

Charting Social Responsibility



Trustee: Bernard Rapoport

Subject: Civic Education, Economics, Social Studies, Language Arts

Topic: Freedoms, Rights, and Responsibilities

Grade Level: 9-12

Time: 90 minutes

[View how this lesson plan fits state standards](#)

[View the video](#) or [read the transcript](#)

Materials:

- Computer with Internet access, external speakers, and a LCD projector OR access to a computer lab with Internet access and headphones for each student
- Updated Media Player recommended. [Download QuickTime](#). Problems playing? [Check our Media Help page](#).
- Student worksheets ([Word](#), [PDF](#))
- Chalkboard
- Index cards (optional)
- Download Lesson Plan ([Word](#), [PDF](#))

Learning Objectives:

Students will:

1. define the concept of social responsibility;
2. assess arguments for and against social responsibility of businesses;
3. practice critical thinking skills; and
4. demonstrate reading comprehension skills by drawing a summary of a text.

PREVIEWING (20 minutes)

1. Start the class by telling students that they are going to watch a short video about a person who has often been referred to as “self-made.” Have a brief (2-3 minutes) discussion about what “self-made” means.

2. Ask students to form small groups of 3-4. Distribute **WORKSHEET 1** and ask students to extrapolate as much as they can from the quotes to answer the questions at the top of the **WORKSHEET**.

*NOTE: To increase group discussion, you can turn **WORKSHEET 1** into a transparency and show the questions from the overhead projector.*

3. After 7-8 minutes, stop the groups' discussion and ask if the students managed to answer the questions. Encourage the students to justify their answers by pointing out phrases in the text that led them their conclusions.

VIEWING AND DISCUSSING (25 minutes)

1. As a class, watch the brief Bernard Rapoport video, which can be accessed online at www.americantrusteesproject.org. If you have difficulties accessing the videos, please visit our [Media Help page](#).

2. After students have seen the video, ask the students to compare Rapoport's actual characteristics to students' responses from **WORKSHEET 1**. Encourage students to share their impressions.

3. Ask volunteers to summarize Bernard Rapoport's story. Discuss the keys to his success both as a businessman and a philanthropist. Consider the following questions:

- Is Bernard Rapoport a responsible person? Can he be called a responsible businessman?
- What does responsibility mean to him?
- Is he unusual in this respect? Why or why not?
- What are the benefits of being a responsible citizen?
- What are the benefits of being a socially responsible business?

NOTE: You may choose to place these warm-up questions on an overhead or chalkboard to increase participation.

4. During the discussion, focus students' attention on Bernard Rapoport's philosophy, particularly on his views of social responsibility and social justice. Put up the following excerpts from Rapoport's speech for students to see. You may also consider expanding the discussion by asking students to come up with explanation(s) and/or interpretation(s) of what is meant in each case:

- "The only difference between people is love and education."
- "I think it's possible to build a business and have a sense of social responsibility."
- "No one is self-made. We all owe so much to so many for all the nice and good things that have happened in our lives."
- "The test of a society is how it assesses its values and how - once the assessment is made - it implements them."
- "I judge success by what people contribute to bettering the quality of life of citizens, of the country, or in the world."

APPLICATION (15 minutes)

1. Ask the students if they agree with Bernard Rapoport's philosophy and whether they can identify a contrary view on relations between businesses and community. Tell the class that they are going to read a short article by a Nobel Prize winner in economics –

Milton Friedman – who addresses the subject of social responsibility and business and holds a contrasting viewpoint on the subject.

2. Have students read “The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase Profits” from **WORKSHEET 2**. Advise students to underline or highlight key points as they read. Allow time for students to read the article.

3. Ask a volunteer to summarize Friedman’s argument. Elicit answers that address the five arguments that will appear during the next step (roles of managers, employee relations, company’s reputation, company’s resources, social problems in the community). Write down their answers on the board. Students will make use of them later.

4. Ask students to consider the following questions:

- What would Bernard Rapoport say to Friedman?
- Would they agree on any point?

5. Brainstorm ideas as a whole class. Break the class into small groups of 3-4 students and have each group complete **WORKSHEET 3**. Make sure each group has a recorder to write down results of the group’s discussions.

6. After groups have formulated their answers, ask a representative from each group to share their views with the whole class. Discuss whose position (Rapoport’s or Friedman’s) makes more sense to them.

EXTENSION (30 minutes)

1. In their small groups, ask students to think of businesses in their communities and whether they adopt Rapoport’s or Friedman’s approach to conducting business and fulfilling social responsibility. Encourage students to cite concrete examples and justify their answers using the rubrics from **WORKSHEET 3**.

2. As a wrap-up, ask students to write down their definition of social responsibility of individuals and of businesses. They can do this in their journals (or on index cards). Instruct them to keep their definitions concise.

HOMEWORK

For homework, ask students to write a paragraph addressing ‘the muddiest point’ of the classroom discussion on businesses and social responsibility.

ASSESSMENT

Students may be assessed on:

1. journal entry (or an index card) with the definition of social responsibility;
2. paragraph writing (homework); and
3. participation in classroom discussion.