



Values

Materials:

- Worksheet
- Plain white or colored paper
- Colored pencils (optional)

Brainstorm

Read the following scenario to students: *You're about to take a math test that you are completely unprepared for. You walk into the classroom and notice that there is a substitute. The substitute hands out the tests and then begins to read a book. You happen to be sitting next to the best student in the class and can clearly see their test.*

Discuss

Ask students: *What would you do? Would you cheat?* Allow students a few minutes to discuss the topic. Then, ask additional probing and clarifying questions as appropriate, such as: *Is cheating ever OK? What if you really need to do well in the class to stay on a sports team? What if the other student says it's OK? What if everyone else is doing it?* Continue to engage students on the subject without judgment as long as the discussion remains courteous and productive.

Dive in!

Explain to students: **Values** are the ideas or beliefs that are most important to us in life. When we talk about values, we are not talking about material things like electronics, sneakers, or video games. When we talk about values, we mean intangible things, or things that can't be touched. Everyone has values, and your values might be different based on where you live, your family, your religion, or your age. Some examples of values are honesty, fairness, and respect. Knowing what our values are is important because it helps us do the right thing. It can be a little overwhelming to think of our values. How do we decide what is most important to us in life? In this activity, we will determine our core values. Core values are the values that we think are the MOST important. They are the beliefs and ideas that guide how we live, the people we want to be, and the friends we surround ourselves with. Understanding what our values are helps us make decisions that honor what is important to us.



High School

Activity

Assemble students in pairs or small groups. Explain: *Today we are going to think about three things that are most important to us and then make our own coat of arms to reflect those values.* Show them some of the examples from the Worksheet or [assemble a wide range of examples](#) to demonstrate the activity. *These are examples of coats of arms from countries around the world.* Point out the details in each of the examples and make a connection between the images used on each and how they demonstrate the value. *These examples demonstrate what's important in each country. To get started, you will each identify up to three values that are important to you, such as friendship, honesty, and kindness. Then, you'll each design a coat of arms to illustrate your motto.* Artistic ability isn't what's important with this activity, so if you have access to a computer and students would prefer to print out images, allow them to do so. Provide students with ample time to complete the task and then call on volunteers to share their coat of arms. When students are done, have them respond to the reflection question below on a sticky note or on a piece of paper.

Reflect

Have students respond to the question individually on the worksheet. If time permits, call on student volunteers to share their responses. *How do the images you selected for your coat of arms represent the values that are most important to you?*

Optional Home Connection → Have students share their coat of arms with family members and explain how it represents their values.

Professional Development

Take 5 minutes and reflect on your own values. What is most important to you? Why? How do you demonstrate that this value is important?



High School

For Further Study:

- ASCD: *What are Your Values, Practices, and Actions as a Teacher?*
<http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/113008/chapters/What-Are-Your-Values,-Practices,-and-Actions-as-a-Teacher%C2%A2.aspx>
- Common Sense Media: *Understanding our Personal Values:*
<https://www.commonsense.org/education/lesson-plans/understanding-our-personal-values>
- Edutopia: *Helping Your Students Understand Their Values:*
<https://www.edutopia.org/blog/helping-your-students-identify-their-values-maurice-elias>