

## the ARTICLE (for instructors)

### It Only Takes One Bad Apple

There is an old saying: It only takes one bad apple to spoil the bunch. The idiom can be applied to every day life. A recent research report indicates that "one bad apple" can quickly spoil the atmosphere of the office. An employee with a negative attitude brings conflict and stress to the workplace. A problem employee usually doesn't do an equal amount of work, is always unhappy and complaining, and bullies others.

Negative behavior, the researchers found, is much stronger than positive behavior. As such, several positive employees can't change the mood created by one negative teammate. In fact, it often leads to a downward spiral, with more and more employees becoming unhappier and unhappier as time continues. The news comes out of the University of Washington.

In order to solve the problem, companies need to deal with the negativity immediately. One answer is to have the employee work alone as much as possible. In effect, he should be isolated from other team members work-wise. Better yet, ensure that effective hiring practices prevent the problem from entering the building. Training managers to better determine potential hires helps, as do personality tests. These can identify and remove emotionally unstable or disagreeable people.

Case in point: The wife of the report's lead author noticed that when a problem employee at her office was sick for several days, the atmosphere quickly changed. People began to help one another. They played classical music on their radios. Many went out for drinks after work. However, once the problem returned, the toxic atmosphere returned, too.

**Teacher's Notes:**

\* Underlined words in red typeface are the answers.

**the ARTICLE (for students)**

saying	isolated	mood	behavior	complaining
effective	attitude	disagreeable	toxic	however
solve	unhappier	employee	spoil	potential

**It Only Takes One Bad Apple**

There is an old (a. \_\_\_\_\_): It only takes one bad apple to spoil the bunch. The idiom can be applied to every day life. A recent research report indicates that "one bad apple" can quickly (b. \_\_\_\_\_) the atmosphere of the office. An employee with a negative (c. \_\_\_\_\_) brings conflict and stress to the workplace. A problem employee usually doesn't do an equal amount of work, is always unhappy and (d. \_\_\_\_\_), and bullies others.

Negative (e. \_\_\_\_\_), the researchers found, is much stronger than positive behavior. As such, several positive employees can't change the (f. \_\_\_\_\_) created by one negative teammate. In fact, it often leads to a downward spiral, with more and more employees becoming (g. \_\_\_\_\_) and unhappier as time continues. The news comes out of the University of Washington.

In order to (h. \_\_\_\_\_) the problem, companies need to deal with the negativity immediately. One answer is to have the employee work alone as much as possible. In effect, he should be (i. \_\_\_\_\_) from other team members work-wise. Better yet, ensure that (j. \_\_\_\_\_) hiring practices prevent the problem from entering the building. Training managers to better determine (k. \_\_\_\_\_) hires helps, as do personality tests. These can identify and remove emotionally unstable or (l. \_\_\_\_\_) people.

Case in point: The wife of the report's lead author noticed that when a problem (m. \_\_\_\_\_) at her office was sick for several days, the atmosphere quickly changed. People began to help one another. They played classical music on their radios. Many went out for drinks after work. (n. \_\_\_\_\_), once the problem returned, the (o. \_\_\_\_\_) atmosphere returned, too.

## STEP ONE

**Define:** What does "bad apple" mean? Can you use it in a sentence? Can you give examples?

## STEP TWO

**Questions:** Read as much of the article as you can in two minutes. Guess the answers to the questions below, then listen to your teacher read the article. Try to confirm your answers.

a.	What does a negative employee bring to the office?
b.	According to the article, what is a problem employee?
c.	What happens when an office has a negative employee?
d.	What are some possible solutions listed in the article?
e.	What happened in the example when the problem employee was sick for several days?

## STEP THREE

**Fill in the Blanks:** Listen to your teacher read the article again. Fill in the blanks with the missing words.

## STEP FOUR

**Vocabulary:** In pairs/groups, remember how the words were used in today's article.

a.	<b>spoil</b>	c.	<b>complaining</b>	e.	<b>solve</b>	g.	<b>effective</b>	i.	<b>disagreeable</b>
b.	<b>attitude</b>	d.	<b>mood</b>	f.	<b>isolated</b>	h.	<b>potential</b>	j.	<b>toxic</b>

## STEP FIVE

**Discuss:** Talk about the following questions in pairs/groups. Remember to support your answers!

a.	Do you agree, that "one bad apple spoils the bunch?" Why/not?
b.	Have you ever worked with a negative person before? If yes, give details.
c.	What other solutions do you think might work with a bad apple? Why?
d.	Do you think that a bad apple usually knows he creates a negative atmosphere? Why/not?