

Sample

How to be Assertive



**A Self Study Booklet for
school prefects**

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Chapter 1

Introduction

You have probably bought this booklet because you want to learn how to be more assertive although it is just possible that you want to learn how to be less assertive!

In either case the first thing you need to know is that different situations require different degrees of assertiveness and this booklet will help you decide how assertive to be in certain situations.

Throughout this booklet, you will be asked to do some exercises. You will get the most learning from doing what we suggest, but this is a self-study booklet and you are in control of your own learning. It is up to you, therefore, to decide whether to do our suggested activities and to determine the pace at which you work through the booklet.

Whatever approach you decide to take, we hope you will not only enjoy the booklet but also put into practice what you learn. Don't forget

"Knowledge is important, but putting knowledge to good use is more important."

Chris Cordery
Author

Chapter 2

What is assertiveness?

Definition

There is no commonly agreed definition of assertiveness. The Oxford dictionary suggests that it is a state of being *forthright* and *positive*. A quick look on the internet will reveal the following descriptions of someone who is assertive:

An important skill

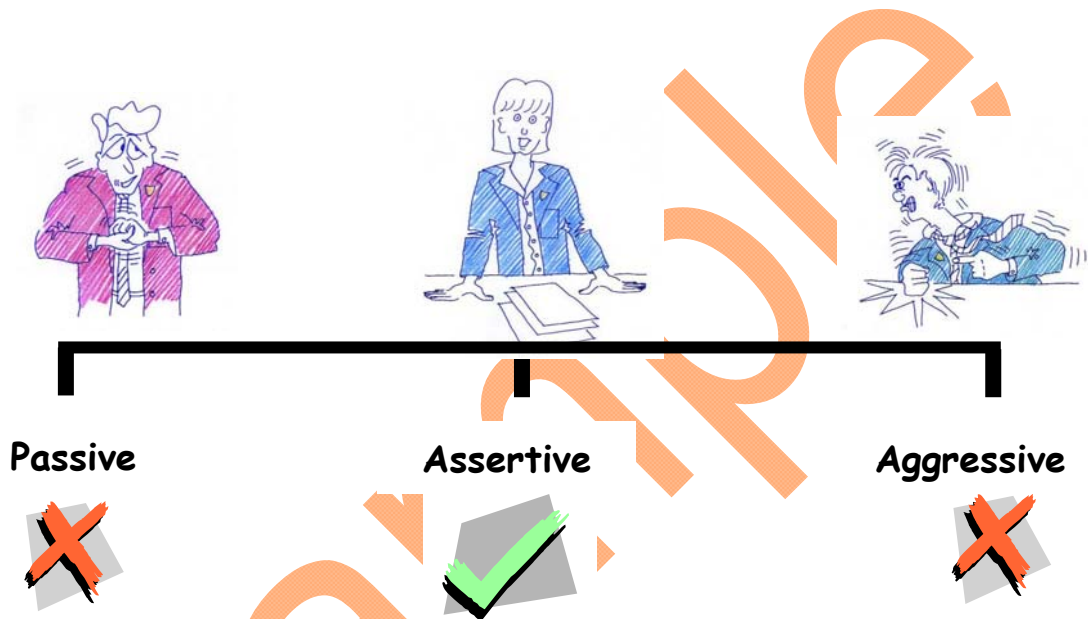
The skill of being assertive (and it is a skill, not a personality characteristic) is very important to people in positions of responsibility, including school prefects. It is fundamental to

Chapter 3

Understanding assertiveness

As we mentioned earlier, being assertive is not the same as being aggressive, but nor does it mean being passive, meek or subservient.

Perhaps the best way to think of assertiveness is to consider it to be approximately halfway along a continuum (a line) between aggressive and subservient



As a prefect, you somehow need to avoid being at either end of this spectrum. Let's now look at what this means by considering the ends of the spectrum first.

Before we go any further we would like you to try an activity. You can get an idea of some of the body language associated with passive, assertive and aggressive behaviour from the cartoons above, but we suggest you access the internet and look up 'assertive behaviour' in YouTube. A quick look at the results (avoiding American and academic websites) will give you access to video clips showing different types of behaviour.



Once you have done that, have a go at the following activity ...

Activity 1

Write down some words that describe the body language and oral language associated with *Passive*, *Assertive* and *Aggressive* behaviour. See if you can manage at least 10 in each category.

Passive	Assertive	Aggressive

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Now let's consider how this might apply to a prefect

Passive

A passive person trying to be an effective prefect would:

- appear to be timid
- show lack of confidence (in how they look (body language) and how they speak)

Aggressive

An aggressive person trying to be an effective prefect would:

- look for opportunities to be confrontational

Assertive

An assertive person trying to be an effective prefect would:

- be firm and fair with everyone

Activity 1 - our ideas

Here are our ideas for what you could have included in Activity 1

Passive	Assertive	Aggressive
<u>Behaviour/Body language</u> Avoids eye contact Fidgets with hands/fingers Head angled to one side Hesitant to act and speak Legs crossed when standing - weight on one leg and frequently shifting (looking nervous)	<u>Behaviour/Body language</u>	<u>Behaviour/Body language</u>
<u>What is said</u> 'I'm not really sure' 'It's not for me to say' 'I haven't got an opinion' 'I might, but I don't know ..' Overly polite		
<u>Tone and volume of voice</u> Quiet Soft		

Chapter 4

Understanding assertiveness in more depth

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But not all situations require a score of 5.

If you need to calm someone down or show a compassionate attitude, you might want to consider using behaviour that is 3 or 4 on the assertiveness scale.

If you need to inject pace in with a group of people who are a bit slow to get on with a task or show annoyance about something, you might need to behave at 6 or 7 on the assertiveness scale.

Now this is where we need you to do a particularly important activity.

Activity 2

By now you will have worked out the characteristics of very passive and very aggressive people and you will have a good idea of the qualities that make up someone who is right in the middle of the continuum: that is 5 on the assertiveness scale.

Our challenge to you is to describe how people would behave and speak if they were operating at 3 and 7 on the assertiveness scale.



And straight away here is another activity

Activity 3		
List some situations in which you might need to adopt assertiveness on in the 3, 5 and 7 categories on the assertiveness scale. Try to find at least 4 in each column.		
3	5	7

Now let's look at some specific scenarios

Chapter 5

Application of assertive behaviour

Scenario 1

A Year 7 girl has been receiving unpleasant text messages from another girl in her year and she is upset. She knows you and asks for advice.

What number on the assertiveness scale would you apply in this case?

Choose 6 words that describe how you will react in this case:

-
-
-
-
-
-

Do these words fit the number you decided upon above? Do you wish to change your number? You can do so.



Scenario 2

Sample



Scenario 3

Sample



There are no right or wrong solutions to the scenarios described above, but here are some ideas for you to consider

Scenario 1 - *young girl receiving unpleasant text messages*

You will probably have chosen 3 or 4 on the assertiveness scale.

Scenario 2 - *year 8 boys having heated argument*

Scenario 3 - *organise a visit to your school by local businessmen and businesswomen*

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Chapter 6

Conclusion

We hope you are now more knowledgeable on the subject of assertiveness and, as a result, we hope you now fully understand that you have a choice about how to react in given situations.

No-matter how inclined you are to be more or less assertive there are some situations where one degree of assertiveness is appropriate and there are others in which you will need to react with a different degree of assertiveness. One size of assertiveness does not fit all situations, so the skill of assertiveness is to choose the most appropriate way to react in a given situation.

For now, we wish you good luck in your role as a prefect, but more than anything else we hope you will apply some of the things you have learnt in this short booklet.



Finally, do bear in mind that assertiveness does not just apply to being a school prefect; you can practice using some of the knowledge you have gained by working through this booklet in all aspects of your life.

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