

Character Education Questions

1. What is character education?

Character education teaches students core values that benefit both themselves and society. The present and future success of our society will depend on the wholesome morals of its people. All educational institutions need to promote constructive ethical values, such as caring, citizenship, courage, fairness, perseverance, respect, responsibility, self-discipline, and trustworthiness.

2. Why is character education so important?

Quality character education is critical for successful schools. It helps children understand the importance of virtues that create a caring and safe school environment. Character education also teaches children the principles of how they can become successful and productive citizens. Without proper values of a caring citizenry, society would crumble. It is imperative for the well-being of our society, that children be taught universal values. Teddy Roosevelt said, "To educate a man in mind and not in morals, is to educate a menace to society."

Successful education must have academic achievement and character development. Children should receive a constant message throughout the entire curriculum of the importance of character. Remember:

Quality Character Education Builds A Moral Infrastructure For Successful Schools.

3. What are the advantages of using picture books in teaching virtues?

Instead of teaching values in the abstract, character education picture books teach values with interesting stories. For example, the award-winning Another Sommer-Time Story™ books stress many positive character traits that teachers and parents can use to train their children. Then as children are captivated by these interesting stories, they may see the consequence of both good and bad values. Now children can make intelligent choices of values that will benefit both themselves and society.

Teachers and parents can discuss the various character issues raised in each story. For each story, various class activities and teacher materials are provided on our website. These reinforce character development, e.g., lesson plans, activity pages, reward certificates, posters, games, writing ideas, coloring pages, puzzles, and quizzes.

An added benefit of using the award-winning Another Sommer-Time Story™ read-alongs is that a lively song is sung at the end of the narration which reinforces character.

4. What are the Another Sommer-Time Story™ pillars of character?

There are nine pillars of character, one for each school month, e.g., respect, trustworthiness, caring, fairness, responsibility, self-discipline, perseverance, citizenship, and courage.

See Another Sommer-Time Story™ Pillars of Character (Free Resources at our website) for a list of story books associated with each virtue. Under each virtue there are similar virtues listed, and a brief summary of one of the Another Sommer-Time Story™ books that addresses

that virtue. For example, for the example respect—there are thirteen titles that address the subject of respect. The teacher or parent can choose from this list a story that will teach the subject of respect.

5. What should be the goal of education?

Education should prepare students both mentally and socially. An educated mind and high moral character are essential for students to live successful lives and to become successful citizens. Unfortunately, many educational institutions have stressed only the mental development and left students drifting to find their own values. Consequently, many students have chosen negative values that have greatly hindered their mental development and been detrimental to our society.

The twin goals of education should be academic achievement and character development. The question needs to be asked: What kind of education benefits students and society the most? The answer? Educating the mind and promoting ethical values that lead to success both for individuals and society.

6. How does teaching character affect school discipline?

To be effective, schools must have a disciplined environment for learning. Character education greatly decreases discipline problems because educators promote the universal virtues of respect, honesty, caring, fairness, responsibility, self-discipline, perseverance, citizenship, and courage.

The advantage of using picture books that show the consequences of undisciplined schools as in *Mayor For A Day* and *Light Your Candle* is that it helps students understand the importance of a disciplined teaching environment.

7. Why is character development so important for a nation?

A nation is only as strong as the character of its people. Imagine a society where everyone is selfish and no one can be trusted. Such a society will soon deteriorate. Criminals will flourish in such a society.

8. How soon should character be taught in schools?

As soon as a child enters the school, character should be emphasized. There needs to be a fair, firm, and loving atmosphere. Children must be taught early to respect the rights of others.

9. What is a true child-centered environment?

A true child-centered environment provides children with discipline, direction, and training to allow each child to grow up properly. Wise are those parents and schools preparing children for their future by providing intelligent guidance. What does character education do? It promotes core ethical values that teach children life-guiding principles for success, such as respect, trustworthiness, caring, fairness, responsibility, self-discipline, perseverance, citizenship, and courage. It's not religious indoctrination, even though practically all religions support such values. Character education provides intelligent guidance showing children the wisdom of doing things that will benefit them as well as society.

10. *What are the dangers of values clarification?*

Values clarification often places children into dilemma situations in which they must make decisions between two wrong choices. It often deals with situations that in all likelihood will never happen, and some situations in which even philosophers would have difficulty in deciding what to do. Instead of teaching positive morality, it stresses situation ethics. Its effect destroys traditional values. Values clarification also indoctrinates children until they lose their sense of shame over evil and accept degenerate behavior as normal. The pros and cons of drugs, homosexuality, lesbianism, premarital sex, prostitution, lying, stealing, infanticide, euthanasia, and suicide are likely to be discussed while non judgmental teachers carefully avoid imposing their values.

11. *Can morality be legislated?*

Some will say, "You can't legislate morality," as an excuse to promote moral relativism. If one can't legislate morality, then one can't punish indecent behavior, cheating, stealing, and killing. Of course society must legislate morality. We can't let criminals run free or naked people run through our streets. Sensible laws are passed both for schools and society based on reason and common sense. Others contend values should be taught at home and not in school. True, homes should play a major factor in teaching morals, but morals should be taught everywhere. Honesty, self-control, respect, responsibility, caring, courage, and citizenship are values that should be encouraged everywhere; whereas cheating, lying, fighting, bullying and hating are negative values that should be condemned.

12. *What is the cultural war?*

Click on: Cultural War. Material is taken from *Character Under Attack & What You Can Do About It* by Carl Sommer.

13. *Why are some character education programs ineffective?*

Some criticize character education programs as ineffective. They will be ineffective if the schools are teaching character in the abstract. There must be a climate of character within the entire school. Teachers cannot expect students to be honest just because they had a lesson on honesty. If students cheat, they should be punished. If students disrupt classes, corrective action should be taken. If bullying takes place, the bullies need to be disciplined. Teachers and principals must be given the right to discipline unruly children. Sadly, educational leaders often tie the hands of teachers and principals in matters of discipline.

14. *Should schools be morally neutral by not teaching values?*

To contend schools should not teach values is impossible—all education in one form or another teaches values. Take American history: either one condemns slavery or one condones it. To remain neutral is in effect condoning slavery for those believing in slavery. If tests are given, either one condemns cheating or accepts it. Values are inherent in education. One cannot be morally neutral. The question should be asked—which values should be taught?

15. What are the four keys for successful schools?

Click on: Four Keys for Successful Schools. Material is taken from *Character Under Attack & What You Can Do About It* by Carl Sommer.

16. Where are some schools making a difference?

Click on: Schools Making a Difference. Material is taken from *Character Under Attack & What You Can Do About It* by Carl Sommer.

17. Why does Advance Publishing offer so many character education free resources?

Carl Sommer, president of Advance Publishing, has a passion for the future of America's children. As a former teacher and author of *Schools in Crisis: Training for Success or Failure?*, he realizes the importance of positive character development and what it means for the prosperity of our nation.

Sommer wrote about the educational crisis and solutions. Now being a successful businessman (he's also president of Reliable EDM, the largest company of its kind west of the Mississippi River), he wants to contribute to educational success.

The mission statement of his publishing company is: "Providing exciting and inspiring character education materials that train and motivate children with positive virtues and life skills, which enable them to live successful lives, and results in stronger families, better schools, and a safer and more productive society."

Much of the free material has been developed by Sommer. Click on "free resources" at www.AdvancePublishing.com and use the materials to help your children become successful.