

Cheating Hurts (Part 1)

Overview:

Students discuss why cheating is wrong and examine the harm it does. Their ideas are posted to reinforce the lesson.

Materials:

- Large sheets of butcher paper (one for each group of 3-4 students)
- Drawing paper
- Colored marking pens or paints

Procedure:

1. Ask students to define cheating. Discuss examples of cheating and pick one that is applicable to different situations.
2. Ask them for examples of cheating in school. List them on the board and add your own. The list should include:
 - Copying answers from someone's paper
 - Erasing someone's name from a paper and putting yours on it
 - Stealing answers to an assignment from the teacher's answer book
 - Getting someone else to do your work
3. Have the students form groups of three or four. Give each group a sheet of butcher paper and a colored marker. Tell them to select someone to record the group's ideas in large lettering on the butcher paper.
4. Say: *The object is to list as many reasons as you can why cheating is wrong. Remember to look beyond mere self-interest.* "I might get in trouble" is acceptable, but there's more to it than that. When time is up, one member from each group will read their list to the class. While they're making their lists, make your own. You might include the following points:
 - You'll lose the teacher's trust that you will always do your own work.
 - Your friends will learn you can't be trusted. If you can't be trusted in school, why should they trust you to keep a secret or tell the truth?
 - You'll lose your self-respect and pride. Do you really want to think of yourself as a cheater?
 - When you cheat on a test, you're lying to other people about how much you know. Do you really want to be a liar?
 - If you can justify cheating, you'll probably end up lying about other things.

Cheating Hurts (Part 1)

- Once you tell one lie, you have to create a whole bodyguard of lies to protect it.
 - Cheating is like robbing from students who are honest.
 - If cheating becomes a habit when you're young, it will be easier to cheat when you're older.
 - Cheating is taking something you haven't earned. Is this any different than stealing?
5. For additional discussion questions, see the end of "Cheating Hurts, Part 2." When the discussion is finished, post all the lists around the room. To reinforce the lesson, make note of items on the lists whenever a related topic comes up.

Adapted from *Character Education in America's Schools* by Terri Akin, et al. (eds), (Innerchoice Publishing, Spring Valley, CA), 1995. Used with permission.

This lesson is from the *Good Ideas* book, available for purchase from the CHARACTER COUNTS! online store: <http://www.charactercounts.org/materials>

McREL standards

Life Skills

Standard 4. Displays effective interpersonal communication skills.

Level IV, Benchmark 2. Exhibits positive character traits toward others including honesty, fairness, dependability, and integrity.

<http://www.mcrel.org/Standards-benchmarks/>