63krM2g  After the video, invite students to share their thoughts on these questions or other questions you feel are worth discussing:  In your experience, does a reminder about behaving ethically matter? Why or why not?  Assuming this science is correct, what reminders could have made a difference in the examples of ethical misconduct you researched? Who could have or should have given those reminders? |

Extensions

Content Enrichment

* Have students use the articles they printed to create a bulletin board display about professional misconduct.
* Have students repeat the research assignment, but this time allow them to explore misconduct in other career fields, such as politics, law enforcement, professional athletics, and journalism.

STEM Integration

* Engineering: Businesses are regulated to prevent cheating and corruption. Similarly, engineering projects are regulated in two ways: to protect the health and safety of workers, and to protect the safety of people who will be using the building, bridge, or other structure that is being engineered. Invite students to pair up and take a field trip through the school, looking for clues to safety engineering. This might include:
  + Sprinklers and fire extinguishers
  + A schoolwide PA system
  + The way lockers are constructed
  + Flooring in the gym vs. flooring in the rest of the school
  + How appliances, plumbing, and so forth in the school cafeteria are designed and laid out
  + Stairs and railings
  + Placement of electrical wiring for lights and other fixtures

Tell students to make a list of what they see as they look around. As they do so, ask them to speculate on what the code or safety law might be that the engineers are complying with. What do they think the minimum standard is that the law has set for the engineers who worked on their school? Do they see evidence of any work that seems to be below this standard? Above?

* Math: Luscious Laptops makes protective sleeves for laptop computers and tablets. Right now, the company manufactures its products in the United States. It has eight full-time employees. Two of them manage the company, and each makes $75,000 per year. The other six run the machinery and attend to details on the factory floor. These employees are paid $12 an hour. In one hour, the eight employees can produce 60 laptop sleeves. Luscious Laptops has an offer from a manufacturer in Peru that says it can make the sleeves while paying employees only $3 per hour. But because the equipment in their factory is older, they can only make 45 sleeves per hour. If the company manufactures in Peru, it would still keep their managers in the United States. What is the total cost per laptop sleeve if they are manufactured in the US versus in Peru? What percentage of the total cost goes to paying factory workers and what percent goes to management? Does the move to Peru make economic sense? What are the ethics involved in making this decision? What would the company decision makers need to know in order to make an ethical decision, as well as a sound economic one?

Additional Cross-Curricular Ideas

* English Language Arts: Have students read excerpts from Barbara Ehrenreich’s *Nickel and Dimed* and discuss the ethical issues described in the excerpts. Are there examples of ethical misconduct in the book? Why or why not? Many sections of the book describe behavior that is technically legal but morally questionable. When does “morally questionable” behavior cross the line into ethical misconduct?
* Social Studies/History: Today sweatshops are considered a horrible thing that mostly happens in other countries, but the reason most US factories are run better than sweatshops is because of labor laws. Have students research the US labor movement in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Students can choose topics such as the Triangle Fire, the Steelworkers Strikes of the 1930s, the labor laws passed under FDR, and so forth. Have students put together a poster or presentation on their topic and share what they learned with the rest of the class.
* Social Studies/History: The Watergate Scandal, which ultimately ended the presidency of Richard Nixon, is perhaps one of the largest examples of misconduct by government officials in American history. Have students do research on the facts of what happened and discuss the ethical and legal breaches that occurred during Nixon’s presidency. Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein’s books, *All the Presidents’ Men* and *The Final Days,* may be particularly useful for this assignment. There is also an excellent and, for the most part, accurate movie of *All the Presidents’ Men* starring Robert Redford and Dustin Hoffman, and an episode of the CNN documentary, *The Seventies,* which covered Watergate in some detail.