

# **Instructor's Guide**

**for**

## **EXPLORING YOUR CHARACTER VIDEO**

*“The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically...intelligence plus character—that is the goal of true education.”*

*Martin Luther King, Jr.*

### **Overview**

In this video the topic of character and character education are explored. Students and educators comment on the role of character education in creating a positive school environment and in helping students to become more productive members of the larger community. Connections are made between developing a strong character and succeeding at school, at work, and in life.

Character involves developing life skills so that you can behave in an appropriate way and interact and communicate well with others. Key character traits are emphasized, including respect, trustworthiness, caring, responsibility, fairness, and citizenship.

The complexities of developing a set of values are also addressed: for example, whether it is ever okay to tell a lie to protect somebody's feelings, and how you may react when life is unfair. Students in the video suggest that the way you behave affects you and those around you, and that learning about character now can help you in any life situation in the future.

Students are the leaders of tomorrow, and as such if they become citizens of good character they can help to contribute to the community. They can become better workers if they are positive, appreciate diversity, and get along with others. Understanding good character can help students become more confident and successful when dealing with those in the world at large.

## Presentation Suggestions

Write the following quote from the video on the whiteboard or overhead: “You have within you right now, everything you need to deal with whatever the world can throw at you.” Ask students whether they feel that this is true. Have them list values they feel they have learned from their parents or other influences, such as movies, books, or personal interactions (such as honesty, fairness, respect, responsibility, courage, and so on). Looking at that list, ask them again whether they have within them what they need to deal with whatever life throws at them.

Give students the **Anticipation Quiz** to complete prior to viewing the video. If you wish, allow the students to state their answers and discuss them.

Show the video. Encourage students to make changes to the answers they put down for the Anticipation Quiz while watching the video.

At the conclusion of the video, ask students to discuss any changes they made to the answers on the Anticipation Quiz as a result of information in the video. Follow up the discussion with the **Activities**.

Use the **Discussion Questions** to request oral or written responses from students, or assign the questions as homework essays.

Give the **Quick Quiz** at the conclusion of class and correct the quizzes as a group.

Assign the **Homework Option**, if desired.

## Anticipation Quiz

**Directions:** Answer these questions as completely as possible. You will revise your answers as you watch the video.

1. What benefits can come to you in your future life from developing good character now?
2. What character traits could help you get or succeed in a job?
3. Name six good character traits.
4. What role do teachers have in teaching good character?

## Answer Key

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Answer might include success in work, ability to communicate well with others, ability to lead others, etc.</li><li>2. Ability to get along with others, be honest, listen to and respect others.</li></ol> |
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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>3. Six traits highlighted in the video are respect, trustworthiness, caring, responsibility, fairness, and citizenship.</li><li>4. Teachers have to be role models, showing good character and respect to others.</li></ol> |
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## Activities

### Activity #1

**Title:** Appreciating Diversity

**Format:** Small group

**Time:** 20-25 minutes

**Materials:** chart paper, marker pens

#### Procedure:

1. Organize the class into three groups.
2. Assign each group one of these categories:
  - a. Ethnic background
  - b. Religion or spiritual beliefs
  - c. Political beliefs
3. Ask each group to list as many different subsets within their category on chart paper. (For example, the subsets in the religion category might list Buddhist, Catholic, Muslim, Wicca, Protestant, Jewish; the subsets under political beliefs might include Democrat, Republican, liberal, or environmental).
4. Have the groups post their pages around the room.
5. Ask students to say whether their particular beliefs or background are represented in each category.
6. Point out that even within a small group there can be diversity. Ask this discussion question: Do you think diversity enriches or divides us? In what ways?

### Activity #2

**Title:** Analyzing Your Own Character

**Format:** Individual

**Time:** 30-35 minutes

**Materials:** Paper, pen

**Procedure:**

1. Have each student write down each of these characteristics at the top of a piece of paper (one piece of paper for each category):
  - a. Honesty
  - b. Respect for others
  - c. Fairness
  - d. Caring
  - e. Responsibility
2. Ask each student to take about 15 minutes to write specific examples of situations where they or somebody they know evidenced each one of these characteristics (one situation per characteristic).
3. Ask students to discuss or write about what would have happened in the situations they wrote about if the person involved had not had as strong a character (they don't have to divulge whether it was them or somebody else acting in the situation).

**Discussion Questions**

1. One of the students in the video says "Character is what you do when no one's looking." What did he mean?
2. How does character relate to self-esteem?
3. Discuss ways you can develop character by volunteering.

**Quick Quiz**

**Note:** You may list the word bank on the board and allow time for students to respond, or copy and hand this out as a written exercise.

**Directions:** Associate a character trait from the word bank with a phrase from the phrase list.

**Word Bank:**

1. trustworthiness
2. respect
3. responsibility
4. caring
5. honesty
6. fairness

7. citizenship

Phrase List:

- a. Open to diversity
- b. Taking charge of one's own success
- c. Honoring others' property or authority
- d. Able to keep confidences
- e. Not deceiving others or yourself
- f. Able to see the larger context
- g. Understanding one's role in the community

**Answer Key**

1.	d
2.	c
3.	b
4.	a

5.	e
6.	f
7.	g

**Homework Option**

Research a culture other than your own on the Internet and at the library and develop a list of what is considered good character in that culture. Write an essay comparing and contrasting that culture's concept of good character with your own culture's concepts.