

Student name: _____ Date: _____

Describe employer, employee and co-worker responsibilities

Objectives:

- A. Identify employer responsibilities.
- B. Identify employee and co-worker responsibilities.
- C. Identify basic civil rights in the workplace.

MODULE 4A: INFORMATION SHEET

TO THE STUDENT: Read and study this information sheet, then complete the activities at the end of this module.

Introduction

In this module you will analyze human relations in terms of *employer, employee, and co-worker* responsibilities. The information provided is not all-inclusive; it is intended to serve as a guide for basic responsibilities in the workplace.

Employer Responsibilities

First, let's take a look at some employer responsibilities. The employer is responsible to provide a safe working environment that is free from any type of harassment. They are also required by law to adhere to several pieces of legislation. Here are some legislative excerpts:

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964:

It shall be an unlawful employment practice for an employer to fail or refuse to hire or to discharge any individual, or otherwise to discriminate against any individual with respect to his/her compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment, because of such individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.

Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970:

To assure safe and healthful working conditions for working men and women; by authorizing enforcement of the standards developed under the Act; by assisting and encouraging the States in their efforts to assure safe and healthful working conditions; by providing for research, information, education, and training in the field of occupational safety and health; and for other purposes.

You can find more information about your rights as an employee at U.S. Department of Labor web page <http://www.dol.gov/> and at The Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry web page <http://www.dli.state.pa.us/landi/site/default.asp> .

As stated earlier, these are not all of the responsibilities that an employer has, I mention these as a reference in order for you to know that the employer must provide a safe environment where you can satisfactorily perform your job and be paid a fair wage for doing so.

Employee and Co-Worker Responsibilities

Now, let us turn towards employee and co-worker responsibilities. What does your employer expect of you? Some characteristics of a responsible employee are;

- good attendance
- punctuality
- cooperation
- initiative
- honesty
- willingness to learn
- dependability
- positive attitude
- loyalty
- enthusiasm

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY:

As an employee, you have a responsibility to your company, your job and your co-workers. Attending work is a critical part of that responsibility and, at the very least, employers expect you to be at work every day. Employers understand, though, that special circumstances may occasionally keep you away from the job. Because you'll be an important part of a team, when you must miss work, let your employer know as soon as possible so someone else can be scheduled to do your job.

Most companies have their own policies concerning absences, but some general rules for attendance are listed below:

- 1) Reasons for missing work: Generally there are only two reasons for missing work: emergencies and special occasions. Be sure that you find out what reasons are acceptable for missing work at your new job. Sometimes it's hard to decide whether you should go to work or not, but your job must be among your top priorities.
- 2) Notifying your employer: It is important that you inform your employer of your absence. If you have to miss work because of an emergency you should notify your employer as soon as possible. You should give at least two weeks notice if you have to miss work because of a special occasion. Your boss needs as much time as possible to find someone to replace you.
- 3) Who to notify: The right person must know why you are absent. It is your responsibility to make sure that your employer or supervisor knows why you aren't at work. Try to talk directly to your boss when you need to be absent. Don't depend on someone else to relay a message or explain your absence. The person you ask to tell your boss that you won't be at work could get busy and forget.
- 4) What to say: Explain the reason for your absence in a clear and complete way. When you tell your supervisor about your absence be sure that your situation is fully understood. If your boss doesn't agree that your reason for missing work is acceptable, perhaps you should re-evaluate your priorities to make sure that you are acting responsibly.

PUNCTUALITY:

Your employer expects you to be to work on time everyday. If you are to begin work at 7:00 AM, you should allow yourself enough time to arrive and prepare yourself to begin work on time. You can not be successful if you show up right at 7:00 AM and then begin to get yourself ready to start work.

COOPERATION:

During the course of your working career you will be expected to work with a variety of people. Sometimes just getting along with your co-workers can be difficult because of the different personalities. However, most people will react in a positive manner to kindness and consideration. Cooperation is the key here. You may not like everyone you work with but your employer will expect you to maintain a positive working relationship with your Co-workers. Just knowing that your employer expects you to work effectively with others should be reason enough to cooperate with your Co-workers. There are other reasons for wanting to get along with your Co-workers. Co-workers can be especially helpful when you have started a new job. The more experienced employees can "show you the ropes" and help you make a smooth transition to your new job. Later on, when

you know your way around, you will be much happier if you like your Co-workers and they like you.

A NON-HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT:

This one is everyone's responsibility. The law requires your employer, you as a worker, and your co-workers to provide a work environment that is free from all forms of harassment. The legal definition of harassment is severe or pervasive enough to create a hostile or abusive work environment based on race, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability (including obesity), military membership or veteran status, sexual orientation, marital status, transsexualism or cross-dressing, political affiliation, criminal record, prior psychiatric treatment, occupation, citizenship status, personal appearance, tobacco use outside work, Appalachian origin, receipt of public assistance, or dishonorable discharge from the military for the plaintiff and for a reasonable person.

MODULE 4A: STUDENT ACTIVITIES

TO THE STUDENT: After you have read and studied the information sheet above, complete the following activities.

Activity 1: Answer the following questions with complete sentences.

1. Generally there are only two reasons for missing work. What are they?

a.

b.

2. Why is it important to be a team player?

3. If you have to miss a day from work, who should you call?

4. If your boss doesn't agree that your reason for missing work is acceptable, what should you do?

Activity 2: Fill in the blanks:

1. Try to give at least _____ notice if you have to miss work because of a special occasion.
2. You need to _____ your reason for your absence in a clear and complete way.
3. Because you'll be an _____ part of a team, when you must miss work, let your _____ know as soon as possible so someone else can be _____ to do your job.
4. Most people will react in a _____ manner to _____ and consideration.
5. You should allow yourself _____ time to arrive and prepare yourself to begin work on time.

Activity 3: True or False. Write T or F in the blank space after the number.

1. It doesn't matter how many days of work you miss, as long as your employer is notified.
2. In most cases, having a cold isn't a very good reason to miss work.
3. Employers are happy when employees stay home from work because they don't have to pay them for the days missed.
4. The death of a family member would be a valid reason for being absent from work.
5. Ten minutes before you are scheduled to start work is sufficient notice to request an absence from work.
7. Workers are often fired from their jobs because of excessive absenteeism.
8. A dependable employee is one who comes to work when scheduled.
9. "I overslept" is a legitimate reason for missing work.
10. After an absence from work, an employee may be required to submit a note from a physician.
11. Employee absences cost the employer money.
12. "I need some time off to look for a new job," is a good reason for missing work.
13. Absenteeism causes extra work for others.

Activity 4: Write a letter to your boss requesting a day off from work for a special occasion.

Be sure to clearly explain your reason for the request. (Is it a valid reason?) Identify the day you are requesting off. Don't forget to thank your employer in advance.

MODULE 4A: STANDARDS ADDRESSED IN THIS MODULE

Pennsylvania’s Academic Standards for Career Education and Work

13.2.11. Career Acquisition (Getting a Job)

- E. Demonstrate, in the career acquisition process, the application of essential workplace skills/knowledge, such as, but not limited to:
- Commitment
 - Communication
 - Dependability
 - Health/safety
 - Laws and regulations (i.e. Child Labor Law, Fair Labor Standards Act, OSHA, Material Safety Data Sheets)
 - Personal initiative
 - Scheduling/time management
 - Team building
 - Technical literacy
 - Technology

Pennsylvania’s Academic Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening (RWSL)

1.1.11. Learning to Read Independently

- E. Establish a reading vocabulary by identifying and correctly using new words acquired through the study of their relationships to other words. Use a dictionary or related reference.

1.4.11. Types of Writing

- C. Write persuasive pieces.
- Include a clearly stated position or opinion.
 - Include convincing, elaborated and properly cited evidence.
 - Develop reader interest.
 - Anticipate and counter reader concerns and arguments.
 - Include a variety of methods to advance the argument or position.

1.5.11. Quality of Writing

- A. Write with a sharp, distinct focus.
 - Identify topic, task and audience.
 - Establish and maintain a single point of view.

- F. Edit writing using the conventions of language.
 - Spell all words correctly.
 - Use capital letters correctly.
 - Punctuate correctly (periods, exclamation points, question marks, commas, quotation marks, apostrophes, colons, semicolons, parentheses, hyphens, brackets, ellipses).
 - Use nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, prepositions and interjections properly.
 - Use complete sentences (simple, compound, complex, declarative, interrogative, exclamatory and imperative).

Student name: _____ Date: _____

Develop and describe positive working relationships with others on the job.*

Objectives:

- A. Define the term "interdependence" and explain how this is important in developing positive working relationships.
- B. List your own positive personal traits.
- C. List and develop a plan of action to eliminate your own negative personal traits.

MODULE 4B: INFORMATION SHEET

TO THE STUDENT: Read and study this information sheet and then complete the student activities at the end of this module.

Work Relationships

The first step in developing positive working relationships on the job is to understand that you are dependent upon other people and they are dependent upon you in the workplace. This interdependence (two or more people who rely upon one another for some reason) of people also extends to our personal life -- People are normally dependent upon one another for many different things.

The primary reason for employees losing their jobs is poor human relations skills (they fail to get along with other employees in the work place). For this reason, developing positive working relationships is essential. In a place of employment, all employees must work toward the same goal. In doing this, each individual employee's behavior and attitudes affect almost every other worker in the business. The general effectiveness of the work group is influenced by each employee's moods, attitudes, personal hygiene, mental health, communication skills, etc. As you may have seen, the evaluation of other people may not be the same as our own personal evaluation. The way we personally see a situation versus the way it is viewed by others has a strong bearing on positive working relationships on the job. Begin today to develop the positive attitude and personal traits that will enhance the working relationship in your work station.

**(This is also CAPS Module 6, used with permission.)*

Positive Personal Traits

In order to develop positive working relationships on the job and in your personal life, try to develop some of your more positive personal traits. The following list describes some of the more desirable personal traits.

1. Communication Skills - Develop your ability to express yourself to customers, co-workers, and management in a calm, positive manner. Don't jump to conclusions and don't lose your cool!
2. Personal Appearance & Hygiene - People form an initial impression of you within 10 seconds of first sight. This impression can make or break a relationship from the start.
3. Dependability & Reliability - Always carry through any commitments you make--Be at work on time, complete your assigned daily tasks before leaving work; never put off until tomorrow what you have time for today; do what you say you will do, follow the rules and instructions of your place of business, even if you feel your way is better, etc.
4. Initiative - Take the responsibility to do things without being told. Seek out additional tasks - even those you don't particularly like.
5. Cooperative Attitude - Be a "team player!" Learn to cooperate with others by compromising on differences, remaining neutral on conflicts between others and being willing to change and adjust to benefit your workplace.
6. Honesty & Loyalty - Don't become involved in "office gossip." Never discuss work problems within earshot of customers and never discuss negatives about the business away from work.
7. Positive Attitude - Learn to see the bright side of things. Smile and show interest and enthusiasm during your day at work. Show an interest in the people around you and the business in general. Enthusiasm is contagious.

Changing Negative Personal Traits

Negative personal traits can be changed when three conditions occur:

1. You must be able to recognize and acknowledge your negative traits.
2. You must want to change or eliminate these traits.
3. You must make a decision to take action to stop these negative traits.

Change will not occur automatically. You must make every effort to change or eliminate the undesirable trait. If you are like most people, it is very difficult to identify your own negative traits because people generally like to view themselves in the best light.

MODULE 4B: STUDENT ACTIVITIES

TO THE STUDENT: After reading and studying the information sheet, complete these activities to demonstrate your understanding.

1. Describe in complete paragraphs what you would do in the following situations.

- A. You have recently been promoted to assistant manager. One of the employees is constantly asking for changes in her scheduled hours for various reasons.
- B. You have witnessed one of your co-workers giving a discount to a friend.
- C. The manager has assigned teams to work on a team project. One of the members on your team has been a real negative employee, always complaining, not willing to do much for the company, someone that no one really wants to work with. What would you do to make this a positive experience for everyone on your team?

2. Match each of the terms listed in Column A with the most closely related term in Column B. Write your answers in the space provided.

Column A	Column B
____ 1. Communication	A. First Impressions
____ 2. Personal Appearance	B. Enthusiastic
____ 3. Dependability	C. Faithfulness
____ 4. Reliability	D. Integrity
____ 5. Initiative	E. Team Player
____ 6. Cooperative	F. Additional Tasks
____ 7. Honesty	G. Always carry through
____ 8. Loyalty	H. Complete assigned daily tasks
____ 9. Positive Attitude	I. Good Grooming
____ 10. Hygiene	J. Ability to express yourself

3. Answer the following questions:

A. Describe in a complete paragraph your own positive personal traits. Be honest!

B. Describe in a complete paragraph your top three negative personal traits with your plan of action to eliminate them.

C. Keep a journal for one week describing what you have done to try to eliminate your negative traits.

MODULE 4B: STANDARDS ADDRESSED IN THIS MODULE

Pennsylvania’s Academic Standards for Career Education and Work**13.1.11. Career Awareness and Planning**

- A. Analyze career options based on student interests, abilities, aptitudes and accomplishments.

13.3.11. Career Retention (Keeping a Job)

- A. Evaluate personal attitudes and work habits that support career retention and advancement.
- C. Evaluate conflict resolution skills as they relate to the workplace.
- Constructive criticism
 - Group dynamics
 - Managing/leadership
 - Mediation
 - Negotiation
 - Problem solving

Pennsylvania’s Academic Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening (RWSL)**1.1.11. Learning to Read Independently**

- E. Establish a reading vocabulary by identifying and correctly using new words acquired through the study of their relationships to other words. Use a dictionary or related reference.

1.5.11. Quality of Writing

- A. Write with a sharp, distinct focus.
- Identify topic, task and audience.
 - Establish and maintain a single point of view.
- B. Write using well-developed content appropriate for the topic.
- Gather, determine validity and reliability of, analyze and organize information.
 - Employ the most effective format for purpose and audience.
 - Write fully developed paragraphs that have details and information specific to the topic and relevant to the focus.

- F. Edit writing using the conventions of language.
- Spell all words correctly.
 - Use capital letters correctly.
 - Punctuate correctly (periods, exclamation points, question marks, commas, quotation marks, apostrophes, colons, semicolons, parentheses, hyphens, brackets, ellipses).
 - Use nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, prepositions and interjections properly.
 - Use complete sentences (simple, compound, complex, declarative, interrogative, exclamatory and imperative).

Student name: _____ Date: _____

Identify ways to resolve conflict.*

Objectives:

- A. List problem solving steps and decision-making skills.
- B. Identify coping skills used to deal with different types of problems.
- C. Identify ways an employee can get along with co-workers, employees, and customers.

MODULE 4C: INFORMATION SHEET

TO THE STUDENT: Read and study this information sheet and complete the student activities at the end of this module.

Getting Along With Others

A person can be extremely well qualified, have a lot of technical skills, be honest and hardworking, and still fail to achieve goals in life or be satisfied. A reason for this is that there is virtually nothing that we do that is not affected by how well or poorly we relate to other people.

Contact with other people occurs frequently in most jobs. A worker who is unable to get along with others may not survive on the job very long. Some of the people an employee may have to get along with are co-workers, supervisors, and the general public.

We All Need Human Relations Skills

When you interact with other people, you are engaging in human relations. We all interact with other people. We cannot escape doing so in our crowded, complex, interrelated society. In a single day you relate to co-workers, salespeople, bus drivers, parents, children, sisters, brothers, bosses, teachers, customers, neighbors, friends, and police.

Some of these relations are pleasant, some unpleasant; some satisfying, some not so satisfying. Overall your success and satisfaction in life will be influenced by how well you relate, by your human relations skills.

**(This is also CAPS Module 7, used with permission.)*

From the time you were born, you have had to deal with people, and as you go out into the world of work, your ability to get along with others on the job combined with your job skills will determine whether or not you will be a successful employee. In order to get along with others, you must first understand yourself better and how you react to others in different situations. As you learn to evaluate yourself in relationships with peers, co-workers, teachers, family and acquaintances, you will develop human relations skills.

There are many skilled people who have the technical knowledge needed to carry out specific job duties, but they have not learned good human relations skills. Some of the personal reasons for learning good human relations skills are:

1. You will be able to improve social relationships.
2. You will understand yourself better.
3. You will be able to assess situations with people more accurately.
4. You will enjoy interaction with people on the job more so that you will be more satisfied with your place of employment.

Human Relations Is Communicating

Because you are involved in some form of human relations practically all of your waking hours, human relations skills are clearly important. Human relations means communicating with others.

That involves obvious direct communication, such as talking and listening, writing and reading. It also includes nonverbal communication using body language, consciously or subconsciously; how you dress, how you take care of yourself. It involves what you communicate and how you communicate.

In most occupations an employee will be in frequent contact with co-workers. In some jobs it is necessary to discuss tasks with other employees in order to complete the work. Even if speaking to other workers is not required to do the job, it is still important to be on friendly terms with other employees. Employers prefer a friendly atmosphere because most people perform better when they get along well with those around them. Hostility, a feeling of ill will, can create problems that could cause a slowdown in production. A worker who makes other people angry, for example, is interfering with their performance. Such a worker usually does not last very long on the job.

Getting along with supervisors is also very important in job survival. If, because of a negative attitude, an employee doesn't cooperate with a supervisor, the supervisor can recommend that the employee be fired. A supervisor can also prevent an uncooperative worker from receiving a promotion.

In many occupations it is necessary for a worker to deal directly with the general public. They may have frequent daily contact with many people whom they have not met before. Salespersons, nurses, and receptionists are just a few examples. Such workers must be able to get along well with everyone they meet. A complaint to management from a dissatisfied customer or client could place a worker's job in jeopardy.

Getting along with others is not difficult. There are guidelines one can follow when dealing with co-workers, supervisors, and the general public:

1. Be courteous and polite at all times!
2. Develop a friendly attitude.
3. Don't become involved in gossip.
4. Control your temper.
5. Accept criticism.

Problem Solving Steps

The way people show their feelings expresses the attitude they have. From someone's looks or actions, it is quite easy to see whether he or she feels happy, excited, or sad. People show how they feel even without saying a word. Sometimes an employee may feel hostile toward someone. It is wise not to let these feelings show. Having a positive attitude is necessary for success in any occupation.

The way in which we learn to identify and solve problems can have a far reaching effect, not only on ourselves, but on the others around us. If we learn how to identify the basic process of solving a problem, we can apply it to all areas of our lives--on the job, at home, at school, and in peer relationships.

The basic steps to solving a problem are:

1. Recognize the problem.
2. Obtain the facts - The more facts you gather, the better your decision will be.
3. Weigh the facts.
4. Determine the goal or objective desired.

5. Make a decision based on several possible solutions - list the pros and cons to each alternative and the possible consequences or results of each solution.
6. Take action to solve the problem.
7. Check the results of your actions to determine whether or not your solution to the problem is working.

If we learn to identify and recognize what the real problem is, we have a better chance of solving it rationally, but if we deny there is a problem when there actually is one, it will only get harder to solve.

Get along with others on the job

More people are fired because they can't get along with others than for any other reason. No matter how good you are at your work, to survive on the job you must get along with other people.

Sometimes on our jobs we are confronted with situations in which we are required to respond to our co-workers, our supervisor, employer or to customers' actions. To handle these types of problems, there are several responses that we can take to help us get along better with others.

Some suggestions for getting along with a supervisor include:

1. Accept the authority of the supervisor.
2. Immediately ask the supervisor for more responsibility when all assigned duties are completed.
3. Handle merchandise and supplies carefully - they represent an investment to the business.
4. Learn from all supervisors, both the good ones and those less skilled. Whether the constructive criticism by a superior is negative or positive, employees must learn to listen to what is being said about their job performance that they need to correct in carrying out their job duties, and not let the manner in which they are being told overshadow the message of the supervisor.

Some of the ways you can improve your relationships with your co-workers are to:

1. Know all co-workers by name.
2. Introduce yourself to the other employees if the supervisor or another employee does not do so.

3. Greet by name or at least smile at the other employees upon arriving at work.

In order to greet the customers or clients at your business and make them feel welcome, you should learn ways to make them feel important so they will want to return to your business in the future. You are the representative for your business, and the customers will form an opinion about the service your business offers by the way you provide them with help and information.

Following is a list of suggestions to make your customers feel welcome:

1. Smile and greet each customer with whom you come in contact with confidence and sincerity.
2. Treat each customer as a guest: the customer is your reason for being in business.
3. Help each customer with individual needs - customers come to a business because they need the goods or services you provide.

MODULE 4C: STUDENT ACTIVITIES

TO THE STUDENT: After you have read and studied the information sheet, complete the following activities in complete sentences.

1. Sometimes a worker puts down other workers just to see them get upset. What could you do instead of getting upset?

A. You dropped a glass jar and it broke. Someone said, "How did you get hired? You must be related to the boss." **WHAT SHOULD YOU SAY OR DO?**

B. You just started working at a toy store. You were taking packages out to the parking lot. Another worker who was just leaving yelled, "Hey ugly! Did you get that face for Halloween?" **WHAT SHOULD YOU SAY OR DO?**

C. You were absent from work one day because you had a bad cold. The next day, a worker said, "Hey, we were glad you weren't here yesterday. We really got a lot done." **WHAT SHOULD YOU SAY OR DO?**

D. You are generally accurate at making change. This morning, though, you made a mistake and another worker said, "You're supposed to collect the money, not give it away!" **WHAT SHOULD YOU SAY OR DO?**

2. Read the following case studies and suggest solutions to everyday human relation problems.

A. Judy had been working at her job as a department store sales clerk for two weeks when her supervisor called her into his office. He told her that she had been doing a good job except for some mistakes she had made in ringing up sales on the cash register. Upon hearing this, Judy stormed out of his office, saying to herself, "I don't have to take this abuse. Who does he think I am?"

(1) Did Judy react in a mature manner? Explain your answer.

(2) If you were Judy's supervisor would you recommend that she be fired? Explain your answer.

B. Joe is employed as a stock worker at an auto-parts warehouse. On Joe's second day on the job, Bill, another employee told him that he suspected the janitor of stealing some supplies from the warehouse. On his lunch break, Joe repeated what he had heard to the office secretary, who also happened to be his girlfriend. The secretary told the boss what Joe had said. The boss promptly called the janitor into her office and fired him for stealing.

1) Did Joe use good judgment in telling his girlfriend what he had heard from Bill? Why or why not?

2) What would you have done if you were Joe? Describe some consequences of your actions.

C. Jerry has just graduated from high school. He was sharp and definitely college material. For the last two years of high school he had to work to help support his widowed mother and three younger sisters.

He received a scholarship that covered tuition and books, but not room and board. His boss offered him a small raise, or he would write a recommendation to get him a comparable job with comparable pay with the same company in the town where the university was located. With a college education Jerry would qualify for a much better position in the long run; however, there would only be enough money to support himself. What should Jerry do?

- 1) What is the problem? Explain.
- 2) What are the facts?
- 3) How do you weigh the facts? Evaluate.
- 4) What is Jerry's objective? Should this be changed?
- 5) What would be your decision for Jerry?
- 6) What action should Jerry take?
- 7) What are the possible results of the action?

MODULE 4C: STANDARDS ADDRESSED IN THIS MODULE

Pennsylvania’s Academic Standards for Career Education and Work**13.3.11. Career Retention (Keeping a Job)**

- A. Analyze work habits needed to advance within a career.
- B. Evaluate team member roles to describe and illustrate active listening techniques:
 - Clarifying
 - Encouraging
 - Restating
 - Reflecting
 - Summarizing
- C. Evaluate conflict resolution skills:
 - Constructive criticism
 - Group dynamics
 - Managing
 - Mediation
 - Negotiation
 - Problem solving

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- E. Establish a reading vocabulary by identifying and correctly using new words acquired through the study of their relationships to other words. Use a dictionary or related reference.

1.5.11. Quality of Writing

- B. Write using well-developed content appropriate for the topic.
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- F. Edit writing using the conventions of language.
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 - Use nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, prepositions and interjections properly.
 - Use complete sentences (simple, compound, complex, declarative, interrogative, exclamatory and imperative).

1.6.11 Speaking and Listening

- A. Listen to others.
- Ask clarifying questions.
 - Synthesize information, ideas and opinions to determine relevancy.
 - Take notes.

Student name: _____ Date: _____

**Distinguish between positive and negative feedback;
define and give examples of constructive criticism.***

Objectives:

- A. Define feedback.
- B. List examples of positive and negative feedback you could receive at work.
- C. Define constructive criticism and list steps in responding to criticism in a constructive manner.

MODULE 4D: INFORMATION SHEET

TO THE STUDENT: Read and study this information sheet and then complete the student activities at the end of the module.

What is feedback?

Feedback is information given to a person to evaluate behaviors. People can give you feedback on things you do or say. Feedback is important to you because it will tell you how you are doing and if you are doing what is expected of you.

Feedback can be either positive or negative. If you are doing a job or an assignment correctly, you will receive positive feedback and you will know that you should continue that behavior. Positive feedback tells you that everything is going well.

Negative feedback, on the other hand, tells you that you are not doing as you are expected. It tells you that you must in some way alter your behavior so that you will be doing things right.

**(This is also CAPS Module 20, used with permission.)*

Who gives feedback?

Everyone gives feedback! You are constantly giving feedback to your friends, parents, teachers and the people with whom you work. Through your words or actions, you are letting people know how you feel in response to things that they are saying or doing.

All your life, you have been receiving feedback from your friends, parents, and teachers. Your report card from school has been a form of feedback. If you received an A, you knew that you were doing well in that subject and that you should continue doing whatever you were doing in terms of reading, studying, and listening in class. If you received an F, this told you that you were going to have to make some changes in order to pass the course.

Feedback on the job

Now that you are working, you will be receiving feedback from your employer and from the other employees at work. If your employer is pleased with your performance on the job, he/she will give you positive feedback by telling you that you are doing well. You may be given increased hours or you may even have received a pay raise to show you that you are doing well. If you are not doing well, your employer may tell you about the mistakes you are making or he/she might start decreasing your hours. Usually if your work does not improve, the employer will terminate your employment.

Dealing with positive and negative feedback

It is usually very easy to deal with positive feedback. Everyone likes to hear good things about themselves and the work they are doing.

If your employer says, "You did a nice job with that project you just completed," or "We have decided to offer you a full-time job and an increase in pay because you are doing so well," you will feel good. You will probably continue to do your job as you have been or you might even try to do more because you know that would please your employer.

However, if your employer says, "I think you are having some problems getting along with the other employees," or "I am not pleased with the number of errors I have found in your work," you should realize that this is negative feedback and that it is a sign that you must change your behavior at work or possibly lose that job.

Some people have a very difficult time dealing with negative feedback. When they hear people say bad things about them, they tend to get defensive. They may

try to shift the blame to another person by saying "I didn't do that--it was _____," or they may try to deny that there is a problem at all.

It is important for you to realize that your employer has been doing this job much longer than you have and that he/she probably knows best. You must also realize that as long as you work for that person, you must do whatever is necessary to please the employer. The business you work for has policies and procedures you must follow and has set standards for the work they expect from you. You must be willing to alter your behavior and make the expected changes if you wish to be successful on the job.

When you display a positive reaction to negative feedback, it shows your employer that you are trying to improve. By asking for help or by showing that you are making an honest attempt to improve your work, you will show your employer that you want to keep your job and that you are cooperating.

When your employer evaluates your work, you should study carefully comments he/she makes and the way you have been rated. In areas where your employer rates you well, you know that you should continue to do whatever you have been doing. Any area in which your employer evaluates you with a low grade must be improved. If you do not understand why you have been evaluated the way you were, ask your employer to explain it to you. Then show that you are planning to make a serious attempt to improve.

Constructive criticism

It is important for you to realize that negative feedback is often seen as criticism and most people do not react well to criticism. It is true that sometimes criticism that is given is destructive and meant to hurt another person. For example, if a co-worker said to you, "That mistake you made was really stupid," it would be destructive criticism meant to hurt you.

On the other hand, your employer may offer negative feedback or criticism meant to help you improve on the job. This should be construed as constructive criticism and you should accept it as such. You must learn to react to criticism in a constructive manner and use it to help improve your performance on the job.

Reacting to constructive criticism

Try to follow these rules in dealing with constructive criticism from your employers.

1. You should listen carefully to your employer and try to understand the criticism. Take it seriously and thank the employer for helping you to understand.

2. Try not to act defensively. Be willing to admit that you made a mistake or that you know you could be doing a better job.
3. Do not lose your temper or argue with your employer. Do not become angry with your employer.
4. Work to improve on your weaknesses. Let your employer know that you are serious about trying to improve.

MODULE 4D: STUDENT ACTIVITIES

TO THE STUDENT: After you have read and studied the information sheet, answer the following questions.

1. Define feedback.
2. Describe three examples of positive feedback you have received from your employer.

3. Give three examples of times when you received negative feedback from someone at work. Then tell what you did to improve or correct the problem.

What was the negative feedback?

What did you do?

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

4. Write a paragraph contrasting the differences between destructive and constructive criticism. (Use additional sheets for your paragraph.)
5. Think of a time when someone at work offered you some constructive criticism. Write an essay (of three paragraphs or more) describing how you reacted. Using the rules for dealing with constructive criticism, include how you should have reacted. (Use additional sheets for your essay.)

MODULE 4D: STANDARDS ADDRESSED IN THIS MODULE

Pennsylvania’s Academic Standards for Career Education and Work**13.3.11. Career Retention (Keeping a Job)**

- C. Evaluate conflict resolution skills:
- Constructive criticism
 - Group dynamics
 - Managing/leadership
 - Mediation
 - Negotiation
 - Problem solving

Pennsylvania’s Academic Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening (RWSL)**1.1.11. Learning to Read Independently**

- E. Establish a reading vocabulary by identifying and correctly using new words acquired through the study of their relationships to other words. Use a dictionary or related reference.

1.4.11. Types of Writing

- B. Write complex informational pieces (e.g. research papers, analyses, evaluations, essays).
- Include a variety of methods to develop the main idea.
 - Use precise language and specific detail.
 - Include cause and effect.
 - Use relevant graphics (e.g., maps, charts, graphs, tables).
 - Use primary and secondary sources.
- C. Write persuasive pieces.
- Include a clearly stated position or opinion.
 - Include convincing, elaborated and properly cited evidence.
 - Develop reader interest.
 - Anticipate and counter reader concerns and arguments.
 - Include a variety of methods to advance the argument or position.

1.5.11. Quality of Writing

- A. Write with a sharp, distinct focus.
 - Identify topic, task and audience.
 - Establish and maintain a single point of view.

- B. Write using well-developed content appropriate for the topic.
 - Gather, determine validity and reliability of, analyze and organize information.
 - Employ the most effective format for purpose and audience.
 - Write fully developed paragraphs that have details and information specific to the topic and relevant to the focus.

- F. Edit writing using the conventions of language.
 - Spell all words correctly.
 - Use capital letters correctly.
 - Punctuate correctly (periods, exclamation points, question marks, commas, quotation marks, apostrophes, colons, semicolons, parentheses, hyphens, brackets, ellipses).
 - Use nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, prepositions and interjections properly.
 - Use complete sentences (simple, compound, complex, declarative, interrogative, exclamatory and imperative).