

Education in primary and secondary schools on anti-corruption in the Republic of Korea

1. Contents on anti-corruption in the textbooks on "Ethics"

In Korea, the course on "Ethics" is included in the curricula of each grade of primary and secondary schools.

In **primary schools**, since it is not easy for children to understand the concept of "integrity" and "corruption," the textbooks on ethics deal with the elements of "anti-corruption" rather indirectly with various topics such as honesty, responsibility, faithfulness, self-control, self-esteem, compliance with the law and regulations, patriotism, fairness, community spirit, and civil duties.

In **secondary schools**, students learn about the causes of corruption, the negative impact of corruption, and solutions to corruption problems. In high schools, the textbooks on ethics deal with corruption issues more specifically, cover ethical values required for public officials and business ethics, and suggest diverse activities to think about the ways to fight corruption and the importance of integrity.

Some examples of the contents on anti-corruption in the secondary school textbooks on "Ethics" are provided below:

A. Middle schools (analysis of six textbooks on "Ethics")

Social justice and ethics	The impact of corruption and solutions to corruption problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corruption impedes social development, causes social confusion, undermines ethics of both individuals and society, and makes it difficult to achieve common goals. • Corruption is caused by selfishness, nepotism, cronyism, and malpractices. It is necessary to maintain a high level of integrity and make efforts to improve the institutions and processes that may contribute to causing corruption. • Corruption is caused by cronyism, nepotism, result-oriented attitudes, and improper operation of anti-corruption systems. Prevalence of corrupt practices leads to mistrust in overall society and increase in illegalities. • The act of pursuing the private interest by using bribes, personal relationships and power does harm to society as well as individuals. Corruption is caused by human selfishness and unfair social systems. • In order to solve corruption problems, all members of society must make efforts to follow ethical principles. Particularly, public officials must perform their duties with a high level of integrity. It is necessary to make efforts to improve unfair social structure and unjust systems. • It is necessary to strengthen punishment for corruption and enhance education on anti-corruption for citizens as well as public officials. • It is necessary to change the mind-set of individuals, establish institutional mechanisms to eradicate corrupt practices, strengthen citizen oversight, and foster a culture of integrity in overall society.
	Fair competition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fairness in procedures and legitimacy of the result are essential to fair competition. • A society with a high level of integrity and honesty can be realized by ensuring equal opportunities for all, fairness in procedures, and legitimacy of the result. • Unfair systems lead to infringement of the fundamental rights of individuals, occurrence of various forms of corruption and misconduct, and weakening of community spirit. • The requirements for fair competition include provision of equal opportunities and conditions, consideration for the socially vulnerable, and establishment of procedures based on social agreement. These factors are essential to realize social justice.

Desirable attitudes of citizens	Importance of compliance with the law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with the law helps ensure the interests and safety of people and realize social justice. • Compliance with the law contributes to people's happiness and national prosperity. • Compliance with the law contributes to protecting freedom and rights of individuals and maintaining the public safety and order. • Efforts to consider other people's rights, control greed, and realize social justice help realize an ideal society.
	Balance between public and private interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The private interest can be realized by promoting the public interest. The public interest can be advanced by controlling the private interest. It is necessary to keep the balance between public and private interests. • The conflict between public and private interests must be resolved with upright community spirit. • The fair operation of the law and institutions is required to keep the balance between public and private interests.
Ideal society		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An ideal society refers to a society where fair distribution of resources is realized, ethical values are respected, and the spirit of tolerance is realized.
Study and career		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important to consider ethical standards, social contribution and social responsibility in choosing one's path of study or career. One must refrain from corruption and wrongdoing, and contribute to society.
Relationship between ethical practices and the State		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a society with prevalent corruption and malpractices, it is difficult for the people to follow their conscience, which would bring bad consequences to both the State and the people.

B. High schools (analysis of four textbooks on "Ethics")

An ethical life	The impact of corruption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "An act of corruption" refers to an illegal act committed by abusing public office for private gains. • The main causes of corruption include excessive selfishness of individuals, social practices and culture tolerant of corruption, and social structure conducive to corrupt acts. • A culture of integrity is important social capital in itself. • Corruption undermines the foundation for fair competition, weakens national competitiveness, impedes social development, causes disharmony between people, and hinders social integration.
	Solutions to corruption problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To resolve corruption problems, it is important to make educational efforts to arouse conscience of individuals and conduct campaigns to improve the social climate. What is more important is to make collective efforts to break the vicious circle of corruption and improve systems. • The institutional approaches to prevent corruption can be taken mainly in two ways. First, in order to resist the temptation to engage in corrupt acts, it is necessary to stipulate punishment greater than the benefits that might be derived from corrupt acts. On the other hand, it is necessary to put in place mechanisms for oversight and control over the process and result of performing public duties. • To reduce corruption, not only public officials but also all members of society must uphold the principles of integrity. To combat corruption, one must not cling to personal relationships and nepotism, and must have a strong sense of justice to resist the temptation to commit an act of corruption.

	Ethical values required for public officials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public officials must perform their duties with responsibility for the public interest. Since public officials are vested with authority and mandates by the people, they must contribute to promoting the public interest by sacrificing their personal interest. Public officials must neither conduct their duties for personal gains nor commit corruption by abusing their authority. It is important for public officials to have a law-abiding spirit and a sense of integrity in order to serve the nation and the people. Since public officials' attitudes greatly affect the ways of life and values of ordinary citizens, they must set an example by practicing diligence and frugality.
	Business ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Businesses that do not conduct their business in an ethical way may cause various harms to society by pursuing profits in an immoderate way. Since such businesses focus on reducing costs and maximizing profits, unrestricted pursuit of profits may lead to an act of infringing upon the public interest and fair competition such as environmental pollution, bid-rigging, monopoly, bribery, tax evasion, and violation of civil rights. Employees themselves must not violate the public interest by committing an act that may pollute the environment, threaten the public safety, or cause corruption such as fraudulent accounting. In the case that their employer has engaged in a serious violation of the public interest, employees are encouraged to blow the whistle to realize social justice.
	Ethics for professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professionals are required to have a high level of social responsibility and ethics since they may obtain improper gains by using knowledge or information unknown to general customers or clients.
	Activities	<p><u>Discussion topics</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk about the ways to prevent and eradicate malpractices. Read a news story about "tax evasion vs. donation" and talk about the efforts required to build an ethical society from both personal and social perspectives. Talk about the impact of corruption. Think about the level of my awareness of anti-corruption. Talk about the ways to dissuade people from free rides. Talk about the mechanisms needed to promote whistleblowing. <p><u>A culture of integrity shown in pictures</u></p> <p>Displaying pictures of historic figures well-known for a high level of integrity, anti-corruption measures that have contributed to the prevention of corruption including the asset disclosure system, civil society campaigns calling for anti-corruption measures, opening of the Anti-Corruption Training Institute, etc.</p> <p><u>Quotes from the classics</u></p> <p>The textbook presents quotes from the classics such as Politeia of Plato about a high level of ethics that the ruling class must have.</p>
Ethics and Ideologies	Importance of a sense of integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public officials must inherit the spirit of "cheong-baek-ri," which refers to public officials of high integrity and uprightness. Jeong Yak Yong, in his book "Mok-min-sim-seo" (Guidelines for Governors), emphasized benevolence, integrity and frugality as values required for public officials by saying that "governors must be benevolent, be incorrupt in order to be benevolent, and be frugal in order to be incorrupt." Public officials must have such attitudes to serve the people and the nation. Korea has traditionally called men of high integrity and justice "cheong-baek-ri" and respected such persons. Integrity in the performance of public duties is one of the ethical values that public officials must have. Even today, the spirit of "cheong-baek-ri" is still important. Public officials must recognize that their authority was entrusted to them by the people, and conduct their duties in a fair manner without committing corruption.
	Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read a story of Minister Hwang Hee of the Joseon Dynasty, who is regarded as "cheong-baek-ri." Read a cartoon about "ik-seon-gwan," which refers to crowns worn by kings and crown princes of the Joseon Dynasty, symbolizing integrity and frugality.

2. Anti-corruption education for students provided by the Anti-Corruption Training Institute

The Anti-Corruption Training Institute (ACTI) under the Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission of the Republic of Korea developed anti-corruption training programs for primary and secondary school students in 2015, and has since provided training for students based on applications. ACTI sends official circulars to schools every year to receive applications for anti-corruption training. Schools can also use the “free semester system” website (www.ggoomggi.go.kr) to apply for anti-corruption training any time. The ACTI team visits the selected schools to provide anti-corruption training.

The training program consists of group work (50%), game-based learning (25%), presentation (10%), introspection (10%), and audio-visual education (5%).

Contents of anti-corruption training for students

Category	Major programs
Game-based learning	Playing darts with one’s eyes covered Moving ping-pong balls Playing Monopoly for happy life
Writing & participation	Writing about my (or my family’s) experience related to conscience Talking about my experience related to conscience Drafting Integrity Pledge for our class
Discussion & role-playing	A mock court in the classroom Role-playing in a situation of ethical dilemma
Assessment	Assessing my level of integrity with my classmate

Anti-corruption training sessions organized by ACTI

	2014	2015	2016
Primary & middle schools: Integrity Class Tour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 regions including Seoul, Sejong and Incheon • 16 primary schools and 6 middle schools • 4,000 students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 regions (Seoul, Sejong, Chungbuk Province, and Daegu) • 25 primary schools and 12 middle schools • 5,345 students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chungbuk Province • 1 primary school and 4 middle schools • 297 students
High schools: Integrity Camp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cheongju City • More than 22,000 students in 9 schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sejong City and Chungbuk Province • 1,346 students in 7 schools 	

Result of participation surveys

In 2016, the ACTI conducted a survey of the 297 students (19 primary and 278 middle school students) who participated in its anti-corruption training programs. The satisfaction rate recorded an average of 92.2%.

Effectiveness of education			Organization of the training course	Management of the training course
Usefulness	Improved understanding of "integrity"	Enhanced will to practice integrity		
90.0%	91.1%	92.6%	91.3%	95.2%

