

# The ABCs of Leadership

**SUBMITTED BY:** Kathryn McGinn

**SUBJECT(S):** Career Development

**GRADE LEVEL(S):** 9, 10, 11, 12

## ≡ OVERVIEW:

Students will read and analyze an article about the qualities of good leaders. Students will come up with their own list of leadership qualities and explain why they chose those qualities.

## ≡ RELATED ARTICLES:

- [“What It Takes to Become a CEO”](#)
- [“Prom Appeals to the Heart – and the Business Brain”](#)
- [“How an Online Expedition to Saturn Builds Better Leaders”](#)
- [“Educator Toolkit: Leadership in the Age of Activism”](#)
- [“Educator Toolkit: Emotional Intelligence”](#)
- [“Disney CEO Bob Iger Lets Us In on the ‘Magic’ of His Corporate Leadership”](#)
- [“CEO David Pottruck on How to Be a Great Leader”](#)
- [“Career Insight: Saif Saeed Ghobash on Why Great Leaders Study History”](#)
- [“Career Insight: Sachin Rekhi on Why You Shouldn’t Fear Rejection”](#)
- [“5 Leadership Lessons from Israeli Model Titi Aynaw”](#)

## Common Core Standard(s):

- ELA CCR Writing 3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
- ELA CCR Reading 1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking

to support conclusions drawn from the text.

- ELA CCR Reading 8: Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
- ELA CCR Speaking and Listening 1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- ELA CCR Speaking and Listening 4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

### **Objectives/Purposes:**

- Students will read/analyze a text.
- Students will creatively present their ideas about leadership.

### **Knowledge@Wharton Article:**

- [“Dick Vermeil: Leadership Through the Eyes of a Football Coach”](#)

### **Other Resources/Materials:**

- Newsprint/markers

### **Activities:**

1. Begin the lesson by having the students complete a five-minute free-write in their notebooks on the following topic: Think about the most encouraging/inspirational leader you know. This leader can be a peer, a teacher, a parent, a coach, or anyone else in your life who provides guidance. Explain why/how this person is an encouraging leader and describe the impact he/she has in your life. Have students share with a partner and then ask volunteers to share with the class. (10 mins)
2. Hand out the “Dick Vermeil” article and read aloud as a class. Have students take turns reading paragraphs. After the first three paragraphs, stop students and ask if they agree

with how Vermeil handled the situation with the kicker. Is it a leader's responsibility to provide encouragement, or does a leader need to provide "tough love" every once in a while? Read the rest of the article straight through to the end. (5 mins)

3. Have students find a partner, and assign each group a letter of "LEADER". On newsprint, they should write their letter and what Vermeil believes the letter stands for. Go over the letters together. Address the key points below:

- L: Loyalty, Liking People
- E: Ego of just the right size; give credit to others
- A: Adversity (overcome obstacles), Achievement, Attitude, and Appreciation of those who work with you.
- D: Decisive (make up your mind about your goals and act on them)
- E: Effort — there's no substitute for hard work!
- R: Relationships with people that are built on trust and loyalty.

Ask students which letters they most agree/disagree with. (10 mins)

4. Working with their partners, students should come up with their own words for each letter of "LEADER." They must provide a brief explanation or short story to illustrate why they chose each letter. Put their final drafts on newsprint to share with the class. (10 mins)

5. Hang students' visuals around the room. Give students an opportunity to walk around and see their peers' work. (5 mins)

### **Tying It All Together:**

Ask students what stands out to them about the different words? What were some frequently used words? Were there any words that surprised them? (5 mins)

### **Practice Outside of the Classroom:**

- Think about ways you can apply these principles of leadership to your own life. Are any principles harder to apply than others? Why?

### **What Worked and What I Would Do Differently:**

While the lesson went smoothly, it might have been fun to make it more personalized. For example, students could have used their own names to create leadership acronyms, making each letter stand for a leadership characteristic they possess (or strive to possess).

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