

**OTS 212 (c)  
LESSON PLAN**

**Leadership Characteristics and Principles**

**1 period**

**Introduction**

During this period you will be taught the desirable characteristics of a leader, and how to apply the ten principles of leadership.

At all stages in your officer progression, you are functioning as leaders. To perform this function well, you as leaders require the necessary tools to do your job. The ten characteristics and ten principles of leadership will be your guide to action.

When placed in a leadership role, you should strive to follow the material set forth when making your decisions and formulating your plan of action. They will act as a guide to the development of your leadership skills.

**Characteristics of a Leader**

It is not easy to be a leader. It requires hard work, determination and practice. To lead the cadets in your division, you must have their respect, and in order to do this you must possess qualities that make you earn their respect and confidence.

Characteristics:

A characteristic is often defined as a human quality or trait that can be associated with a person. There are many human qualities that a person requires to become a good leader. However, there are ten important and principle characteristics a leader must possess in order to be effective.

**Honesty:** To be honest, a leader must be fair and just in character or behaviour, free of deceit and untruthfulness and must be sincere. If a cadet does not feel that you are honest and fair, they will be unwilling to trust and hesitant to follow.

**EXAMPLE:** A new cadet asks you whether their performance is up to the standard. Be honest with them by telling them the truth and be fair in your assessment. If he or she needs to work on their drill, tell them. If their uniform is very good, praise them.

**Sense of responsibility:** to be responsible, a leader must be morally accountable for their actions, have the authority to act independently and make decisions. Leaders must recognize that if they hold a position of authority in an organization there are certain responsibilities that go along with it. A leader can delegate authority but never responsibility.

**EXAMPLE:** A good leader would always ensure that the cadets in his or her division had the opportunity to eat before a busy morning of parade practice. He or she has a responsibility for their welfare.

**Confidence:** This is defined as the feeling of self-reliance or certainty, and firm trust. As a leader you must have confidence in yourself and the power of your convictions. It is also necessary to have confidence in your followers and superiors. Confidence provides the courage to go beyond!

EXAMPLE: When trying sailing for the first time, the leader will have confidence in the exercise and trust those who are in charge. The confidence that is demonstrated will indeed help the cadets who are afraid and unsure of them.

**Enthusiasm:** Enthusiasm is defined as a strong interest, admiration, or great eagerness. Enthusiasm is infectious. If a leader is inspired or demonstrates a keen interest in completing the task at hand, the cadets will become more than ready to lend a hand.

EXAMPLE: When detailed to complete cleaning stations, the leader that is motivated and enthusiastic will help inspire those who may be unwilling to participate. Eventually, everyone involved will be energized.

**Dependability:** To be dependable, a leader must be reliable and of sound and consistent character. As a leader you must be reliable because others depend on you for direction. Show that you are the one to get the job done.

EXAMPLE: The Divisional Officer has been notified that weekly parade night has been cancelled. He or she must be dependable and phone all the cadets in their section and pass on the information. The cadets can depend on their leader to keep them up to date.

**Patience:** A leader shows patience by demonstrating calm endurance of hardship, tolerance and perseverance. A good leader has the patience to answer questions from the cadets and ensures that the information is understood. Cadets who are afraid to ask you for help because you are impatient will see you as unapproachable and think twice before coming to you again.

EXAMPLE: The Training Officer wanted all the cadets and officers to feel that the cadets could approach her, so she removed the office door. This promoted an open door policy in the corps.

**Decisiveness:** A decisive leader is one who can decide on an issue quickly and effectively. The confidence of your cadets will be gained if you make clear and consistent decisions. A good leader will consult with others, look at the pros and cons and then decide the course of action to take. Do not delay decisions because you are afraid of the results or because you do not know the answer. Seek advice and do not waiver from your decision. Have confidence!

EXAMPLE: The cadets in your division ask you if they can go to the store during break. It is a five-minute walk through a busy section of town, crossing a set of lights and a railway track. It is raining and dark. There is a canteen in the building so you decide that it would be safer if they stayed in the building for their break.

**Determination:** This quality is defined as the firmness of purpose or the frame of mind that enables you to complete a task no matter what happens. If, as a leader, you are given a task, finish it to the best of your ability. Do not get put off by details or small problems. Your determination to get the job done will be transferred to your followers.

EXAMPLE: The supervising officer has been tasked with folding sails. It has started to rain and is getting very cold, but the leader is determined to ensure that the sails are folded no matter what.

**Loyalty:** By being loyal a leader is true and faithful, devoted to the organization and those people involved. As a cadet leader, you must be loyal to your task, peers, superiors and most importantly, your followers. Do not say one thing to them and then do another. Support them when they need help, put them ahead of yourself and respect them.

EXAMPLE: During sports night, a good Divisional Officer would cheer on and encourage their own cadets, even if they were losing the game terribly.

**Courage:** Courage is defined as the ability to disregard fear, and to act with bravery. A leader must go ahead of others to set a good example or give direction. You must have the strength of character to stand up for what you believe is true and just. You require the courage to try something new, the courage of your convictions, the courage to lead others, the courage to admit when something is wrong and the courage to accept failure as a natural part of trying something new.

EXAMPLE: A Divisional Officer may show courage by helping a cadet who is afraid of the water learn how to swim. The leader may also have a fear of water, but he or she will overcome their fears to help one of their cadets.

## **The Ten Principles of Leadership**

As leadership is considered an art, there are ten principles that the Navy League Cadets have adopted in order to help develop your leadership skills by providing a guide to action. This is not a complete list but it is a good foundation to build on.

### **1. Lead by Setting a Good Example**

This is the first of the Ten Principles. This motto is very common in the cadet organization.

By setting a good example for others to follow, the standard of the group will improve. The reverse is also true; if the standards are not maintained, cadets will lose motivation.

Set a good example by only asking cadets to do a task that you would do.

### **2. Get to Know the Cadets and Look After Their Welfare**

The second principle of leadership requires the leader to know two types of information about the cadets:

Personal: This type of information may include; but is not limited to:

- full name and pronunciation;
- cadets school and performance;
- part of town cadet comes from; and
- hobbies.

Professional: This type of information may include; but is not limited to:

- ranks and appointment;
- training qualifications;
- individual strengths and weaknesses;
- leadership ability and potential.

In regards to the welfare of the cadets, it is critical to put the cadets first in all your decisions. They are your number one priority. Make them feel that they are important by looking out for their morale, feelings, injuries, request for conferences and general well being.

### **3. Develop the Leadership Potential of Your Cadets**

In making the effort to pass on the leadership skills that you have learned and developed, the effectiveness of the unit will increase.

1. Helps you to train your replacement.
2. By giving others the benefit of your experience, and letting them lead from time to time, not only does it develop the leader's skills, but it enhances the Leader/Follower relationship.

### **4. Make Sound and Timely Decisions**

As the fourth leadership principle, the ability to make sound and timely decisions is one of the most important traits a leader can have.

- Sound Decisions - The leader weighs the pros and cons and reflects upon the most logical solution, before making a decision.
- Timely Decisions - These must be made on time, so as not to negatively affect the outcome to the task. The leader must act quickly when necessary.

### **5. Train Cadets to Work as a Team**

The leader can accomplish more in a shorter period of time, by working as a team. Good team spirit or esprit-de-corps helps make the work more interesting and fun for everyone.

### **6. Communicate Ideas and Thoughts Clearly**

A good leader will ensure that the cadets completely understand his or her meaning. This can be done by the use of an O Group (a meeting):

- The O Group allows the leader to give the instructions to each cadet and ensures that everyone understands his or her task.
- The O Group enables the leader to confirm the task by getting the cadets to repeat the instructions before dismissal.

## **7. Keep Cadets Informed of all Activities and any Changes**

The seventh leadership principle deals with human curiosity. Most people need to know what is happening next, and why things have changed from before. Cadets will always ask WHY when given a message, therefore, a good leader will plan to keep his or her followers informed. If the cadet knows what to expect, they will be more comfortable following your lead!

## **8. Take Personal Initiatives**

In the position of supervisor, a leader can stand back and simply observe a task in progress. This is only effective if the leader:

- Finds mistakes, determines better ways to accomplish tasks and analyze procedures.
- Secondly, and most importantly, uses his or her personal initiative in applying a solution or correcting a problem.

## **9. Improve on Personal Weaknesses and Capitalize on Personal Strengths**

In the ninth leadership principle, the leaders must be honest with themselves as to their limitations and strengths.

- By admitting a weakness, leaders can seek help to improve themselves. Practice makes perfect!
- A strength should be shared with others so that knowledge can be passed on from cadet to cadet. Sharing expertise makes the group stronger!

## **10. Treat Others as You Would Like to be Treated**

The last principle is an excellent rule of thumb when it comes to good leadership. A good leader will, at all times, treat others with respect, thereby instilling the values of personal dignity into their followers.

## **Conclusion**

A leader can possess many qualities and characteristics, but there are certain qualities that will set them apart from their peers. By using these ten leadership characteristics you will gain the respect of your followers and therefore will be able to lead more effectively and be more successful. The ten principles of leadership are to be used as a guide to formulate your plan of action.