

Professionalism (2nd Year)

SUBJECT: Personal response to an ethical problem in the workplace

It is likely that every employee will encounter an ethical dilemma sometime in his or her working life. You may witness illegal or unethical behavior by co-workers. You might have a boss who asks you to save money or “cut corners” by performing a questionable task. Perhaps you yourself might someday consider doing something sneaky, second-rate, or illegal – such as falsifying a document or compromising safety standards. Ethical problems eventually arise. You will be judged as a worker by how you choose to respond to them.

ASSIGNMENT: Write a 5-paragraph essay about a work-based ethical dilemma that could arise in your career area. Use your imagination to describe the problem and your response to that problem. Follow this rubric:

- Para. 1. Introduction:** Set the stage for your essay by describing an imaginary future work place and an ethical dilemma you are faced with. Tell the reader what they are about to read. This paragraph can be as brief as three sentences.
- Para. 2. Detail #1:** Describe the ethical dilemma in detail. Who caused it? What was their motive? What are they trying to accomplish? Why is it an actual work-place problem?
- Para. 3. Detail #2:** How will you respond to this problem? Why will you respond in that manner? What judgments did you have to come to in order to form your response?
- Para. 4. Detail #3:** One person’s behavior can affect many other people. Build on Paragraph #3 by writing about what could have happened if you made a different decision. How does “doing the right thing” make a person feel? How does it feel to knowingly betray your personal ethical code or the ethical expectations of your career area?
- Para. 5. Conclusion:** Summarize your paper. What was the purpose of this exercise? Why should a successful worker think about and understand work-place ethics? What did you learn about yourself by writing this paper? Do you believe that your personal behavior can actually affect your work place and the people served by this job?

This assignment is an extremely valid “prep” for the Writing HSPE or CoE which requires students to respond to a prompt in the form of a 5-paragraph essay.