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# Asking for a Raise

CTAE-FS-9 Ethics and Legal Responsibilities: Learners commit to work ethics, behavior, and legal responsibilities in the workplace. Used with permission of Career Solutions Publishing

## Understanding and Goals

### Unit Understandings, Themes, and Concepts:

#### Enduring Understandings:

Students will learn the appropriate time and manner in which to discuss a pay-raise with their employer. Asking for a raise is like giving a presentation: you should be well prepared. Raises are generally no longer given on a regular basis just for continuing to work for a company; they are becoming based more on merit which makes exemplary job performance necessary.

### Primary Learning Goals:

#### Essential Questions:

- How should you prepare yourself to increase your chances of getting the raise you would like?
- How should you approach your employer about receiving a raise?

### Students with disabilities:

For students with disabilities, each instructor should refer to the student's IEP to be sure that the accommodations specified in the IEP are being provided within the classroom setting. Instructors should also familiarize themselves with the provisions of Behavior Intervention Plans that may be part of a student's IEP. Frequent consultation with a student's special education instructor will be beneficial in providing appropriate differentiation within any given instructional activity or requirement.

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## Sample E-Lesson - Student Version

**Weekly Words of Wisdom:** "You have to earn raises. They aren't automatic, and they're rarely as much as you want."

*Leslie Innes, architect, 28, Boulder, CO*



### I Deserve a Raise

Jim, an account manager, stops eating lunch, turns to Lena and says, "I need a raise. I want a new car, and I can't afford one on my salary."

"I want at least 5% more. Even if 3% is average, I need the extra money. I'm handling three of Shannon's accounts since she was laid off, and I've been employee of the month twice this year. I don't believe business is as slow as they say, and, besides, it'll pick up."

He complains as he bites his apple, "Tamara earns twice as much as I do. It's not fair. She gets a sales commission, but I've been with the company longer."

Lena, who is skeptical about Jim's getting a 5% increase, tells him, "I wish talking to me would get you that raise, but you'll have to ask the boss."

Jim pitches his apple. He's getting nervous about asking for a raise.

Asking for a pay raise isn't easy. If Jim has the same conversation with his boss, do you think he will get an increase? \_\_\_\_\_ A 5% increase? \_\_\_\_\_ Why or Why not?

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## Plan A

Doing what is expected earns you a salary, but doesn't guarantee a pay raise. A recent [salary.com](http://salary.com) survey shows that 64% of companies do not plan to increase their salary budgets for 2008, which means no raises for most employees.

In the past, increases were mostly automatic. However, many companies now give merit increases only, and they are based on exceptional performance. You may get a large raise if you excel in your work and a small, or no, increase if you only get the job done.

If you have worked for one company for a long time and feel underpaid, you may decide to approach your boss about an increase. Make sure you are well-prepared before you bring up the topic of a raise. You won't get a second chance for a long time, and not until something has changed about your work. Before you ask for a raise, here are some important questions you need to answer.

- *Has my performance been outstanding?* Did you take initiative or just do what you were told?
- *What is my employer's pay raise policy?* If the company awards raises only after performance evaluations, getting an increase at another time is unlikely.
- *What is the normal pay scale for my job in the area where I work?* The local market for your skills and experience will affect how much you are paid.
- *Is my company in good financial condition?* Is the business growing? Cutting back?

On the next page, circle DO or DON'T to show whether an action is appropriate when asking for a raise.

## Plan A (Continued)

- |  |    |         |
|--|----|---------|
| 1. Be bold and show confidence. Act like you're entitled to a raise.   | DO | DON'T   |
| 2. Describe your achievements.   | DO | DON'T   |
| 3. Explain how you help the company make more money or save money.   | DO | DON'T   |
| 4. Point out additional responsibilities you've accepted.  | DO | DON'T   |
| 5. Say you've had a better offer from another employer.  | DO | DON'T   |
| 6. Threaten to quit if you don't receive a raise.  | DO | DON'T   |
| 7. Point out new skills you acquired.  | DO | DON'T   |
| 8. Tell your boss about your personal needs, such as a new house or car.   | DO | DON'T   |
| 9. Evaluate your performance beforehand to see if you deserve a raise.   | DO | DON'T   |
| 10. Tell your boss how you plan to contribute to the future of the company.  | DO | DON'T   |
| 11. Compare your pay with other employees in the company.  | DO | DON'T   |
| 12. Consider your boss's mood and viewpoint.   | DO | DON'T   |
| 13. Make your request right after a successful event in your career.   | DO | DON'T   |
| 14. Schedule an appointment for a day/time when your boss is not busy.   | DO | DON'T . |
| 15. Be realistic about the amount you might expect.  | DO | DON'T   |
| 16. Be firm; demand a pay raise.   | DO | DON'T   |
| 17. Ask for more responsibility when requesting an increase.   | DO | DON'T   |
| 18. Be well-groomed and dress nicely for your meeting.   | DO | DON'T   |
| 19. Show e-mails or notes from satisfied customers or supervisors.   | DO | DON'T   |
| 20. Learn what your boss values in an employee, such as good customer service, implementing cost-saving technology, showing leadership skills. | DO | DON'T   |

## Plan B

The most important part of Plan A is to have a Plan B. Even if you are organized, confident, and well prepared, your request for a pay raise may not be approved.

What will you do if you don't get the raise you want? Will you quit on the spot? Will you pout and whine to others? Will you pretend the conversation never took place?

Circle the actions you would take as part of a good plan B.

1. Your boss tells you that your performance doesn't deserve a pay raise at this time, but she encourages you to continue to do a good job.
  - a. Stand up for yourself; let the boss know that you disagree with her opinion. Sometimes you have to toot your own horn to be appreciated.
  - b. Ask your boss how you can improve your performance and earn the raise you believe you deserve. Ask for concrete goals that you both agree on and that you can track and document in the future.
  - c. Tell your boss that you know others who do the same work you do and are making more money than you. Let her know that you think she is acting unfairly toward you.
  - d. Say to your boss that you don't give up easily. Tell her that you will be back in a few weeks to request a raise again after she has had some time to think about it.

## Plan B (Continued)

2. Your boss tells you that your performance is excellent and you deserve a raise but the budget won't allow it.
  - a. Ask your boss to commit to giving you a raise as soon as the budget is increased. Make sure you get it in writing.
  - b. Ask the boss if the company will give you educational or training benefits, more personal days off, let you work from home on certain days, or some other perk instead of money.
  - c. Tell the boss you'll have to look for another job if the company can't find the money to give you a raise.
  - d. Say that you aren't happy with the decision, but you'll live with it.
3. Your boss tells you that everyone in your position will get the same increase—a much smaller one than you expected.
  - a. Quit immediately and look for a position in another company.
  - b. Try to get your boss's sympathy. Say you need more money in order to pay your rent.
  - c. Thank your boss for hearing your request. Return to your work and be happy with what you get.
  - d. Take the increase grudgingly, but complain to your co-workers and try to get them upset with the boss also. Maybe he'll change his mind.

## Plan B (Continued)

4. Your boss tells you that you're already being paid the top salary for your job.  
There will be no extra perks in the future, and no room to advance.
  - a. Continue to do your job and plan to request a raise again at a later date.  
Eventually the boss will give in and award you an increase.
  - b. Explain to your boss that this is unfair. You can't be expected to work forever without a pay raise.
  - c. Continue to do your job and quietly begin looking for another job.
  - d. Ask other people what they are making. If you learn that someone in a different position makes more money, go back to your boss and say you want the same salary.
5. When you try to set an appointment with your boss, he asks you the reason. You don't want to say it's to discuss a raise.
  - a. Tell him it's personal and that you'd rather discuss the matter privately.
  - b. Say it's about a raise you believe you are due.
  - c. Make up a false reason and tell him the truth only after you arrive for the appointment.
  - d. Say that you don't have a reason and that you just need to talk with him about some things.

## Presentation Counts

Asking for a raise is like giving a formal presentation. In addition to being prepared, you need to practice what you will say. Your increase may depend on the presentation.

Form a small team of two or three classmates to help you develop role plays in which an employee asks the boss for a raise. Use the tips from Plans A and B on pages 3-6 to come up with ideas.

Work as a team to write the dialogue. Brainstorm the employer's viewpoint and the questions she might ask; then have two team members perform the role play for the class. Ask the class to decide whether to award or deny the employee's request for a pay raise and to explain why.

Following are points to use as you develop the role play.

- Jordan Phelps: Production assistant for a television soap opera in New York City
- Present salary: \$29,850.00 + benefits
- Experience: 5 years, 2 years on present job without a raise
- Salary range for career and location: \$23,000.00 to \$39,000.00
- Responsibilities: answer phones, send Faxes, arrange meetings and travel, run errands, distribute scripts, respond to requests for photos and information, organize production materials, watch show tapes for errors, time rehearsals.
- Newest responsibilities: handle cast fan mail, help writers with online research
- Personal characteristics: flexible, energetic, problem-solver, self-motivated



## Sample E-Lesson – Instructor Version

### Instructor's Guide

**E-Lesson Standards:** (1) Demonstrate negotiation skills; (2) Use interpersonal skills; (3) Make decisions based on circumstances and conditions.

**E-Lesson Correlations:** Employer relations, workplace communication, negotiation skills

### Teacher's Corner

Employees often rush into an ill-planned and badly timed meeting with an employer to request a pay raise. This results in employee anger and disappointment when the request fails. Students need to understand that negotiating a pay raise requires the same attention to planning and detail as interviewing for a job.

Young employees may believe they are entitled to regular raises just because they continue to work for a company; however, this form of pay increase is becoming a rarity. Explain the difference between merit raises and cost-of-living increases and emphasize that qualifying for a merit raise requires outstanding performance every day.

Help students understand that pay scales have ceilings. It may be necessary for employees to look at career changes and continuing education in order to earn more money.

## Activity Preview

Each activity in today's lesson is briefly described below to provide you an overview of what is expected of students.

**I Deserve A Raise** Jim is nervous about approaching the boss to request a pay raise. He believes he deserves a raise and shares his thoughts with his friend Lena. Students are asked to evaluate Jim's reasons for a raise and decide whether he deserves a raise and how much. To expand the lesson, ask students to identify the points that will be in his favor and the points that will weigh against him when he speaks with the boss.

**Plan A** A list of actions related to asking for a pay increase is provided. Students are asked to identify whether the actions are appropriate or inappropriate by circling either DO and DON'T. Expand this activity by asking students to add other actions to the list.

**Plan B** Students are offered a choice of responses when a pay raise negotiation ends poorly. Advise them that pay raises may be small, or denied, for many reasons. As employees, they must evaluate the reason and determine their next step. To expand the activity, initiate a discussion about perks that could make up for lack of a cash reward.

**Presentation Counts** Working as teams, students will write dialogue for employee and employer and practice asking for a pay raise. Classmates will vote on whether to give the raise and explain their reasons. Extend this activity by asking some of the teams to create a role play portraying the things an employee shouldn't do during this meeting. To further expand the lesson, change to another character and career.

## Related Web Site

The following Web site "So You Wanna Ask for A Raise" provides guidelines for requesting a pay raise.

<http://www.soyouwanna.com/site/syws/raise/raise.html>

## Solutions to Activities

Students may provide varying responses to some answers. Accept all appropriate answers.

### I Deserve a Raise

Reasons Jim might get a raise:

1. He is handling more accounts.
2. He has been employee of the month twice.

Reasons Jim might not get a raise:

1. His personal need for a new car is irrelevant.
2. The company's business is slow and layoffs are occurring.
3. Comparing his pay to Tamara's is a bad idea. Tamara's salary should be confidential. Her job is different, and she's gets a sales commission, which means the more sales she makes, the more money she earns. There may be other reasons why her pay is higher.
4. Obtaining a higher raise than is typical for the position is not likely to happen unless Jim is a super performer.

## Solutions to Activities (Continued)

### Plan A

1. DON'T
2. DO
3. DO
4. DO
5. DON'T
6. DON'T
7. DO
8. DON'T
9. DO
10. DO
11. DON'T
12. DO
13. DO
14. DO
15. DO
16. DON'T
17. DO
18. DO
19. DO
20. DO

## Solutions to Activities (Continued)

### Plan B

1. b
2. b
3. c
4. c
5. a

### Presentation Counts

Evaluate students on the thoroughness and authenticity of their role plays. Were they able to anticipate the employer's point of view?

## Related Materials

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# CSP E-Lessons

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**What types of skills are covered?** The lessons require students to analyze, think critically, problem solve, and communicate. Many lessons contain academic activities related to careers.

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