

2

Making the Right Choice

Let's Begin

Have you ever got involved in any unethical action like cheating in an examination?

Have you ever be an accomplice to someone engaging in unjust actions or those that violate moral principles?

Do you think it is right or wrong to do the above?

Explain your reasoning.

The Republic of Singapore was ranked the world's third least corrupt country and it also emerged as the least corrupt country in the Asia-Pacific region in 2024. So, how Singapore is able to effectively contain corruption?

Examples of ethics in daily life in singapore

In Singapore, ethical behavior is often rooted in a blend of traditional values and the principles that have underpinned the nation's success.

If the conscience feels guilty about an act, the act is a sin

Here are some examples of ethical principles in daily life in Singapore:

- **Filial Piety:** This is a cornerstone value, particularly in Asian cultures, including Singapore, emphasizing respect, care, and financial support for one's elderly parents. Some firmly practised ethical behaviours include:
 1. Adult children providing financial assistance to their elderly parents.
 2. Taking care of aging parents, including providing personal and emotional support.
 3. Respectful communication and interactions with elders, such as greeting the eldest person first and using honorific language.
- **Honesty and Integrity:** These values are highly valued in personal and professional interactions. Singapore's reputation for being tough on corruption reflects this commitment. Here are some basics practices with absolute resolute in our nation.
 1. Being truthful and transparent in all dealings, both in personal life and at work.
 2. Taking responsibility for one's actions and avoiding deceit or dishonesty.
 3. Rejecting corruption and upholding ethical standards in all aspects of life.
- **Civic Responsibility:** Singaporeans are encouraged to be active citizens and contribute to their communities. Examples include:

1. Obeying the law, including traffic rules and regulations.
 2. Respecting public property and not littering.
 3. Queueing up and boarding public transport in an orderly manner.
 4. Participating in volunteer work and community service.
 5. Respecting cultural and religious differences and promoting harmony in a multicultural society.
- **Sustainability and Environmental Consciousness:** With its limited resources, Singapore places importance on sustainable living and environmental protection. It is imperative that the citizens follow these norms diligently:
 1. Practicing the 3Rs (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) in daily life.
 2. Choosing eco-friendly products and services.
 3. Using public transport, walking, or cycling instead of relying heavily on private vehicles.
 4. Participating in community initiatives to protect the environment.
 - **Respect for Others:** This includes showing courtesy and consideration towards everyone in society. Examples include:
 1. Not interrupting others when they are speaking.
 2. Offering seats on public transport to those who need them more, such as the elderly, pregnant women, and the disabled.

3. Showing empathy towards others and being considerate of their feelings.

These examples illustrate the blend of traditional values and modern principles that contribute to ethical behavior in daily life in Singapore.

The Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau (CPIB), an independent agency, is responsible for the investigation and prevention of corruption in Singapore.

It is the world's oldest anti-corruption agency established in 1952 by the British colonial government.

As the sole agency in Singapore which investigates corruption offences, the CPIB is constantly striving to keep Singapore corruption-free and ensuring that offenders are brought to justice.

Enacted on 17 June 1960, the Prevention of Corruption Act 1960 (PCA) is the primary anti-corruption law in Singapore. The PCA empowers the CPIB, and governs and defines corruption and its punishments. Key features include:

Corruption in Singapore is broadly defined as a bribe offered in return for a favour. The bribe can be in the form of monetary or non-monetary nature. This includes:

- Money, gifts, loans, fees, rewards, commissions or other property of any description
- Any office, employment or contract
- Any payment, release, discharge or liquidation of any loan, obligation or other liability

- Any other service, favour or advantage of any description
- Any offer, undertaking or promise of any gratification

No One is Exempted

The CPIB investigates all corruption cases, whether it involves public or private sector individuals or members of the public. Regardless of the person's rank, seniority and political affiliations, no one is exempted from the law.

Harsh Penalties

A person convicted of an offence under the PCA 1960 shall be liable to a fine not exceeding \$100,000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 5 years or to both, for each count of corruption.

Ensuring Incorruptibility of the Public Service

Government employees are expected to perform their duties and responsibilities with integrity at the core of their service to the nation.

If it is proven that any corrupt transaction is in relation to a contract or a proposal for a contract with the government, the person convicted shall be liable to a fine not exceeding \$100,000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 7 years, or to both, for each of the corruption offence.

Within and Across Borders

The PCA 1960 has extra-territorial powers to deal with corrupt acts committed by a Singapore citizen outside Singapore as though these were committed in Singapore.

Reflect and Answer

1. How do you define corruption?

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2. What are examples of this?

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3. How can corruption impact the society?

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Activity A: **Corruption Up Close**

*Have you or your family been victims of corruption?
How did it affect you all? Share your experiences with
your class.*

The cause of this disturbing trend is the lack of morals and ethics at the workplace. Every profession comes with its set of ethics, which when adhered to increases the quality of life for everyone.

Ethical Behaviour

Ethical behaviour is a belief system established by society based on which people conduct themselves in their life. These tenets help us recognise the right from the wrong and the good from the bad. Adherence to these baseline codes of conduct ensures that ethics are upheld in all walks of life.



How would you explain integrity?

Roger Jenkins explained it as "The ability to do the right thing or choosing to do the right thing when you could get away with doing the wrong thing."

Everyday Examples of Ethics

- Always being honest
- Optimum utilisation of resources
- Being diligent to one's commitment/work
- Being punctual
- Being polite to everybody

Ethics in Different Professions

Let us look at ethical behaviour in some common professions.

Business

Here are snippets from the lives of two contrasting personalities, both big leaders in the business world.

Sound Bites on a Flight

Once there were two gentlemen seated next to each other on a flight. Soon they started conversing. One of them was really proud of his professional achievements and talked about it throughout the journey. When the flight landed, the gentleman who had shared all about himself extended his hand for a handshake with the other man. That's when he realised that he hadn't asked the other man his name. He asked him what his name was and the man politely replied, "My name is J. R. D. Tata."

The humble man who had remained silent in the face of the other man's lavish self-praise was the chairman of the Tata Group, a multinational conglomerate company. J. R. D. Tata was known for being humble and grounded. He was a benevolent and encouraging employer who took interest in the welfare of all his company's employees, irrespective of the positions they held. The Tata brand stands for transparency, dependability and trust. Adherence to ethics and professionalism consistently for years has led Tata to the high pedestal it is placed on today.

Breach of Trust

Sazaly Bin Selamat is a former bank executive at the Development Bank of Singapore (DBS) in the Technical & Operations Department. His main duties included the clearing of cheques from customers for payment of credit card or cash line bills.

Sometime in 2005, Sazaly met Alex Lian, a car repossessioner when Sazaly's car was repossessed due to non-payments of his car installments. Subsequently, Alex came to know Sazaly was employed at DBS and he was able to access DBS's customer database. Alex called Sazaly up a few days later and asked if he would like to make some money by helping him obtain the particulars of DBS's customers through the database. Alex informed other individuals known to him about Sazaly's "services" and the latter provided the required information to them in return for cash. From July 2005 to October 2006, Sazaly provided DBS customers' information to Alex and his contacts, which included illegal bookies and loan sharks.

On 28 January 2011, Sazaly Bin Selamat was sentenced to 12 weeks' imprisonment and ordered to pay a fine of S\$21,000 and a penalty* of S\$2,625 for corruption offences. He was also fined \$6,000 for computer misuse offences.

* Penalty is an additional punishment (for corruption offences) imposed on the bribe taker to pay a sum which is equal to the amount of that gratification.

Source: <https://www.cpib.gov.sg/about-corruption/case-studies/private-sector/>

Activity B: **Impact of Corruption**

1. Discuss in pairs the impact of Sazaly Bin Selamat's actions on DBS bank and its customers?
2. Compare and contrast what it would be like to work in an ethically managed workplace versus one run unethically

Ethics in Medicine

Read the following real-life incident, names have been altered.

Mr. Menon developed severe leg pain, which made it difficult for him to walk properly. He felt weak in the knees.

The doctor, an orthopaedic surgeon, suggested physiotherapy. Mr. Menon tried it but did not get relief. The orthopaedic surgeon then prescribed blood tests, which pointed to an infection. He asked Mr. Menon to take an X-ray of his spine.

The doctor saw the X-ray and diagnosed an aggressive bone infection. He advised surgery immediately as the vertebrae was almost destroyed and there was the danger of Mr. Menon becoming paralysed.

The doctor wondered aloud how Mr. Menon was able to walk at all. He said that the procedure would cost \$400, 000.

How can we afford this much money in such a short time? thought Mr. Menon.

Mr. Menon and his family were greatly agitated by the grave prognosis given by the orthopaedic surgeon. They decided to go ahead with the procedure the next day itself, but a close relative asked them to take a second opinion. This time Mr. Menon consulted a renowned neurosurgeon Dr. Khalid who looked at the X-ray.

Mr. Menon also told him about the surgeon's prognosis.

Dr. Khalid said, "Why operate on someone who is able to walk on his two feet? You do have a bone infection, and the spine is getting affected. But it is completely curable with medication.

You don't have to spend so much and do a procedure. Operating on the spine is always the last option because it is so risky.”

Mr. Menon and his family thanked their stars that they had found a doctor like Dr. Khalid.

Mr. Menon is completely fine now, after one-and-a-half years of being on medication.

Activity C: Doctors and Ethics

Discuss the following in pairs. You can share your thoughts with your class.

1. Why do you think the orthopaedician suggested an immediate surgery?
2. What would have happened to Mr. Menon and his family had they listened to the first orthopaedic surgeon?
3. According to the Hippocratic oath taken by doctors, the patient's welfare comes first. Was the first surgeon following the ethics as given in the oath?
4. Has your family faced any such instance as Mr Menon?

Every person engaged in public works and service have a moral obligation to strive to be their very best. But there are a few exceptional public service staff who not only are experts in their skill and deliverance but also do not hesitate to walk that rare extra beyond their call of duty, sometimes even risking their own personnel safety.

A Triumph of Quick Thinking and Service: The Tanjong Katong Sinkhole Rescue

On July 26, 2025, a sudden and dramatic sinkhole opened up along Tanjong Katong Road South near the One Amber condominium, swallowing a vehicle and triggering alarm across Singapore. Amidst the chaos, it was not emergency services but a team of construction workers—led by foreman **Pitchai Udaiyappan Subbiah**—who emerged as the unexpected heroes of the moment.

The sinkhole, caused by the collapse of a sewer-shaft caisson ring under a PUB construction site, left a woman trapped in her car, partially submerged and surrounded by rising water. Within seconds of hearing the collapse, Pitchai and his co-workers rushed to the scene. While some instinctively wanted to jump in, Pitchai used his experience and calm judgment to prevent further risk. "You go down, you also cannot climb up," he warned, demonstrating the foresight that ultimately ensured both the woman's safety and that of his team.

Instead, the workers swiftly tossed a **nylon rope** into the sinkhole. The woman, who had managed to open her car door, grabbed hold of the rope and was pulled to safety within two to three minutes—just in time, as the hole began to fill with water. The entire rescue was completed in less than five minutes.

Pitchai, a 46-year-old Indian migrant worker with over two decades of experience in Singapore, displayed not just technical expertise but profound humanity. After rescuing the woman, he and his team offered her a phone to call her daughter, showing compassion well beyond the call of duty.

This isn't the first time Foreign Construction workers have stepped up as true heroes— who embody real selflessness and strength, risking their own lives to save others. These are the same individuals helping to build Singapore, while carrying the heavy responsibility of providing for their families back home.

The spontaneous teamwork and service-mindedness of these workers quickly gained national admiration. Online communities praised their courage and presence of mind, while the Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF) and PUB expressed official gratitude, planning formal recognition for their heroic response.

In a city known for its order and planning, this incident became a powerful reminder that character, courage, and selfless service often emerge unannounced. Thanks to the unwavering moral clarity and swift action of Pitchai and his team, a life was saved—proving that in moments of crisis, it is often the quietest heroes who act the fastest and care the most.





Activity D: Impact of Ethics or Their Absence

Discuss with your class the following.

1. What qualities did foreman Pitchai and his team demonstrate during the sinkhole incident, and how do these qualities reflect the values of responsible citizenship and service to others?
2. In what ways can the actions of migrant workers like Pitchai inspire us to redefine who we consider heroes in our society? Discuss with reference to remedial measures when things go wrong, ethical behaviour and courage during crisis.

Ethics in Sports

At the 2017 London Marathon, sportsmanship was profoundly displayed when Matthew Rees sacrificed his own time to assist the collapsing David Wyeth across the finish line. This selfless

act, emblematic of true athletic spirit, underscores the essence of sports ethics-prioritizing human compassion and solidarity over personal achievement in the heat of competition.

Activity E: Delve Deeper

1. Recall and relate to one such show of sportsmanship that happened in your school.

Ethics in sports

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2. The time to choose between right and wrong is only a split second when we are forced to make a decision. This is when our true colours are often on full display. Recall incidents from your life when you made the right decision and when you made the wrong decision.

Right Decision, Ethical Action

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Wrong Decision, Unethical Action

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Becoming ethical and principled doesn't happen overnight. It involves practising it from this very moment onwards. How ethical are we as students? What we practise now is what we will practise later as adults.

No matter what the environment around you is, it is always possible to maintain a brand of integrity.

~ Dr Abdul Kalam - Rocket Scientist and Former President of India

Here is an excerpt from Charles Swindoll's 'A Battle for Integrity':

Integrity is completeness or soundness. You have integrity if you complete a job even when no one is looking. You have integrity if you keep your word even when no one checks up on you. You have integrity if you keep your promises. Integrity means the absence of duplicity and is the opposite of hypocrisy. If you are a person of integrity, you will do what you say. What you declare, you will do your best to be. Integrity also includes financial accountability, personal reliability, and private purity. A person with integrity does not manipulate others. He or she is not prone to arrogance or self-praise. Integrity even invites constructive and necessary criticism because it applauds accountability. It's sound. It's solid. It's complete.

Integrity - an expression of love

When we love ourselves, we stay true to what is best and good within us, regardless of what others think, say or do. This is called self-integrity. When we have self-integrity, we make choices that are safe and healthy for us. Eg. choosing to eat

food that is healthy for us, the right kind of friends etc.

When we have self-love and self-integrity, we develop healthy love for others in our lives, which once again expresses itself as integrity in our relationships with others.

In every relationship we make some said and unsaid commitments. We promise to be patient, kind, understanding, and loving. We promise to honour the commitments we make to ourselves and others, through thick and thin – in good times and bad.

Can integrity and love be contradictory?

You may come across situations where practising integrity might seem like the least loving thing to do. However, taking decisions that reflect integrity is always a sign of selfless love.

Activity F: Recognise the Right Choice

Recognise ethics as a student and practise them in your everyday life.

What would you choose to do in these scenarios? Tick your choice. Discuss with your class what is the right choice.

Column A	Column B
1. You found a watch in the playground	a. Keep it. Finders, keepers.
	b. Deposit it at 'Lost & Found' and inform others.

2. The teacher allows you to access his laptop to facilitate an online session.	a. Browse through all folders and gather information.
	b. Just stick to the work and return the laptop.
3. There is an exam tomorrow, and you have access to the question papers in the staff room.	a. Use all the time to study well.
	b. Enter the staff room and try to access the question paper stacks.
4. A friend has sneaked a smartphone into the hostel.	a. Tell him that if he allows you to play games, you will not report him.
	b. Advise him to deposit the phone with the warden or give it to his parents.
5. You have been a topper all the while. A newcomer from another place has just joined the school and is proving to be a tough competition.	a. Make friends with the newcomer and help them settle. You both learn from each other.
	b. Do everything to isolate the newcomer and cut them off so that they would not be a tough competition.

Activity G:

Debate

Form two teams with the guidance of your teacher. One team should stand for the opinion/quote given below and the other team should stand against it. Use examples to substantiate your points.

Politics without principles, education without character, science without humanity, and commerce without morality are not only useless but also positively damaging.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Let's Remember

The difference between countries that have made great economic and social progress and those that have not is the adherence to ethics by the people, whatever be their profession. If we want Singapore to continue to prosper, we have to ensure the highest standards of work culture and ethics, regardless of whether others follow them or not.

*A nation's destiny is determined by leadership,
Leadership is determined by character,
Character is determined by ethics,
Ethics are determined by values,
Values are caught and not taught.*

My Space

What I liked most about this lesson...

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I learnt that

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Engage

with Family



The table contains a list of people pursuing different professions. Discuss with your friends and family and briefly write the ethical behaviour expected from the people. Also discuss what is incorrect or unethical in the profession and list them in the table.

Think of some professions that are not given in the table. Add at least three professions and write down the expected ethical behaviour from them.

Professionals	What is ethical in this profession?	What is not ethical in this profession?
Driver		
Child care worker		
Chef		
Builder		
Doctor		
Politician		
Defence personnel		
Teacher		