



## Accepting Criticism or a Consequence

Criticism and consequences are a part of everyone's life. Students might hear criticism from others, especially adults, as a result of their behavior or lack of behavior, their work habits, or their appearance. Sometimes students use behaviors that result in consequences that are unpleasant or unwanted. Many students have developed different inappropriate ways for coping with criticism and consequences. They include yelling, leaving the situation, and throwing things. These strategies are inappropriate for school or social situations in general, and students must learn alternative appropriate ways to accept criticism and consequences if they are to find success.

**The goal of the lesson is to teach students the appropriate behavioral expectations for the skill of "Accepting Criticism or a Consequence."**

The objectives of the lesson for students include:

- learning the steps of the skill of "Accepting Criticism or a Consequence."
- practicing the skill.
- generalizing the use of the skill to different situations and people.

### Introduce the Skill

Ask the students to share examples of times when they have had to accept criticism from someone. Give the students time to think about the question and provide several responses. Reinforce their responses.

**NOTE:** Responses might include when they were late for work, when they didn't clean up their room at home, when they made mistakes on an assignment, or when they did not follow the rules in the cafeteria.

Ask students to share examples of times when they had to accept the consequences of choices they made and what some of those consequences were.

**NOTE:** Expect answers that are similar to those given in the first discussion. Examples of consequences might include having to stay in at recess to complete an assignment, not being able to go outside to play with friends until a bedroom is cleaned up, or having to listen to the boss's warning for being late to work.

You could also introduce the skill to young children by reading the story, *If I Were a Lion*, by Sarah Weeks, and have a class discussion about accepting consequences for one's actions.

### **Describe the Appropriate Behavior**

Provide students with the behavioral steps for the skill of "Accepting Criticism or a Consequence."

**NOTE:** Steps can be posted on a bulletin board or shown on an overhead, etc. Please adapt the steps to fit your expectations and the needs of your students.

**SAY:** "Here are the steps of the skill of 'Accepting Criticism or a Consequence.'"

- 1. Look at the person.**
- 2. Say "Okay."**
- 3. Stay calm.**

**SAY:** "These are the steps we are going to use for the skill of 'Accepting Criticism or a Consequence' in this class and building."

### **Give a Reason**

Ask the students to provide reasons for why they think it might be important to use these steps when they need to accept criticism or a consequence. Here are some examples to use in case students have difficulty thinking of ones on their own:

- You will know what you did wrong and be able to correct it.
- You will show others that you are able to take responsibility for your actions.
- People are more likely to talk with you about compromises.
- You might not make as many mistakes in your work.



**Practice**

Choose one or more of the following activities to complete your lesson by allowing the students to practice the skill.

1. Have students tell their partner the steps of the skill.
2. **Journaling ideas**
  - Use the book, *If I Were a Lion*, by Sarah Weeks, as a starting point for students to write about a time when they did accept a consequence appropriately and what happened. Or use the book as a starting point for students to write about a situation when they did not accept a consequence and the outcome.
  - Ask students to write about a time when they did not accept criticism from someone. How did it make the other person feel? What might they do differently the next time someone gives them criticism?
  - Ask students to write about a time when they did accept criticism from someone. How did that help them in that situation? How could they use those same behaviors in a different situation?
3. **Role-play:** Print the following role-play scenarios on separate pieces of paper. Divide students into pairs and ask them to role-play the scenes with each other.
  - The teacher has explained to you that you have worked problems 7 through 10 on the math assignment the wrong way. Accept the criticism appropriately and ask for help to redo the incorrect problems.
  - Your boss tells you that you have to stay 30 minutes at the end of your shift today to make up for the time you missed because you came in late. Accept the consequence appropriately.
  - Your teacher sends a note home saying that you have to stay for detention because you were pushing people around on the playground. Accept the consequence appropriately.
  - The coach tells you that you have to sit out the first five minutes of the basketball game because you missed the team bus to the game. Accept the consequence appropriately.
  - The drama instructor tells you that in order for you to earn a role in the school play, you have to learn to speak more clearly and project your voice out to the audience more. Accept the criticism appropriately.

- Your teacher asks you to rewrite the letters of the alphabet using the entire line on the writing paper instead of using only half the line. Accept the criticism appropriately and redo the assignment.

**SAY:** “Thank you for completing the practice activity. We will continue to discuss the skill of ‘Accepting Criticism or a Consequence’ for the rest of the week.”

**NOTE:** Each day of the week, review the steps of the skill, discuss why it is important to use the skill, and practice when possible.

### Other Ideas for Practice

**NOTE:** As you develop other ideas for practicing the skill, write them here and share them with other staff members in your building.

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**2. Say "Okay."**

**3. Stay calm.**