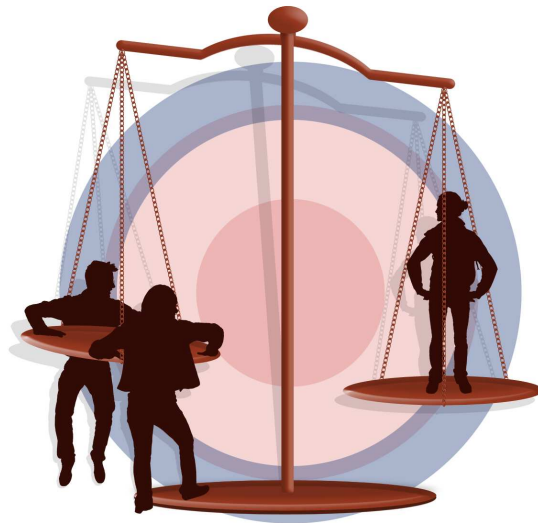


# Fairness

*Treat Others the Way You Wish to Be Treated*



**10 Topics**  
**36 + Lessons**  
**on**  
**Fairness**

## **Character Ed Tools' Vision**

Empowering students to stand on a foundation of character so they may act responsibly when faced with difficult decisions.

**Character Ed Tools** 

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**Building a Foundation of Character**

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# Fairness

## Workbook

### Table of Contents

How To Use This Workbook

Daily Reflections On Fairness



Lesson #1 .....That's Not Fair!

Lesson #2 .....Fairness at School

Lesson #3 .....Fairness at Home

Lesson #4 .....Being Fair with Your Friends

Lesson #5 .....What About Me?

Lesson #6 .....Life's Not Fair

Lesson #7 .....Let's Play Fair

Lesson #8 .....Conflict: It's Not Fair!

Lesson #9 .....Fairness in the Environment

Lesson #10 .....Fairness in the Community

# How To Use This Character Ed Tools Workbook

## Overview

Fairness—it's like a set of scales and when the scales are balanced we feel like things are fair. So, what happens when we feel like the scales are “off balance?” Well, some people get angry; others refuse to do anything, some grumble and complain, and others get depressed, or turn to drugs and alcohol to numb the pain. Then there are the creative ones who start thinking about ways to balance the scales in their direction. Most people will use positive methods to balance the scales to achieve a fair deal, but others will attempt to get the scales balanced with force or by bullying others to get what they believe is their fair share.

This workbook is designed to help students consider how they are handling fairness in their lives. There will be times when they encounter an unfair situation. It's normal for students to want to be treated fairly. It's important to consider what they can do to alter the situation to achieve a measure of fairness, but too often they hurt those around them with their efforts to make things fair. Sometimes they can make things fair with hard work and effort, and other times no amount of effort on their part will make things better.

This workbook will help you motivate your students to keep fairness in mind when interacting with those around them. How you handle those things you consider to be unfair will radically alter the direction of your life. One of the biggest secrets to enjoying life is accepting that which you can't change and challenging that which you can. We feel an immense sense of satisfaction when we can alter a situation to not only be fair for ourselves but for those around us as well.

This workbook will help you present the character quality of fairness to your students in an interesting and engaging way. We have broken the topic of fairness into ten lessons with tons of ideas to get you and your students talking. We are excited about the opportunities you will have to help guide your students to learn how to act fairly with those around them. But more importantly, have loads of fun and enjoy your discussions concerning this significant character quality.

## Daily Reflections On Fairness

We have provided you with an opening comment on each lesson. Our vision is for the entire school to participate in learning more about fairness. With that in mind, we wrote these daily reflections on fairness as witty interesting statements that could be given during your school's morning announcements for ten days. If it is only your class going through this book, a great way to reinforce the messages on fairness is to begin or end your class period reading these daily statements. Also, these reflections could be used, as a reminder for the students, weeks after you've ended your lessons on fairness. However you decide to use them, we're sure you'll find these statements to be inspirational.

## Lessons 1 Through 10

There are ten different topics on fairness. The lessons under each topic are loaded with insights and thoughts to get your students talking for hours on end about fairness. Okay, maybe we're exaggerating a bit, but this *will* get your students talking.

### Activities

This workbook contains multiple activities for each lesson. Use as many of these ideas as time or resources permit. Our goal is simply to get your students talking, thinking, and acting on what they think and have learned about fairness.

### The Lessons

Each lesson is packed with thought-provoking content to get your students talking. An interesting comment is then followed by open class discussion. We think you'll find it fun to see what your students think fairness means and how their actions model fairness and the drive for excellence.

### *Tip for the teacher:*

Please remember that calling on students to verbally respond to any question from this workbook puts that student on the spot. The resulting tension can lead to a rushed response, a wild guess, or simply no response at all.

Please give students 10-15 seconds between asking a question and asking a student to respond. This gives them time to formulate an answer. Help each student feel involved and encourage the others to practice good citizenship when listening to other students' responses.

### Biographies, Historical Data, and Poems

We thought you could use some real examples of people, historical events, and poems that demonstrate fairness in different ways. With each lesson you'll find a whole bunch of data on a real person, an event, or a poem that demonstrates fairness.

### Worksheets

Several worksheets are provided for each lesson to get your students' feedback as they reflect on what they have learned.

## Some Legal Thoughts

Copyrights and all that jazz. You know the drill. These lessons are owned by Character Ed Tools, so don't copy them. This book is about fairness. How fair would it be if you copied any of these lessons without permission? If you want more books or a license to use this workbook school-wide, just give us a yell, we've got solutions. But when it comes to those worksheets? Copy tons of the worksheets (well, perhaps not tons since we are supposed to be saving trees, but you get the idea). Let's get those students writing and

# Daily Reflections On Fairness

## LESSON 1: THAT'S NOT FAIR!

At some point in time just about everyone has said, "That's Not Fair!" What we're really saying is, "That's not good for me!" But you know what? Life won't always be fair. One of my favorite lines concerning fairness comes from the movie *The Princess Bride*. One of the main characters speaking to the Princess says, "Life isn't fair Princess. And anyone who tells you otherwise is trying to sell you something." You know what? Life will be filled with the "good" and the "bad." Our happiness will be directly related to how we handle that which we consider to be fair and unfair.

## LESSON 2: FAIRNESS AT SCHOOL

Early on in the course of life it becomes painfully obvious that life's not fair. One person listens intently in class and puts in long study hours at home to manage a C grade, while another puts in little effort and breezes by with an A+. It doesn't seem fair and it doesn't seem right. But you know what? There will always be someone out there who is taller, smarter, or faster than you. However, it takes more than natural size, talent, or ability to become a champion. So come on, work hard, dream big, and achieve your goals. Former heavy weight boxing champion Muhammad Ali stated it this way, "Champions aren't made in gyms. Champions are made from something they have deep inside them: A Desire, A Dream, A Vision."

## LESSON 3: FAIRNESS AT HOME

There will be those moments when we feel like things are unfair at home. Our relationships with those at home may be stressed at times, but we should be thankful for those relationships. I think people that have a brother or sister don't realize how lucky they are. Sure, they fight a lot, and you may feel like you have more chores to do than the others, but it's comforting to know someone is always there, somebody that's family. Families are like fudge. Mostly sweet with a few nuts..

## LESSON 4: BEING FAIR WITH YOUR FRIENDS

Reciprocate is a big word that means to give or feel toward each other. When two people respect each other their respect is reciprocal. When a person does an act of kindness towards us we can reciprocate by doing something nice to them. Reciprocation is a big part of what it takes to be fair with our friends. Let's treat our friends like we would like to be treated.

## LESSON 5: WHAT ABOUT ME?

Most of the time when considering what we think is fair, we're really thinking, "What about me? Will it be good for me?" It's me, me, me. "How will this impact my life?" But too often we get so caught up in thinking about ourselves, and the difficult situation we're going through, that we miss out on what could have been. Thomas Edison once said it like this, "Some people miss so many opportunities out there because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work."

## **LESSON 6: LIFE'S NOT FAIR**

Expecting the world to be fair to you because you are a good person is like expecting the bull not to charge because you are a vegetarian. Life will be unfair at times. Everybody has difficult years, but a lot of times the difficult years end up being the greatest years of your entire life. The difficult years may not seem fair but those tough times will challenge you to grow and establish deeper character qualities into your life, giving you the ability and confidence to succeed tomorrow.

## **LESSON 7: LET'S PLAY FAIR**

Babe Ruth, a famous New York Yankee baseball player stated, "The way a team plays as a whole determines its success. You may have the greatest bunch of individual stars in the world, but if they don't play together, the club won't be worth a dime." Success in life will come if you learn to play fair and work together with those around you.

## **LESSON 8: CONFLICT: IT'S NOT FAIR!**

General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the 34th President of the United States once said, "Though force can protect in emergency, only justice, fairness, consideration and cooperation can finally lead men to the dawn of eternal peace." Attempting to achieve a measure of fairness with force is fleeting. A true long lasting sense of fairness comes with the mutual respect of everyone involved. Let's work together to make this a fair conflict free day for everyone around us.

## **LESSON 9: FAIRNESS IN THE ENVIRONMENT**

What is your carbon footprint? Well, a carbon footprint is the number of greenhouse gas emissions that are directly or indirectly the result of your actions. Everyone has a carbon footprint. You can't help it. Your breathing is releasing carbon dioxide—a greenhouse gas—into the atmosphere. Okay, you shouldn't stop breathing to reduce your carbon footprint, but you can do something to reduce your number of greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere. Recycle, reuse, or reduce the amount of stuff you purchase or consume and you'll be on your way to making the planet a better place to live.

## **LESSON 10: FAIRNESS IN THE COMMUNITY**

Fairness in society only works if everyone agrees to work together towards a common goal. We should never expect others to do what we are unwilling to do ourselves. Eleanor Roosevelt, former first lady of the United States, stated it like this, "It's not fair to ask of others what you are unwilling to do yourself."

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# That's Not Fair!

## Lesson #1

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### Objective:

To get your students thinking and talking about what it means to be fair.

### Lesson:

This lesson will get your students talking about what fairness means to them. They will be challenged to consider how they define what is fair. Your students will discuss the unfair aspects of life that need to be accepted and those which should be challenged and changed.

---

## Set The Stage #1: What Does Fairness Mean to You?

### Activity:

Time: 15 Minutes  
Materials: Dictionary

Have the students talk about fairness and what each of the following words means to them:

Justice	Impartial	Prejudice	Equitable
Sincere	Bias	Genuine	Honest

Have the students look up each word in the dictionary. How well did their version of the word match the written definition. Let the students discuss what they think it means to be fair using the definitions of these words describing fairness. How can one person believe something is fair when another person perceives the exact same set of circumstances as unfair?



## Discussion:

What does fairness mean to you? What comes to mind when someone asks you; “Do you think that’s fair?” It appears that fairness is associated with a personal judgment. What is fair to me may or may not be fair to you.

Fairness must be a matter of perspective. Most people consider being born blind as unfair. However, a blind person may not consider this as unfair compared to enduring the death of a parent while being a teenager. Collectively as a group we may consider something to be fair while that exact same set of circumstances may be entirely unfair to another group. For example, it may be fair to dress a certain way in the United States but in most middle east countries that clothing or attire may be shocking and rude.

So how do we react when we feel like things aren’t fair? Well, some get angry, stubborn, depressed, or turn to drugs and alcohol to numb the pain. Others get creative, searching for ways to make things fair. The problem is, when they’re trying to make things fair for themselves, they don’t always think about how their actions may be hurting those around them.

Fairness and our struggle to get our fair share is a personal value judgment that impacts not only our lives but the lives of those around us. Being impartial, unprejudiced, unbiased, honest, just, or straightforward may be attempts to act fairly but that fairness is defined by each person individually. So next time you hear the words, “That’s Not Fair!,” take a moment before you respond to consider that person’s point of view in an effort to understand why they might consider the current circumstances unfair.

1. Talk about situations you would consider to be fair that the person next to you may consider to be totally unfair. Why do we have these differing view points concerning fairness?
2. What are some of the differing views of fairness between different cultures, such as the middle east clothing styles or treatment of women?
3. Discuss our various responses to unfair activities. Some respond to unfairness with anger or wild attempts to force things to be fair while others just allow the unfairness to exist. What rules should we follow when attempting to make things fair for ourselves?



**Lesson #1  
That's Not Fair!**

## **What Does Fairness Mean to You?**

### *Lesson #1 – Worksheet for Stage #1*

- 1) **How can something be fair to you and yet unfair to another person?**



- 2) **Why would someone start using drugs or alcohol to cope with their feelings of being unfairly treated?**

- 3) **What should we do when we feel like we are being treated unfairly?**

- 4) **How can we avoid hurting others in our attempts to get our fair share?**

## Set The Stage #2: Life Isn't Fair

### Activity:

Time: 15 Minutes

Materials: Blindfold, Ear Plugs, Whiteboard

Ask for three volunteers. Blindfold one, put ear plugs in another, and tell the third volunteer they are not able to speak. Have the one which cannot speak tell a story or a couple of jokes to the other two students.

It's not fair that people are born with various disabilities. We may not be able to eliminate the disability but we can learn to work together and enjoy life despite the disabilities.

### Discussion:

Life is not always fair. Sometimes we can make things fair with hard work and effort, and other times no amount of effort on our part will make things better. Each year over 120,000 babies are born in the United States with a birth defect. It's estimated that 20% of Americans have some type of disability. Are these problems fair? Obviously not but no amount of effort can change these circumstances.

Everyone has some type of limitation. Perhaps math is difficult, maybe your reading ability is slow, or you have difficulty understanding abstract ideas. Perhaps you wish you could sing or play music well. Maybe you wish you were great at sports but are not. No one can be the best at everything but we can do our best at everything. We can't control all that life gives to us but we can control how we respond to the unfair aspects of life. The big secret to enjoying life is how we respond to the adversity we encounter and how we cope with the unfairness of life.

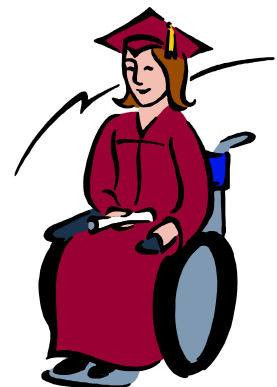
1. Talk about the fairness of physical disabilities such as blindness, hearing problems, or physical deformities.
2. How do others treat those with disabilities? Is that fair? Why?
3. How does a negative attitude towards the unfairness of life hinder your ability to succeed? How does focusing on what you can do improve your ability to succeed at achieving your goals?



## Life Isn't Fair

### *Lesson #1 – Worksheet for Stage #2*

1. **Physical limitations aren't fair but they are part of life. What can you do to help someone who has a physical limitation?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. **Sometimes those with disabilities get picked on at school. What should you do when you see someone picking on a person with a disability?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. **What activity at school do you struggle with on a regular basis?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. **How do the struggles we have, either physical or mental, help develop our character?**





## Set The Stage #3: What Cards Do You Have?

### Activity:

Time: 15 Minutes

Material: Deck of Playing Cards

Demonstrate a card game to the students. For example, teach the students how to play Black Jack, also known as Twenty-one.

Each hand they are dealt is slightly different. There will be times when the hand they are dealt will instantly add up to twenty-one. Other times they must take a risk to get to twenty-one. Unfortunately, there will be those moments when they will go over twenty-one and automatically lose. You don't have control over what cards you are dealt but you can control what you do with the cards you have been dealt. This is true in life. You can't control many of the circumstances you encounter on a regular basis but you can control how you respond to those circumstances.

### Discussion:

Early on in the course of life it becomes painfully obvious that life's not fair. One person listens intently in class and puts in long study hours at home to manage a C grade, while another puts in little effort and breezes by with an A+. It doesn't seem fair and it doesn't seem right.

We can look around us and see those who are stronger, smarter, or faster than we are at the moment. It doesn't seem fair that the guy next to you can read faster but that's the way life is. Too often we resort to knocking others down with our words and actions to change the way things are, but that doesn't help either. In fact, it usually makes the problem worse. No amount of griping, complaining, or hostility will change the situation to give us the satisfaction we hope to achieve.

Life has dealt everyone a different set of cards. It's what we do with those cards that makes the difference. We'll be happier in life when we recognize the value in those differences, using them as opportunities to improve our lives. Sure, there are times when we can't change what has happened to us, but there will also be those moments when we can take positive steps to alter our situation.



**Lesson #1  
That's Not Fair!**

1. There are those who seem to understand various math problems quicker than others. Is this fair? What should we do when we feel like we are lacking in skills such as math or English?
2. Some resort to force or bullying others when they feel like things are unfair. While force can make things fair for the bully, it is unfair to the victim. What are some alternative ways we should use to try to make things fair for ourselves without hurting others in the process?
3. What thoughts go through your mind when you hear someone griping or complaining about an unfair situation? Griping and complaining is a poor method to use to affect change. What should we do instead of griping and complaining?
4. Talk about situations you've experienced where a circumstance was unfair and the positive steps you took to correct it. How did it become a win-win for everyone involved?

*"Life isn't fair Princess. And anyone who tells you otherwise is trying to sell you something." Excerpt from The Princess Bride*

*"Life is not fair, get used to it."  
Bill Gates*



## What Cards Do You Have?

*Lesson #1 – Worksheet for Stage #3*

- 1) How does it make you feel when you observe those around you performing better at a particular school subject? Is it fair that they seem to be able to understand the material better than you?



- 2) Complaining about your inability to do as well as the person next to you, in class, won't change your performance. What should you do to increase your ability to perform well at those school subjects that are difficult for you?
- 3) What is a positive thing you can do when you encounter an unfair situation?



## **That's Not Fair!**

### *The Oskar Schindler Story*

Oskar Schindler, the unlikeliest of role models, was a businessman and member of the Nazi Party. He profited from the German conquests during WWII until he saw the ugly side of Nazism. When he witnessed thousands of Jews being loaded like cattle into trains he said, "No thinking person could fail to see what would happen." Deep down inside he knew what was taking place was not fair.

Before the outbreak of war, Poland had been a relative haven for European Jews—Krakow's Jewish population numbered over 50,000. But when Germany invaded, destruction began immediately and it was merciless. Jews were herded into crowded ghettos, randomly beaten and humiliated. Jewish property and businesses were destroyed, or appropriated by the SS and sold to Nazi investors, one of whom was the fast talking, womanizing, money hungry Oskar Schindler.

An ethnic German, Schindler grew up with all the privileges money could buy. He was born Catholic, but enjoyed drinking, gambling, and chasing women. Never one to miss a chance to make money, he marched into Poland on the heels of the SS. He dove headfirst into the black-market and the underworld and soon made friends with the local Gestapo bigwigs, softening them up with women, money and illicit booze. His newfound connections helped him acquire a factory which he ran with the cheapest labor around: Jewish.

At first, he seemed like every other greedy German industrialist; driven by profit, doing whatever, to whomever, to get it. He was becoming extremely wealthy and enjoyed the fruit of his labor. However, as the brutality of the holocaust escalated, in the summer of 1942, he witness a German raid on the Jewish ghetto. Watching innocent people being packed onto trains bound for certain death, he recognized this as unfair and determined to do something to help the Jews.

Schindler's Jewish accountant put him in touch with the few Jews with any remaining wealth. They invested in his factory, and in return they would be able to work there and perhaps be spared. He hired more Jewish workers, designating their skills "essential," paying off the Nazis so they would allow them to stay in Krakow. Schindler was making money, but everyone in his factory was fed, no one was beaten, no one was killed. It became an oasis of humanity in a desert of moral decay.

Schindler used his influence and the majority of his wealth to protect the Jews around him. His actions saved over 1,200 Jews from certain death. He went from Nazi opportunist to humanitarian. He recognized a situation that was unfair and courageously took action to make a bad situation better for as many as he possibly could.

1. Oskar Schindler was a German business person taking advantage of an opportunity. What do you think caused him to forgo his pursuit of wealth to help those being unfairly treated?
2. It's easy to get caught up in what we're doing and not see those hurting all around us. What can you learn from Schindler's example?



## ***That's Not Fair!***

### *Lesson #1 - Worksheet for Oskar Schindler*

1) It's been said that "all is fair in love and war." Was it fair for the Germans to confiscate property in their conquered lands such as Poland and give or sell it to German Industrialists? Why or why not?

2) Oskar Schindler acquired a factory, was using forced Jewish labor, and was making a lot of money. He didn't seem to have a problem doing this. He wasn't breaking any laws. Was it fair that he was doing this? Why or why not?

3) Schindler recognized that the killing of innocent Jews was unfair. What did he do to help them?



4) Think about someone around you who is being poorly treated by others. What can you do today to help them deal with this unfair treatment?