

Ten Reasons not to Cheat



Why should I not cheat? -- assumes that a definition of cheating or violation of academic integrity is shared within the community. Here is one definition of academic integrity.

Academic Integrity can be defined by honest academic work where (1) the ideas and the writing of others are properly cited; (2) students submit their own work for tests and assignments without unauthorized assistance; (3) students do not provide unauthorized assistance to others; and (4) students report their research or accomplishments accurately. (from Langley High School Honor Policy, McLean, VA)

With a clear definition of academic integrity use the following discussion prompt to help students and faculty find agreement on reasons not to cheat.

Directions

Teachers or advisory leaders plan a discussion time about academic integrity and cheating. Anchor the discussion by introducing the Langley High School definition (or your school's definition) for academic integrity. Begin the discussion by requesting students respond to the question-- Why is cheating harmful to me and the school community?

Summarize and record the students' responses on the board, flip chart, or smart board and seek to achieve consensus agreement on a list of reasons not to cheat. Compare and discuss the students' list with the reasons provided below. Add new reasons to the student list with their consensus agreement. Record comments if students reject any of the reasons suggested here. Please forward a summary of the students' reasons to your school's Academic Integrity Committee.

Suggested reasons not to cheat (to be reviewed only after students complete their draft list)

Cheating is an ethical/moral failure that harms the individual and society (school). Cheating harms the individual by--

1. rationalizing their cheating which leads to more cheating (in and out of academics) and compromises their own ethical/moral code,
2. failing to engage in the authentic learning and mastery of academic material and thus harming their own education,
3. harming their reputation (they are frauds, liars and intellectual thieves) and facing consequences that can be serious,
4. reducing the enjoyment of accomplishments earned through genuine effort.

Cheating harms society by—

5. creating an environment of broken trust, which then limits the ability of students and students and faculty to work together meaningfully and collaboratively,
6. leading to more cheating and a lowering of standards as cheating becomes "normal" and the way to compete in the school culture,
7. lowering standards which can reduce the moral authority of school leaders,
8. forcing cheaters to depend on authentic learners because cheaters haven't learned or mastered their own academic work and rely on the creative work of others,
9. requiring creative and honest students/citizens to spend time and effort protecting themselves (intellectual property, ideas, writing, exam answers) from cheaters which is non productive work,
10. awarding cheaters with unearned rights/privileges and scholarships.

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Teacher/Facilitator: _____ (See directions on previous page)

Consensus Student Responses include

Date: _____

Reasons not to Cheat Cross out reasons not supported by student consensus and add other reasons below.	Student Comments
1. Cheating harms the individual by rationalizing their cheating which leads to more cheating (in and out of academics) and compromises their own ethical/moral code,	
2. failing to engage in the authentic learning and mastery of academic material and thus harming their own education,	
3. harming their reputation (they are frauds, liars and intellectual thieves) and facing consequences that can be serious,	
4. reducing the enjoyment of accomplishments earned through genuine effort,	
5. Cheating harms society by creating an environment of broken trust, which then limits the ability of students and students and faculty to work together meaningfully and collaboratively,	
6. leading to more cheating and a lowering of standards as cheating becomes “normal” and the way to compete in the school culture,	
7. lowering standards which can reduce the moral authority of school leaders,	
8. forcing cheaters to depend on authentic learners because cheaters haven’t learned or mastered their own academic work and rely on the creative work of others	
9. requiring creative and honest students/citizens to spend time and effort protecting themselves (intellectual property, ideas, writing, exam answers) from cheaters which is non productive work,	
10. awarding cheaters with unearned rights/privileges and scholarships.	

Please turn in this form to the Academic Integrity Committee via the school office.