



Professional Skills and Conduct



Session Time: Two, 50-minute sessions

DESIRED RESULTS

ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS

Develop interest in one or more aviation/aerospace career pathways and learn what is required to pursue future employment in the industry. (EU3)

Understand the importance of professionalism, ethics, and dedication as they relate to all aviation/aerospace operations. (EU4)

Gain essential thought processes and life skills, such as good citizenship, critical thinking, informed decision making, which are useful to all learners, whether or not they eventually pursue a career in aviation. (EU8)

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. What skills do you need to become a valuable employee?
2. How can you develop good professional skills?
3. What's more important, the skills I have or how I fit into the workplace?

LEARNING GOALS

Students Will Know

- The difference between professional and technical skills
- How to conduct a professional skills assessment
- How to assess strengths and weaknesses

Students Will Be Able To

- Assess the professional skills needed to gain and keep employment in an aviation career. (DOK-L3)
- *Differentiate* between professional and unprofessional behaviors. (DOK-L3)

ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE

Warm-up

Students will write a paragraph explaining the difference between technical skills and professional skills and provide examples of each.

Formative Assessment

Students will complete a professional skills assessment and provide appropriate feedback to their peers.

Summative Assessment

Students will identify three professional skills or areas of professional conduct they would like to improve and develop action plans for growth.

LESSON PREPARATION

MATERIALS/RESOURCES

- [Professional Skills and Conduct Presentation](#)
- [Professional Skills and Conduct Student Activity 1](#)
- [Professional Skills and Conduct Student Activity 2](#)
- [Professional Skills and Conduct Student Activity 3](#)

LESSON SUMMARY

Lesson 1: Professional Skills and Conduct

Lesson 2: Building Communication Skills

This lesson will give students a brief introduction to professionalization. It will begin with students assessing the difference between technical and professional skills. There will be a brief discussion about the differences and students will be given examples of each type of skill. In small teams, students will develop a list of the technical and professional skills they believe are important to the aviation or aerospace careers they want to pursue. Students then will conduct personal skills assessments and reflect on peer responses to them.

In the second session, students will turn their attention to understanding professional conduct. They will consider who decides what constitutes professional conduct and watch a video illustrating the differences between professional and unprofessional behaviors. The lesson will conclude with students identifying professional skills and conduct they would like to embody and developing plans for growth in those areas.

BACKGROUND

While specific technical skills are required for jobs in aviation or aerospace, professional skills also are important to achieving success. Many jobs require applicants to possess certain licenses or complete specific training.

These are the technical skills required for a job. But professional skills are the “soft skills” (or “transferable skills”) and behaviors that, taken together, reflect positively on the individual and his or her employer. Good attitude, strong work ethic, problem-solving ability, effective communication, critical thinking, willingness to learn, accountability, and the ability to work well with others are among the skills and qualities that contribute to professionalism.

In addition to professional skills, employers expect to see professional conduct, including appropriate demeanor and appearance. Students will examine some common standards of professional conduct while acknowledging that individual corporate culture can affect what is and is not acceptable.

Developing professionalism takes practice. Listening to positive and negative feedback about how you do your job, modifying behaviors in positive ways to address that feedback, and taking the time to reflect on your own performance and how to improve it are important elements of professionalism.

DIFFERENTIATION

To promote reflective thinking and guided inquiry in the **ENGAGE** section of the lesson plan, circulate around the classroom and assist students who might have trouble coming up with ideas for the Warm-Up. Ask questions that provoke their own ideas for possible answers.

Pair students appropriately to provide feedback in a positive manner in the **EXPLAIN** section of the lesson plan.

LEARNING PLAN

ENGAGE

Teacher Material: [Professional Skills and Conduct Presentation](#)

Slides 1-3: Introduce the topic and learning objectives for this lesson.

Slide 4: Conduct the **Warm-Up**.

Students will submit their warm-ups when finished. [DOK 3; explain, categorize]

Warm-Up

Have students write a paragraph explaining the difference between technical skills and professional skills based on the definitions of the words and their prior knowledge. Students should include at least one example of a technical skill and at least one example of a professional skill.

EXPLORE

Teacher Material: [Professional Skills and Conduct Presentation](#)

Student Material: [Professional Skills and Conduct Student Activity 1](#)

Slides 5-7: Lead a brief discussion about the differences between technical and professional skills and provide a few examples of each type of skill.

Technical skills are those needed to be qualified to do a particular job, such as having a commercial pilot certificate or holding an FAA Part 107 certificate to operate drones commercially.

Professional skills are the “soft skills” that contribute to an individual’s ability to do a job successfully, such as strong verbal and written communication skills or the ability to work well in teams. Professional skills are sometimes referred to as transferable skills because they can be transferred from one environment to another.

Provide students with **Professional Skills and Conduct Student Activity 1**. As a class, have students compile a list of aviation and aerospace careers and post the list somewhere visible. Divide students into small teams based on the type of aviation or aerospace careers they’d like to pursue (i.e., group future aerospace engineers together, group drone pilots together, etc.).

In their teams, have students develop a list of the technical and professional skills they believe are important to the aviation or aerospace job they’ve selected. Although the work should be done collaboratively, have each student complete the student activity. They will refer to this list later when developing their career portfolios.

EXPLAIN

Teacher Material: [Professional Skills and Conduct Presentation](#)

Student Material: [Professional Skills and Conduct Student Activity 2](#)

Slide 8: Conduct the **Formative Assessment**. In a class discussion, ask students what they think they do well that might be valuable to an employer and what opportunities do they have for improvement.

Explain to students that being able to honestly and systematically answer these questions is the first step in becoming a better hire for almost any job or career (the later steps, of course, involve actually making improvements). **Distribute Professional Skills and Conduct Student Activity 2**, telling students that the purpose of this assignment is to help them answer these questions. This activity will be included in their Career Portfolios.

Collect student work and grade up to 15 points based on completeness and participation. [DOK 3; analyze, evaluate]
Expect this assessment to take the remainder of the time available on the first session.

Formative Assessment

There are three parts to this assessment.

- Professional skills assessment: Using the predetermined list, students will quickly assess the professional skills they believe they possess. (Students can add more skills if time permits.) This part is to be completed independently.
- Top 10 professional skills: Using the professional skills assessment, students will list what they believe are their top 10 professional skills and why. This part is to be completed independently.
- Peer feedback: Break students into groups of three. Have two students provide a top 5 list to the third student for what they believe that student's top skills are. Repeat until all students receive feedback. Have students discuss how the lists they created differ from those created by their peers.

EXTEND

Teacher Material: [Professional Skills and Conduct Presentation](#)

Slide 9: At the beginning of the second session, introduce students to the idea of professional conduct. Explain that one of the most important professional skills you can have is knowing how to conduct yourself—that is, knowing how to act around coworkers.

Explain the following four principles:

- Conduct is the way you act and behave around others. Remind students that this is how most people will think of them. They are represented by their actions because people can't see their thoughts and feelings. Explain professional conduct is a way of saying how you are expected to act in a work environment.
- Professionals are expected to reflect positively on their employer and their profession as a whole. Explain to students that this applies to them no matter where they are.
- Professional conduct includes is not just what you do, but the attitude you do it with, as well as your appearance. An important part of this is being able to have pleasant face-to-face interactions with your coworkers. You don't have to be friends, but you should be nice. Additionally, not every job or career requires a button up shirt and a tie, but most will require clean clothing and a neat appearance.
- Communication comes in three parts: the words you say, the way you say them, and what your body is doing while you talk. It seems backward, but what you say is actually less important than your tone and body language.

Emphasize that non-verbal communication is a huge part of being professional. Body language and tone of voice are often more important than the words you say.

Slide 10-11: Read the list of unprofessional actions on slide 10. Tell students that this list is not complete. Tell them there are three questions they should ask before they act:

- If I were my boss, would I want my employees to do this?
- Would I want my coworkers to do this?
- Is what I'm doing making everyone's day easier?
- Would I do or say this if my boss were here?

If you answer no to any of these questions, you are likely being unprofessional.

Tell students everything on slide 11 is part of being professional. While going through the lists, be sure to emphasize the following points:

- Most workplaces have codes of conduct that explicitly say what is and isn't explicit behavior. Remember, though, that just because something isn't banned by name in the employee handbook does not mean it's okay.
- Sometimes entire fields have codes of conduct that expand beyond their individual workplaces. Doctors, lawyers, and pilots all have specific rules of conduct they must follow when doing their jobs or they risk losing their licenses or certifications.
- Tell students that sometimes how they do something is more important than what they do. Saying "hello" when meeting someone is nice, but a professional stands up and shakes the hand of the person they are meeting.

Slide 12: Ask students what it means to be a professional. Have them think about that question while they watch a video about what it means to be a professional. When the video is complete, ask students to share their answers.

- "Professionalism TED talk- Dale Atkins (Length 2:45)
<http://video.link/w/nIMd>

Slide 13: Tell students that many of the things employers look for as professional are also good habits to have outside the workplace.

Remind students that social media is not private, and anything that goes on the Internet is there forever. Also remind students that free speech does not apply in the workplace: if they say something or do something that upsets their boss or enough of their coworkers, in most instances it is perfectly legal to face consequences at work, even if what they did was "only online" or not at work.

Slides 14-15: Remind students that proper conduct is a skill, and, like all skills, the only way to increase your professionalism is to practice.

Watch how people who have the kind of career you want as an adult dress, speak, and act. Use the Internet to look for codes of conducts published by professional associations.

When planning for a future career or applying for a place to work, research the company. Not only will their employee handbooks give you their rules of conduct, you can often look at what they say and how they talk about themselves in things like mission and vision statements to infer the way they want their employees to act without explicitly asking for it. As soon as possible, try to change your behavior in school and at home to match that expectation.

Remind students that professionalism isn't a one-time thing or only for interviews. It's about everyday habits and activities. Tell them to pay attention to how they dress and groom themselves, what they say on social media and how they interact with other people face-to-face.



Teaching Tips

If your school has a student handbook, consider going over your school's student code of conduct. It may be worthwhile to go over the code of conduct in your employee handbook as a teacher, if you have one, or your state's code of conduct for teachers.

Slide 16: Have students watch a video and note the "bad" behaviors they see displayed.

- “Soft Skills - Enthusiasm and Attitude” (Length 3:07)
<http://video.link/w/rIMd>

Stop the video at 1:35, and ask the students to provide a corrective behavior for each of the “bad” ones they identified. (Follow the rule of no repeats.)

Resume the video, and revisit with students if there were any behaviors they did not correct that the video identified.

Although some of the examples have been addressed in previous lessons, talk with students about the fact that professionalism is a combination of qualities that make an employee desirable.

Then ask students who decides what is professional conduct and what is not professional conduct.



Questions

Professionalism is a matter of perception. While there are general standards of professionalism that would apply in any job, and many of these are addressed in the video, other standards can vary from position to position and organization to organization.

For example, at some organizations, it is customary to address everyone by their first names. In others it is customary to use courtesy titles for executives. At some organizations, jeans and a t-shirt are acceptable attire, while others require a suit. For pilots and air traffic controllers, being professional includes adhering to policies and procedures designed to promote safety. It is important to understand the expectations within a given organization or job.

EVALUATE

Teacher Material: [Professional Skills and Conduct Presentation](#)

Student Material: [Professional Skills and Conduct Student Activity 3](#)

Slide 17: Conduct the **Summative Assessment**. Distribute **Professional Skills and Conduct Student Activity 3**.

Collect student work at the end of class. Use the 10-point scoring rubric for grading. Take no more than 10 minutes of class time to complete the summative assessment. [DOK 4; examine, compose, design]

Summative Assessment Scoring Rubric

Follows assignment instructions

Postings show evidence of one or more of the following:

Understanding of three qualities of professionalism

Identification of areas of self-improvement for each of the three qualities

Clear articulation of actionable goals for self-improvement

Understanding of how to assess goals for self-improvement

Contributions show understanding of the concepts covered in the lesson

Contributions show in-depth thinking, including analysis or synthesis of lesson objectives

Points

Performance Levels

9-10	Consistently demonstrates criteria
7-8	Usually demonstrates criteria
5-6	Sometimes demonstrates criteria
0-4	Rarely to never demonstrates criteria

Summative Assessment

Have students select three areas of professional conduct they want to improve. They will then create a series of actionable goals to help them grow in those areas. The goals should be ones they can assess and clearly determine whether or not have been completed.



Teaching Tips

Tell students that at least one of their areas must be related to face-to-face communication or social media.

GOING FURTHER

Have students read the AOPA article “Career in Motion ... How To Get Things Moving In The Right Direction” <http://jobs.aopa.org/jobseeker/resources/articles?article=11>.

STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

NGSS STANDARDS

Three-dimensional Learning

- **HS-ETS1-3** - Evaluate a solution to a complex real-world problem based on prioritized criteria and trade-offs that account for a range of constraints, including cost, safety, reliability, and aesthetics as well as possible social, cultural, and environmental impacts.
- Science and Engineering Practices
 - Constructing Explanations and Designing Solutions
 - Disciplinary Core Ideas
 - ETS1.B: Developing Possible Solutions
 - Crosscutting Concepts
 - Influence of Science, Engineering, and Technology on Society and the Natural World

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

- **RST.9-10.2** - Determine the central ideas or conclusions of a text; trace the text's explanation or depiction of a complex process, phenomenon, or concept; provide an accurate summary of the text.
- **RST.9-10.4** - Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- **WHST.9-10.2** - Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes.
- **WHST.9-10.4** - Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- **WHST.9-10.6** - Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.

REFERENCES

<https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills/>