

BUSINESS LAW

&

ETHICS

A 3-Week High School Business & Economics Unit
Contracts, Consumer Protection, Employment Law, IP, and Mock
Trials

Includes: 15 Lesson Plans, 10 Case Studies, Mock Trial Guide, 20 Ethical Dilemma Cards,
Real-World Project, Unit Test & Key, Vocabulary Guide

UM Printables | Premium Teaching Resources

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WEEK 1: FOUNDATIONS OF LAW & CONTRACT LAW

Lesson 1: Introduction to Law & Ethics

Duration:	50 minutes
Objective:	Students will differentiate between law and ethics, and understand the foundational purposes of law in society and business.
Materials:	Whiteboard, Markers, 'Law vs. Ethics' Handout

Procedures:

- **Hook (10 mins):** Present a scenario: A student finds a \$20 bill in the hallway. Keep it? Turn it in? Is it illegal to keep it? Is it unethical? Discuss the difference.
- **Direct Instruction (15 mins):** Define Law (enforceable rules of conduct) and Ethics (moral principles guiding behavior). Discuss the 4 primary sources of law (Constitutions, Statutes, Case Law, Regulations).
- **Guided Practice (15 mins):** Create a T-chart on the board. Provide 5 scenarios; students classify if the action is a legal issue, an ethical issue, or both. (e.g., Lying to a friend = Ethical; Breaching a contract = Legal & Ethical).
- **Independent Practice (10 mins):** Students complete the 'Law vs. Ethics' handout, analyzing how an action can be legal but unethical, and vice versa.

Assessment/Closure:	Exit Ticket: Provide one example of a business action that is legal but might be considered unethical.
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Lesson 2: The Court System & Jurisdiction

Duration:	50 minutes
Objective:	Students will distinguish between civil and criminal law, and navigate the basic structure of the state and federal court systems.
Materials:	Court System Diagram Handout

Procedures:

- **Hook (10 mins):** Ask: 'If you steal a candy bar from a store, who sues you? The state or the store?' Introduce Criminal vs. Civil law.
- **Direct Instruction (20 mins):** Define Criminal Law (State vs. Defendant, penalties/fines/prison) and Civil Law (Plaintiff vs. Defendant, monetary damages). Introduce the court hierarchy: Trial courts -> Appellate

VOCABULARY GUIDE

Term	Definition
Law	A system of rules of conduct, established and enforced by the authority of a governing body.
Ethics	Moral principles that govern a person's behavior or the conducting of an activity; often higher than the law.
Jurisdiction	The official power to make legal decisions and judgments.
Plaintiff	The party who initiates a lawsuit in a civil case.
Defendant	The party against whom a lawsuit is filed in a civil case, or the accused in a criminal case.
Contract	A legally binding agreement between two or more parties that creates an obligation to do or not do certain things.
Offer	A promise to do something or to refrain from doing some specified thing in the future.
Acceptance	An agreement to the terms of an offer, creating a binding contract.
Consideration	Something of value (money, goods, services) exchanged by the parties to a contract.
Capacity	The legal ability to enter into a contract (e.g., being of legal age and sound mind).
Breach of Contract	Failing to perform any term of a contract, written or oral, without a legitimate legal excuse.
Remedies	The means by which a court enforces a right or compensates for a violation of a right (e.g., damages).
Intellectual Property	Creations of the mind (inventions, literary and artistic works, symbols, names, images) used in commerce.
Copyright	Legal protection granted to the creators of original works of authorship (books, music, art).
Patent	An exclusive right granted for an invention, allowing the inventor to exclude others from making/selling it for 20 years.
Trademark	A symbol, word, or words legally registered or established by use as representing a company or product.
Trade Secret	Confidential business information that provides a competitive edge (e.g., the Coca-Cola recipe).
Warranty	A written guarantee, issued to the purchaser of an article by its manufacturer, promising to repair or replace it if necessary within a specified period.

ETHICAL DILEMMA DISCUSSION CARDS (20)

Instructions for Teacher: Print and cut these cards. Distribute to small groups. Have students discuss using ethical frameworks (Utilitarianism vs. Rights-Based).

Dilemma 1

You see your coworker stealing office supplies. They are a single parent struggling financially. Do you report them?

Dilemma 2

Your company produces a product that is perfectly legal, but contributes heavily to environmental pollution. Should the company continue production?

Dilemma 3

You are offered a higher-paying job at a competitor. You have access to your current company's client list. Do you take the list with you to get a head start?

Dilemma 4

A friend asks you to write a fake positive review for their new business online. Do you do it?

Dilemma 5

Your boss asks you to work 'off the clock' for an hour to finish a project to save the company overtime costs. Do you do it?

Dilemma 6

You find a wallet with \$500 in cash. There is no ID, only a receipt from a local charity. Do you keep the money?

Dilemma 7

Your company accidentally overcharges a customer by a small amount. The customer didn't notice. Do you refund the money proactively?

Dilemma 8

You discover a software bug that exposes user data. Fixing it is expensive, and the chances of anyone finding out are low. Do you fix it immediately?

BUSINESS LAW & ETHICS UNIT TEST

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

Part 1: Multiple Choice (2 points each) - Circle the best answer.

1. Which of the following is NOT a required element of a valid contract?
 - A) Offer
 - B) Acceptance
 - C) Consideration
 - D) Written Format

2. A minor (under 18) enters into a contract to buy a used car. Under contract law, this contract is generally considered:
 - A) Valid
 - B) Void
 - C) Voidable at the minor's discretion
 - D) Unenforceable due to lack of capacity

3. The legal protection granted to the creator of an original artistic work (like a song or book) is called a:
 - A) Patent
 - B) Trademark
 - C) Copyright
 - D) Trade Secret

4. An employer refuses to hire a qualified applicant because they are over 55 years old. This violates:
 - A) FLSA
 - B) OSHA
 - C) Title VII of the Civil Rights Act
 - D) Age Discrimination in Employment Act

5. Under the FLSA, if an employee works 46 hours in a week and earns \$10/hour, their gross pay should be:
 - A) \$460.00
 - B) \$490.00
 - C) \$495.00
 - D) \$520.00

6. A company uses a famous actor's face in their commercial without the actor's permission to sell their product. This is an infringement of:
 - A) A Patent
 - B) A Trademark