

Project Title	Treating People Right
Driving Question	What does it mean for a business to treat its employees “right”?
Project Description	This project focuses on the role of businesses in protecting their employees and treating them fairly under the law. After conducting thorough research on human resources regulations (including laws impacting hiring and terminating employees, benefits and compensation, disability and workplace safety, and discrimination and harassment), students work in teams to develop human-resources law handbooks. Each handbook is targeted at a different audience: employees and interviewees; interviewers and supervisors; and non-hiring human resources professionals. Students develop their handbooks using technology of their team’s choice (e.g., word processing program, presentation software, website builder software, etc.).
Timeframe	1-2 weeks
Objectives of the Project <i>(what you will learn to do)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the nature of human resources regulations • Explain the nature of workplace regulations (including OSHA, ADA)
Key Deliverables	<p><u>Persuasive Essay</u></p> <p>Based on research findings and, potentially, personal work experience and/or interviews, <u>each student</u> determines which piece of human-resources legislation s/he believes is the most important for high-school students to be aware of. After selecting this law, the student writes a short essay that explains the law, identifies reasons for the significance of the law to high-school students, and attempts to persuade the reader to agree with the writer’s viewpoint.</p> <p><u>Human-Resources Law Handbook</u></p> <p>Each <u>team</u> develops a human-resources law handbook using technology of its choice (e.g., word processing program, presentation software, website builder software, etc.). The handbook is directed at a specific, assigned audience (i.e., employees and interviewees, interviewers and supervisors, and non-hiring human resources professionals) and contains detailed information about the HR regulations that most directly impact the target audience. (Students should use the Treating People Right handout provided by the instructor to guide their research and handbook content.)</p>

Criteria	Professional	Experienced	Developing	Novice
Content The information contained in and communicated by the human-resources law handbook 60 points	The handbook's target audience is clearly identified and explained in detail.	The handbook's target audience is clearly identified and somewhat explained, but further detail is required.	The handbook's target audience is identified but not explained.	The handbook's target audience is not identified or explained.
	All human-resources laws and regulations identified in the handbook are appropriate, given the assigned target audience.	Most human-resources laws and regulations identified in the handbook are appropriate, given the assigned target audience.	Fewer than half of the human-resources laws and regulations identified in the handbook are appropriate, given the assigned target audience.	The human-resources laws and regulations identified in the handbook are not appropriate, given the assigned target audience.
	The purpose and meaning of each human-resources law or regulation is clearly and concisely explained.	The purpose and meaning of each human-resources law or regulation is explained relatively well, but some clarification is required.	The explanation of each human-resources law's or regulation's purpose and meaning is difficult to follow and understand.	Explanations of the human-resources laws' or regulations' purpose and meaning are incomplete or missing altogether.
	The impact of each law on the audience's responsibilities and duties is clearly identified, explained in detail, and appropriate.	The impact of each law on the audience's responsibilities and duties is clearly identified, somewhat explained, and appropriate, but further detail is required.	The impact of each law on the audience's responsibilities and duties is identified and appropriate, but no explanation is provided.	The impact of each law on the audience's responsibilities and duties is inappropriate or missing.

Criteria	Professional	Experienced	Developing	Novice
Communication Ability to express oneself so as to be understood by others 20 points	Ideas are expressed clearly in the audience’s own language and are easy to understand.	Ideas are expressed clearly with only a few words being difficult to understand.	Both ideas and words require effort to understand.	Ideas are vague and elusive, and language is difficult to understand.
	Handbook is neat, contains no misspelled words, and is grammatically correct.	Handbook is neat but contains minor spelling and/or grammatical errors that are not distracting.	Handbook is neat but contains spelling and/or grammatical errors that are distracting.	Handbook is messy, with many errors in spelling and grammar.
	Visual aids support, focus, clarify, and reinforce information given.	Visual aids add some support to the information given.	Visual aids are related to the information given but do not clarify or reinforce it.	Visual aids detract from the information given, raising many questions.
Organization How the information is put together 20 points	Human resources laws and regulations are clearly identified and titled, and material is easily located.	Human resources laws and regulations are clearly identified and titled; only a few items are difficult to locate.	Some human resources laws and regulations are not identified or titled, and several items are difficult to locate.	The human resources laws and regulations run together or are not identified or titled; material is difficult to locate.

Audience: Employees & Interviewees

1. What forms of discrimination does the government recognize (e.g., age, race, etc.)?
2. What laws and regulations affect interviewing, hiring, promotion, and firing decisions?
3. How do these laws and regulations impact current and potential employees?
4. How are employees' wages and salaries impacted by laws and regulations?
5. What rights to privacy do employees have?
6. What laws and regulations affect youth employment?
7. How do these child-labor laws and regulations protect minors?
8. What rights do employees have related to benefits and leave time?

Audience: Interviewers & Supervisors

1. What laws and regulations affect youth employment?
2. How do these child-labor laws and regulations protect minors?
3. What laws and regulations relate to job applicants and employees who are non-U.S. citizens?
4. How these laws and regulations impact staffing?
5. How does the government define “workplace harassment”?
6. What are a business’s responsibilities related to workplace harassment?
7. What laws and regulations affect interviewing, hiring, promotion, and firing decisions?
8. How do these laws and regulations impact those processes?

Audience: Non-Hiring Human Resources Professionals

1. What methods of monitoring employee activities (e.g., email, social media, phone conversations, etc.) are legal? What methods are illegal?
2. What legal responsibility do businesses have in protecting employees' personal/private information (e.g., social security numbers, medical information, etc.)?
3. What legal protections do whistleblowers possess?
4. What laws and regulations focus on the health and safety of employees in the workplace?
5. What are a business's responsibilities in protecting employees' health and safety on the job?
6. What are businesses legally required to do if a worker is injured on the job?
7. What are businesses legally required to provide to employees with disabilities?
8. What law specifies businesses' responsibilities related to employees with disabilities?

Topic	Workplace Regulations
<p>Regulations Affecting Workplace Safety & Health</p>	<p>According to the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Act, employers are responsible for protecting the safety and health of their workers. To ensure that businesses do so, the OSH Act created the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), which issues and enforces a variety of workplace health and safety regulations. These regulations are intended to protect workers from physical and mechanical hazards (e.g., extreme heat or cold, falls, back injuries, fires, faulty or improper use of equipment, etc.), biological and chemical hazards (e.g., asbestos, blood borne pathogens, lead, etc.) , and even psychosocial hazards (e.g., drug and alcohol abuse, harassment, stress, etc.) in the workplace.</p> <p>OSHA has also developed certain regulations that apply to specific types of work environments and industries, including construction, agriculture, shipyards, and maritime terminals. In addition, most states have a state OSHA program including state-specific safety and health standards that apply only to workplaces within that state.</p> <p>To ensure their workers’ safety and health, employers have specific responsibilities under OSHA, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping the workplace free from serious hazards • Making sure that tools and equipment are properly maintained • Developing and implementing a safety program • Reporting serious accidents to OSHA • Identifying hazards for workers • Keeping records of work-related injuries and illnesses <p>For more information on OSHA, access OSHA’s official website at www.osha.gov or <i>All About OSHA</i> at www.allaboutosha.com.</p>

<p>Helping Injured Workers</p>	<p>Although the law varies from state to state, most employers are required to purchase workers' compensation insurance coverage for their employees. If an employee sustains a work-related injury or contracts an occupational disease (e.g., black lung disease) workers' compensation insurance will provide the employee with payments in place of wages while s/he is unable to work and pay his/her medical bills and related expenses. And, if the employee is killed on the job, workers' compensation benefits are passed on to his/her dependents.</p> <p>In addition to protecting employees from financial loss resulting from an injury sustained or a disease contracted on the job, employers benefit from workers' compensation insurance. That's because in exchange for replacing injured workers' wages and paying employees' medical expenses, workers' compensation waives the employee's right to sue his/her employer for negligence.</p>
<p>Regulations Affecting Workplace Access</p>	<p>The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination based on disability and requires employers to provide reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals (in this case, employees) with disabilities.</p> <p>According to the ADA, a disability is a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more life activities, has a record of an impairment, or is regarded as having an impairment. So, individuals with a substantial hearing or visual impairment, learning disability, or paralysis would be covered, as would people with a history of cancer, mental illness, or other significant impairment. In fact, even a person who doesn't have an official physical or mental impairment may be considered disabled if the individual would be denied employment because of a physical or mental abnormality (e.g., disfigurement, scarring, etc.).</p> <p>Employers are required to make reasonable accommodations to anyone with an ADA-recognized disability. In other words, employers are expected modify the work environment (or jobs) so that employees with disabilities can perform essential job functions.</p> <p>Examples of these reasonable accommodations include acquiring or modifying equipment so that disabled workers can perform their job duties, reassigning disabled workers to other positions for which they are better qualified, or making facilities accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities (e.g., handicap-friendly).</p>

However, employers *aren't* required to make reasonable accommodations if the disabled workers are not otherwise qualified for their jobs, if the employer isn't aware of the disability, or if making accommodations would impose an "undue hardship" (e.g., excessive cost) on business operations.

For more information on the ADA, go to the ADA official website at www.ada.gov or the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's frequently asked questions about the ADA at <http://www1.eeoc.gov/eeoc/publications/adaqa1.cfm>.