

CITIZENSHIP

Teacher Resource

WHAT IS CITIZENSHIP?

Helping my neighbor, community and nation.

BENCHMARKS



HE.68.R.3.2 Explain and develop ways to apply leadership skills in the school and the community.



HE.68.R.3.3 Identify the importance of volunteerism in positively affecting the community and nation.



HE.68.R.3.4 Identify ways to participate in our constitutional republic through public policy, voting and leadership positions.

PURPOSE

► These interactive activities will help your students explore the characteristic of **citizenship** and make good choices that help the school, community and nation. Share the suggested introduction with your students, choose one or more of the activities below, and conclude with the suggested wrap-up. Feel free to modify or revisit activities throughout the week to continue reinforcing **citizenship**.



Suggested Introduction:

"You are familiar with **citizenship** and the importance of making good choices that help our community and nation. Today, we are going to explore **citizenship** and ways we can use our leadership skills and good character to help our community and nation.

Citizenship requires being an active member in your school, community and nation. It means acting responsibly and serving the common good. By participating in things like voting, volunteering or helping classmates, you're contributing to a stronger, more supportive society where everyone can thrive."



Activities to Build Citizenship:



1 Class Election

Introduce students to the concept of voting by holding an election in the classroom. Students can vote on class activities, school improvement projects, a mock presidential election or who should lead a specific event. Reflect on the importance of voting in a representative government, how it helps in decision-making and how every citizen's voice counts. This activity could be extended by inviting a guest from the local supervisor of elections office, or sharing books and articles about the importance of voting.

CITIZENSHIP

Teacher Resource



Activities to Build Citizenship (Continued):

2 Letters of Gratitude

Challenge students to write "Gratitude Grams" to school staff, community helpers, veterans or even senior citizens in a local retirement home. Host a "Gratitude Day" where students deliver the letters or volunteer to help. Have students reflect on how showing appreciation for others' service demonstrates good **citizenship** through a writing project, such as a class newspaper.

3 Interview a Community Leader

Have students interview a community leader about what it means to be a good citizen and leader within a community. Students can present their findings to the class and discuss how they can apply what they have learned to their own lives. Consider having students produce a class newspaper and include the interviewers.

Examples of community leaders include:

- Police officers
- Firefighters
- Local government officials
- Principals
- Teachers
- Judges



Suggested Wrap-Up:

"Today, we have explored the importance of **citizenship** and the various roles that make us good citizens. How can you apply **citizenship** in your everyday life? Whether it's helping a neighbor, joining a community project or learning about important issues, you can make a difference in the world!"

CRITICAL THINKING & PROBLEM SOLVING

Teacher Resource

WHAT IS CRITICAL THINKING & PROBLEM SOLVING?

Gathering information to think through and determine the best solution.

BENCHMARKS

- ✓ HE.68.R.4.2 Develop and apply conflict resolution skills in a variety of situations. Clarification: Coping, grit and new learning opportunities.
- ✓ HE.68.R.4.3 Analyze ways to pursue common goals as a part of a team or group. Clarification: Negotiation, give and take, and analyze pros and cons.
- ✓ HE.68.R.4.4 Identify the importance of perseverance when facing difficulty solving a problem.

PURPOSE

► These interactive activities will help your students explore the characteristics of critical thinking and problem solving and how to gather information to think through and determine the best solution to a problem. Share the suggested introduction with your students, choose one or more of the activities below, and conclude with the suggested wrap-up. Feel free to modify or revisit activities throughout the week to continue reinforcing critical thinking and problem solving.



Suggested Introduction:

"You are familiar with critical thinking and problem solving. Critical thinking involves analyzing information, asking thoughtful questions and understanding things deeply instead of just memorizing facts. Problem solving is about coming up with creative and effective solutions when faced with challenges. Together, these skills help you make better decisions, think independently and tackle problems with confidence. Today, we are going to use these skills to explore conflict resolution in a variety of situations."



Activities to Build Critical Thinking and Problem Solving:

1 Resiliency Reading Connection

Share the story *The Hiding Place* by Corrie ten Boom from the Resiliency Reading List. This is an incredible story of perseverance and resiliency that highlights critical thinking and problem solving. Have students summarize the challenges Corrie ten Boom faced and how she used these skills to demonstrate resiliency. Visit buildresiliency.org to learn about other books listed on the Resiliency Reading List; each title has a corresponding Family Reading Guide.

CRITICAL THINKING & PROBLEM SOLVING

Teacher Resource



Activities to Build Critical Thinking and Problem Solving (Continued):

2 Pathway to Progress

Create in-class challenges where students must work in teams to solve a series of puzzles or challenges in order to progress to the next station or challenge. Teachers can tailor the challenges to fit their content area. Encourage students to practice compromise, actively listen and engage in teamwork to resolve disagreements. After the challenge, hold a debrief session where students can reflect on how they resolved conflicts and worked toward a common goal. Emphasize the importance of perseverance when faced with challenges.

Example challenges include:

- Math problem – solve an equation to reveal jumbled letters
- Word scramble – unscramble letters to find a key word
- Logic puzzle – solve a riddle that leads to a Resiliency Characteristic (e.g., perseverance, empathy, mentorship)

3 The Case of the Crowded Cafeteria

Have students practice **critical thinking and problem solving** through collaboration and communication by analyzing a school-based scenario and working toward a practical compromise, using facts and respectful discussion. Present students with the scenario: "Your school has recently grown in size, and now the cafeteria is overcrowded. Some students don't have enough time to eat, while others have to sit on the floor or skip lunch altogether. The principal is asking for student input on how to improve the lunch experience without adding a new cafeteria." Assign students different roles or perspectives to represent (e.g., teachers, cafeteria staff, custodians, students with food allergies, administrators). Students will discuss in small groups the problems at hand, opinions vs. facts in their assigned roles and work together to propose a realistic compromise that balances the needs of different roles.

Example solutions include:

- Adding an extra lunch period
- Offering grab-and-go lunch options
- Opening outdoor seating
- Reworking class schedules



Suggested Wrap-Up:

"Today, we have explored **critical thinking and problem solving**. These are powerful tools that work best when paired with perseverance. When challenges feel frustrating or overwhelming, sticking with them and not giving up is key to finding the best solutions. When this is combined with careful thinking, creative **problem solving** and the determination to keep going, you can overcome almost any obstacle and grow stronger with each challenge you face!"

EMPATHY

Teacher Resource

WHAT IS EMPATHY?

Understanding others' thoughts, feelings and actions.

BENCHMARKS



HE.68.R.1.1

Demonstrate the ability to respond with **empathy** in a variety of contexts and situations. Clarification: Identifying others' feelings, perspectives, circumstances, experiences and active listening.



HE.68.R.1.2

Describe the importance of **empathy**, kindness, honesty and trust in building and sustaining relationships.

PURPOSE

► These interactive activities will help your students learn the characteristic of **empathy** and understanding others' thoughts, feelings and actions. Share the suggested introduction with your students, choose one or more of the activities below, and conclude with the suggested wrap-up. Feel free to modify or revisit activities throughout the week to continue reinforcing **empathy**.



Suggested Introduction:

"You are familiar with **empathy** and understanding others' thoughts, feelings and actions. **Empathy** helps us connect with others, show kindness, and support friends and family who go through hardships. When we demonstrate **empathy**, we make our community a more caring and understanding place. It's a skill that makes a big difference in how we treat one another!"



Activities to Build Empathy:

1

Resiliency Reading Connection

Read *The Survivor Tree: Inspired by a True Story* by Cheryl Somers Aubin from the Commissioner's Book of the Month List. Have students discuss the examples of **empathy** found in the book. Encourage students to reflect on how they felt while reading the book and brainstorm how they may have responded in a similar situation. At the end of the week, hold a class discussion and focus on what they have learned about responding with **empathy** in a variety of contexts and situations. Visit buildresiliency.org to learn about other books listed on the Resiliency Reading List; each title has a corresponding Family Reading Guide.

EMPATHY

Teacher Resource



Activities to Build Empathy (Continued):

2 Empathy in the Workplace

Provide students with examples of workplace interactions (e.g., a coworker asking for help, a supervisor giving feedback, a customer expressing concern). In groups, have students brainstorm to explore what the individual in each scenario thinks and needs. Then, have students consider **empathetic** and effective ways to communicate in each situation and discuss the role of active listening and professionalism in workplace communication.

3 Building Empathy

Divide students into pairs and give them a task that will require students to communicate and demonstrate **empathy** when solving a problem.

Tasks for students could include:

- Solving a school or community issue
- Renaming a school
- Changing a school mascot

This activity requires clear communication, trust and cooperation. Afterward, have students reflect on their experiences and discuss how the students needed to trust each other, show patience and respond with **empathy** when the activity got difficult.



Suggested Wrap-Up:

"Today, we have explored **empathy** and practiced understanding how and why others think, feel and act. You never know what another person is going through in his or her life. When we recognize others' feelings, understand where they are coming from and choose to show them kindness, we are building stronger relationships and creating a more supportive community. Remember, even small actions like listening, offering help or just being there for someone can make a big difference. Let's continue to use **empathy** every day to make the world a kinder place!"

GRATITUDE

Teacher Resource

WHAT IS GRATITUDE?

Being thankful and sharing appreciation with others.

BENCHMARKS



HE.68.R.1.1 Demonstrate the ability to respond with empathy in a variety of contexts and situations. Clarification: Identifying others' feelings, perspectives, circumstances, experiences and active listening.



HE.68.R.2.1 Discuss how character is shaped by attitudes, decisions and actions.

PURPOSE

► These interactive activities will help your students explore the characteristic of **gratitude** and how character is shaped by our attitudes, decisions and actions. Share the suggested introduction with your students, choose one or more of the activities below, and conclude with the suggested wrap-up. Feel free to modify or revisit activities throughout the week to continue reinforcing **gratitude**.



Suggested Introduction:

"You are familiar with **gratitude**, how to be thankful and share appreciation with others. Showing **gratitude** is more than saying 'thank you.' It requires us to listen actively, understand those around us, and choose to respond kindly and with grace. When you choose to respond to others with **gratitude**, you are making a conscious decision to choose kindness and grace. This builds good character and stronger friendships."



Activities to Build Gratitude:



Resiliency Reading Connection

From the Resiliency Reading List, share the short story "When Mr. Bluebird Won His Coat" from "Citizenship and Leadership" in *The Moral Compass: Stories for a Life's Journey* by William J. Bennett. Mr. Bluebird gave to others without expecting anything in return. This is an example of how to show respect and **gratitude** to others. Mr. Bluebird's only intention was to help Old Mother Nature. He was not seeking fame or recognition like the others. His actions mirrored characteristics of being a helpful citizen, and his humble attitude gained him the honor of being one of the most treasured birds in nature. Lead students in a discussion of why it is important to help others without expecting recognition or a reward. Visit buildresiliency.org to learn about other books listed on the Resiliency Reading List; each title has a corresponding Family Reading Guide.

GRATITUDE

Teacher Resource



Activities to Build Gratitude (Continued):

2 Class Discussion About Gratitude

Display this quote from Marcus Tullius Cicero: "To be content with what we possess is the greatest and most secure of riches." Cicero was a Roman politician, lawyer, orator, political theorist, philosopher and constitutionalist who lived during the years of 106–43 BC. Direct students to discuss in pairs what Cicero meant by this quote and how it applies to their own lives. How would adopting Cicero's perspective impact one's attitudes, decisions and actions?

3 Character Building Through Acts of Gratitude

Help students show their appreciation to an individual or organization (e.g., local fire department, hospital, nursing home). Assign students roles to organize everyone's ideas (e.g., notetaker, group leader, supply organizer). Encourage students to reflect on how **gratitude** is demonstrated through their attitudes and actions. Be sure to discuss how **gratitude** and empathy can lead to positive choices and habits.



Suggested Wrap-Up:

"Today, we have explored **gratitude** and discussed how character is shaped by attitudes, decisions and actions. By expressing thanks to those around us, we demonstrate **gratitude** and build resiliency. Simple acts, like writing thank-you notes or sharing what we're grateful for in our lives, cultivate an attitude of **gratitude**. Remember, being grateful can change how we see the world and make our lives more fulfilling!"

GRIT

Teacher Resource

WHAT IS GRIT?

Working consistently toward long-term goals.

BENCHMARKS

- ✓ HE.68.R.2.4 Monitor progress toward attaining a personal goal.
- ✓ HE.68.R.2.8 Identify strategies to manage challenges and setbacks.
Clarification: Time management, setting boundaries, setting realistic goals and self-care.

PURPOSE

► These interactive activities will help your students implement strategies to demonstrate **grit** by managing setbacks, monitoring progress and working consistently toward their goals. Share the suggested introduction with your students, choose one or more of the activities below, and conclude with the suggested wrap-up. Feel free to modify or revisit activities throughout the week to continue reinforcing **grit**.



Suggested Introduction:

"Today, we are going to explore **grit**, something you have demonstrated in different situations. We use this skill when we work consistently toward long-term goals and face challenges or setbacks. When we demonstrate **grit**, we make progress toward achieving a personal goal, and we become more resilient and adaptable. **Grit** helps us keep our focus on the end result, motivating us to reflect on our progress, adjust our strategies and identify new ways to overcome obstacles."



Activities to Build Grit:

1 Setbacks Scenario Workshop

Help students identify strategies to manage setbacks and challenges to develop **grit**. Present students with different scenarios that include common setbacks (e.g., not making the sports team, failing a test, running out of time for a project). Ask students to brainstorm strategies for overcoming each setback (e.g., asking for help, revising the plan, setting a short-term or long-term goal). As a class, share the strategies and reflect on how setbacks are a normal part of reaching a goal. Emphasize the importance of **grit** and learning from mistakes.

GRIT

Teacher Resource



Activities to Build Grit (Continued):

2 Visualize to Realize: Mapping Your Goal Journey

Help students identify a short-term goal that can be achieved in one or two months (e.g., improve one grade by completing all assignments, learn and master 10 new vocabulary words each week) and stay motivated by visualizing the end result. Have students create mini-vision boards that depict what success will look like when they achieve their personal goals. Students can use pictures, words or drawings that represent the outcome they want to reach. Be sure students include strategies for reaching their goals on the mini-vision board as well. Encourage students to keep the vision board in a place where it can be seen regularly. Discuss how staying focused on the bigger picture, especially when facing challenges along the way, can help students stay consistent in working toward long-term goals.

3 Grit Role Models

Help students learn about grit and resiliency from role models. Ask students to research or watch a video about a famous person who faced significant challenges or failures but persevered (e.g., Frederick Douglass, George Washington, Thomas Edison, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.). Then, have students compare and contrast through written reflections or presentations how the role models demonstrated grit and how this relates to reaching their own goals. Have students share their presentations with the class and discuss how failure can be a stepping stone to success. Emphasize how demonstrating grit plays a huge role in reaching goals and achievements.



Suggested Wrap-Up:

"Today, we have explored new ways we can use grit and plan for success as you go through middle school and prepare for high school. By using different strategies and demonstrating grit, we develop the strength needed to stay on course, allowing us to approach setbacks as opportunities for growth, rather than reasons to give up."

HONESTY

Teacher Resource

WHAT IS HONESTY?

Telling the truth.

BENCHMARKS

HE.68.R.1.2

Describe the importance of empathy, kindness, **honesty** and trust in building and sustaining relationships.

HE.68.R.2.1

Discuss how character is shaped by attitudes, decisions and actions.

PURPOSE

► These interactive activities will help your students explore the complex layers of **honesty** and the importance of being truthful in building and sustaining relationships. Share the suggested introduction with your students, choose one or more of the activities below, and conclude with the suggested wrap-up. Feel free to modify or revisit activities throughout the week to continue reinforcing **honesty**.



Suggested Introduction:

"You are familiar with **honesty** and the importance of telling the truth. **Honesty** is fundamental in building and sustaining relationships with others, and it creates a foundation of trust, empathy and kindness. When you are **honest**, you are demonstrating that you value the relationship enough to be truthful, even when it may be difficult. **Honesty** requires good character, and it is shaped by your attitude, decisions and actions. When you are **honest**, you are building trust because people will know they can rely on you."



Activities to Build Honesty:

1 Think, Pair and Share

Facilitate a discussion with students to explore **honesty**. Divide students into partners or small groups. Present students with scenarios that will encourage critical thinking about **honesty**, kindness and empathy in relationships (e.g., you receive a present you don't like, giving feedback in a group project or setting). After the discussion, talk with students about why **honesty** is important, how empathy plays a role and how decisions reflect character.

Possible discussion topics include:

- Why is it important to be **honest** even in difficult situations?
- How can we use kindness and understanding when being **honest** with others?

HONESTY

Teacher Resource



Activities to Build Honesty (Continued):

2 Build a “Trust Pyramid”

Help students visualize how **honesty**, empathy and kindness are foundational in building strong relationships by having students create a visual of a “trust pyramid.” Start with the base being built on traits like **honesty**, empathy, kindness and trust. At each level, students will add how these traits help maintain healthy relationships (e.g., respect, communication) until they reach the top, symbolizing a strong, supportive relationship. Discuss with students how relationships that are built on these values create a strong foundation and how these values reflect good character.

3 Honesty in the Judicial System

Present a scenario to students demonstrating **honesty** in the courtroom (e.g., Imagine a courtroom where someone is accused of a crime. A witness saw what happened but lies on the witness stand. The lie causes the judge and jury to make the wrong decision.). Pair students with a partner and ask them to discuss the following:

- Why is **honesty** important in the judicial system?
- What might happen if **honesty** isn't valued in the judicial system?
- What could happen if people, such as witnesses, lawyers or judges, were not **honest** during a trial?

Have students share their ideas with the class. Encourage students to think about fairness, justice and the consequences of dishonesty. Summarize the discussion by emphasizing that the judicial system relies on **honesty** to ensure fair decisions, protect innocent people and hold guilty people accountable.



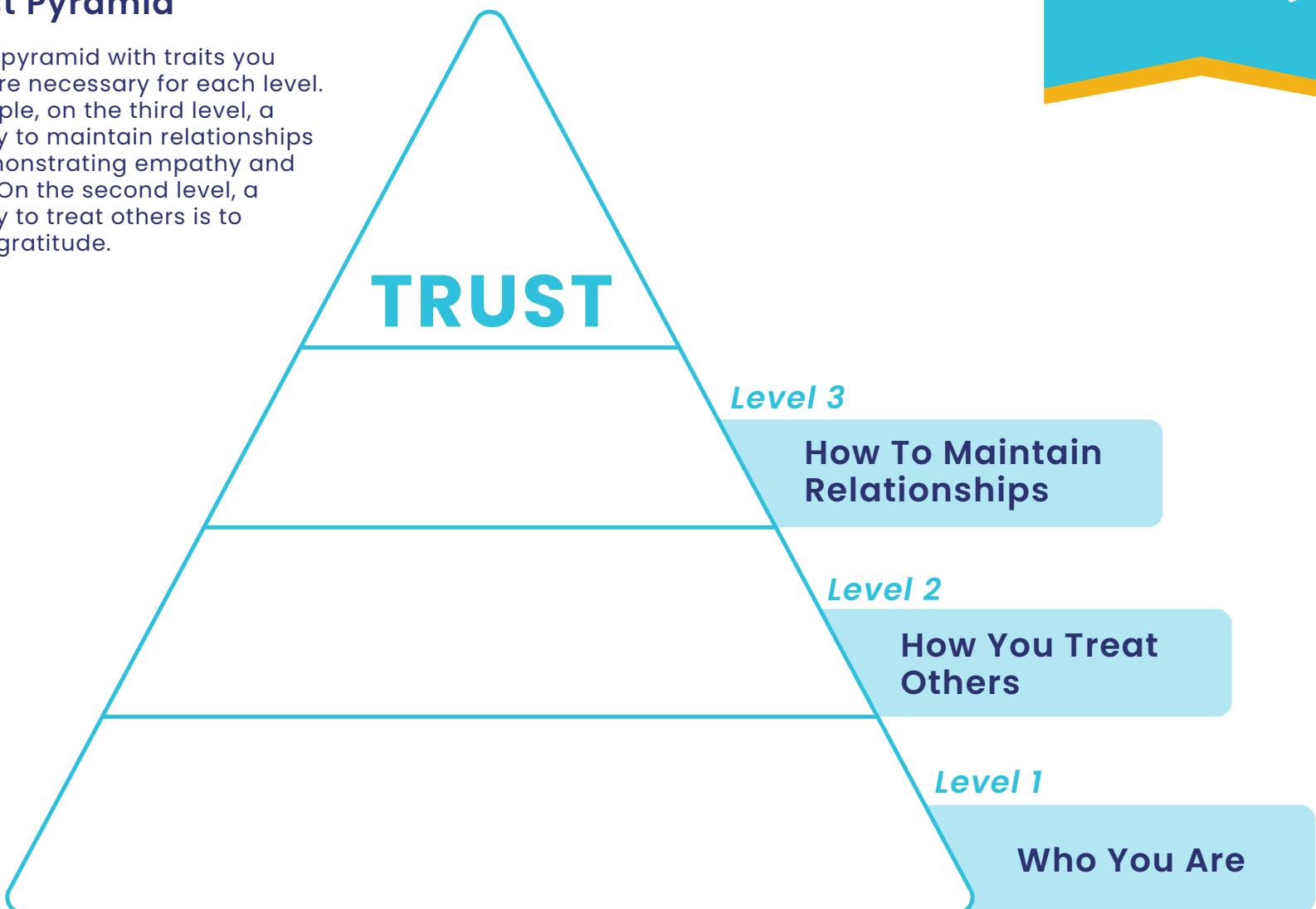
Suggested Wrap-Up:

“Today, we have explored the importance of **honesty** and the importance of this characteristic in building good relationships. As you go through the week, look for opportunities to practice **honesty** and appreciate when others are **honest** with you. Remember, **honesty** is a choice we make daily, one that strengthens our relationships, enriches our lives and builds character.”

HONESTY

Trust Pyramid

Fill in the pyramid with traits you believe are necessary for each level. For example, on the third level, a great way to maintain relationships is by demonstrating empathy and honesty. On the second level, a great way to treat others is to practice gratitude.



This is a supplemental document to support the 6-8 Honesty Teacher Resource.

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MENTORSHIP

Teacher Resource

WHAT IS MENTORSHIP?

Giving or asking for support, guidance, training or expertise.

BENCHMARKS



Discuss ways a leader can build the trust of individuals and groups.



Explain and develop ways to apply leadership skills in the school and the community.

PURPOSE

► These interactive activities will help your students explore the characteristic of mentorship and how to give or ask for support, guidance, training or expertise. Share the suggested introduction with your students, choose one or more of the activities below, and conclude with the suggested wrap-up. Feel free to modify or revisit activities throughout the week to continue reinforcing mentorship.



Suggested Introduction:

"You are familiar with mentorship and what it looks like to ask or give support, guidance, training or expertise. Mentorship gives us the opportunity to share our knowledge and experience to support someone else's growth. This helps build trust because the person you're helping knows he or she can count on you for advice and encouragement. Mentorship also builds strong relationships where both people can learn from and respect each other."



Activities to Build Mentorship:



1 Community Leader Speaker Series

Invite community leaders (e.g., first responder, school principal, elected official, local business owner) to speak about how they give or ask for support, guidance, training or expertise. Discuss with students the leadership traits they learned about and how those lessons can be applied in their lives. As a follow-up activity, have students write thank-you notes to the community leader to practice the Resiliency Characteristic of gratitude.

MENTORSHIP

Teacher Resource



Activities to Build Mentorship (Continued):

2 Feedback Practice

Learning from a mentor includes taking constructive feedback and applying that feedback to your life. It can be challenging to receive feedback because you may feel you are being criticized or judged. An effective mentor will be honest with the intention of helping you to grow and achieve your goals. Also, it can be challenging for a mentor to give feedback in a fair and empathetic manner. By practicing both giving and receiving constructive feedback, you are building resiliency. Have students discuss ways to effectively give and receive constructive feedback.

3 Mentorship and Goal Setting

Have each student determine a short-term and long-term goal he or she wants to accomplish for the school year (e.g., being selected for an athletics team, increasing volunteer activities, entering a music competition). Have students write down who can serve as a mentor for that goal and write the ways the mentor can assist in achieving this goal. Have students take turns sharing their reflections with the class and encourage students to provide feedback or suggestions of additional ways the mentor could serve the student with his or her goal.



Suggested Wrap-Up:

"Today, we have built upon your knowledge of mentorship. As you get older, you can not only benefit from the support of a mentor, but become a mentor yourself. Mentorship is a great way to help others while building leadership skills."

PERSEVERANCE

Teacher Resource

WHAT IS PERSEVERANCE?

Continuing to try even when things are hard.

BENCHMARKS

- ✓ HE.68.R.2.5 Explain strategies and skills needed to assess progress and maintenance of a challenging personal goal.
- ✓ HE.68.R.2.8 Identify strategies to manage challenges and setbacks.
Clarification: Time management, setting boundaries, setting realistic goals and self-care.
- ✓ HE.68.R.4.4 Identify the importance of perseverance when facing difficulty solving a problem.

PURPOSE

► These interactive activities will help your students implement strategies to persevere by managing challenges and setbacks and assessing progress of personal goals. Share the suggested introduction with your students, choose one or more of the activities below, and conclude with the suggested wrap-up. Feel free to modify or revisit activities throughout the week to continue reinforcing perseverance.



Suggested Introduction:

"Today, we are going to explore perseverance. We use this skill when we face hardships. Perhaps you're struggling with time management to study for a test or having difficulty with setting boundaries to focus on priority tasks. Perseverance is the skill that helps us push through these hardships and setbacks, set personal goals and assess how we are progressing."



Activities to Build Perseverance:

1 Weekly Goal Journals

Have each student identify a short-term and long-term goal he or she would like to achieve. Talk about the steps needed for each student to reach his or her unique goals. Next, discuss with your students possible challenges, setbacks and supports that are needed when working toward these goals. Have students journal their experiences each week while working toward their goals. Be sure to check in and make connections to perseverance throughout each day.

2 My Future Self Letter

Challenge students to imagine what they want to achieve by the end of the school year. Have students write a letter to their future selves, describing the goals they want to accomplish. At the end of the year, return to the letters to see what goals they met. Make daily connections to perseverance and discuss how it is important to continue to try even when things are hard. Encourage students to recognize when they need to seek support from a parent, teacher or friend.

PERSEVERANCE

Teacher Resource



Activities to Build Perseverance (Continued):

3 Teamwork Challenge

Create a group challenge where students must work together to solve a problem. Be sure the challenge you arrange allows students to rely on each other. Encourage students to brainstorm strategies together and share responsibility for **persevering** through the challenge.

Possible challenges could include:

- Building the tallest tower out of blocks or a limited number of supplies provided
- Completing a scavenger hunt
- Solving a mystery



Suggested Wrap-Up:

"Today, we have explored new ways we can use **perseverance** and plan for success as you go through middle school and prepare for high school. Remember that challenges have different forms, which may include not having enough time or resources, or a way of transportation. Remember, it is okay to ask for help from a parent, teacher or classmate if you need it. Each time you face a challenge this week, remember your skills and strengths, and that you are capable of conquering anything you set your mind to!"

RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING

Teacher Resource

WHAT IS RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING?

Thinking about all options and outcomes to make the best choice.

BENCHMARKS



HE.68.R.2.2 Demonstrate responsible decision-making that considers multiple perspectives.



HE.68.R.4.1 Analyze possible solutions to a problem to determine the best outcome for oneself and others.

PURPOSE

► These interactive activities will help your students implement the characteristic of responsible decision-making in more complex situations and how to think about all options and outcomes to make the best choice. Share the suggested introduction with your students, choose one or more of the activities below, and conclude with the suggested wrap-up. Feel free to modify or revisit activities throughout the week to continue reinforcing responsible decision-making.



Suggested Introduction:

"Today, we are going to use responsible decision-making to analyze and determine the possible solutions in various situations. Responsible decision-making means thinking about all options and outcomes to make the best choice. What if there are multiple perspectives and more than one solution? For example, imagine you are playing a game with your friends, and two friends decide they both want to be the leader. One friend may suggest he is the best option because he knows the rules best, while the other may suggest she is the best option because she has played the game more often. This situation has different perspectives because both friends have valid reasons for wanting to lead. When we use our responsible decision-making skills, we could determine a possible solution of taking turns leading, letting someone else decide or working together as co-leaders. It's important to listen to each side and find a fair way to solve the problem. When you use your responsible decision-making skills, you are considering those around you and building good character."



Activities to Build Responsible Decision-Making:



1 Democracy in Action: Making Responsible Civic Choices

Teach students how responsible decision-making applies to citizenship and help them understand the impact of voting and civic participation. Begin by asking students what makes someone a responsible citizen. Discuss how civic decisions (e.g., voting, following rules, speaking up for what is right) can affect our community. Present a scenario: "Your town is voting on whether to build a new park. While some say it will improve the community, others say it costs too much. What should you do?" Have students discuss in pairs to determine the most responsible decision in this scenario. Have each pair share their answer with the class for discussion on the impact different decisions would have on the community. Ask students why it is important to make informed, responsible, civic decisions. Have students reflect on one civic action they can take responsibly (e.g., staying informed, volunteering).

RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING

Teacher Resource



Activities to Build Responsible Decision-Making (Continued):

2 Character Decisions: Responsible or Not?

Read a short excerpt from *Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen from the B.E.S.T. English Language Arts Booklist that portrays the character (Brian) making a wise, **responsible decision** and analyze the outcome. Have students then think about what the outcomes would have been if Brian's decisions had been impulsive and irresponsible. Have students complete a "Decisions in *Hatchet*" worksheet.

Example questions could include:

- What was the decision?
- Was it **responsible** or irresponsible? How?
- What were the outcomes?

Discuss with the class how Brian's decisions can relate to real-life situations. Have students explain how they can practice **responsible decision-making** and resiliency when making tough decisions.

3 Budgeting for Real Life

Teach students how **responsible** financial choices impact daily life. Use math to budget for needs (e.g., food, water, clothing) versus wants (e.g., luxury items, video games). Ask students how they would use \$100 over the course of one month. Discuss **responsible** and irresponsible spending. Provide students with a budget sheet for them to allocate their \$100 responsibly and discuss the choices they made.

Discussion questions may include:

- Who saved money?
- Who overspent?
- What will happen next month if you overspent?

Encourage students to reflect on how budgeting responsibly in real life prevents overspending, ensures needs are met first and reduces stress. Have students share how they will incorporate financial literacy in their **decision-making**.



Suggested Wrap-Up:

"You all did a great job analyzing different perspectives and determining the best solution using your **responsible decision-making** skills! The more you practice this skill, the better you will become at understanding the perspectives of others and communicating the best outcome in complex situations."

RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING

Decisions in *Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen



After reading a short excerpt from *Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen, complete the responsible decisions chart below.

Responsible Decision Example:

Irresponsible Decision Example:

Outcome:

Outcome:

What are ways that you can practice responsible decision-making and resiliency when making decisions or encountering challenges?

This is a supplemental document to support the 6-8 Responsible Decision-Making Teacher Resource.

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RESPONSIBILITY

Teacher Resource

WHAT IS RESPONSIBILITY?

Owning my actions, using good judgment and practicing self-control.

BENCHMARKS

- ✓ HE.68.R.2.1 Discuss how character is shaped by attitudes, decisions and actions.
- ✓ HE.68.R.2.3 Describe the importance of following school and community laws and rules.
- ✓ HE.68.R.2.9 Identify healthy responses to negative peer pressure.

PURPOSE

► These interactive activities will help your students implement strategies to demonstrate **responsibility** by understanding how character is shaped and how to respond to negative peer pressure. Share the suggested introduction with your students, choose one or more of the activities below, and conclude with the suggested wrap-up. Feel free to modify or revisit activities throughout the week to continue reinforcing **responsibility**.



Suggested Introduction:

"Today, we are going to explore the characteristic of **responsibility** and how to respond to negative peer pressure. **Responsibility** is using good judgment, self-control and owning one's actions. It's about staying true to your values and doing what you believe is right, even when others choose to go down a different path. **Responsibility** helps you stand up for yourself and protect those around you."



Activities to Build Responsibility:

1 Build Resiliency for High School Responsibilities

Lead students in a discussion on **responsibilities** that they may have when starting high school. Some examples include learning how to drive, documenting volunteer hours for the Bright Futures Scholarship Program or getting a part-time job. Provide some time for students to write down anticipated **responsibilities** in high school, discuss with a partner and align with the other Resiliency Characteristics (e.g., grit when the new **responsibility** is challenging, mentorship to ask for help if needed) that will help to manage these **responsibilities** successfully.

RESPONSIBILITY

Teacher Resource



Activities to Build Responsibility (Continued):

2 Responsibility of Citizenship

Divide students into small groups and give each group a scenario card that describes a real-life situation involving school or community laws or citizenship duties (e.g., a student skipping school, someone littering in a park, a citizen deciding whether to vote).

Each group will:

- Identify the rule or law being broken or followed.
- Explain why it is important.
- Determine whether it is an obligation or a responsibility.
- Discuss how this impacts the school, community or society.

3 Public Service Announcement

Have students create a short public service announcement (PSA) about the importance of responsibility. This can be a video, poster or speech that educates their peers. Students can focus on themes, such as character, peer pressure, and following school or community rules. Have students present their PSAs to the class.



Suggested Wrap-Up:

"Today, we have explored new ways we can use responsibility when faced with difficult situations. Remember, even if your friends disagree, it's okay to say no and make your own choices. When you choose to be responsible, you not only make better choices for yourself, but you also set an example for others to follow."

SELF-AWARENESS & SELF-MANAGEMENT

Teacher Resource

WHAT IS SELF-AWARENESS & SELF-MANAGEMENT?

Understanding and governing our thoughts, actions and impact on others.

BENCHMARKS



HE.68.R.1.1

Demonstrate the ability to respond with empathy in a variety of contexts and situations. Clarification: Identifying others' feelings, perspectives, circumstances, experiences and active listening.



HE.68.R.2.9

Identify healthy responses to negative peer pressure.

PURPOSE

► These interactive activities will help your students implement strategies to enhance their **self-awareness and self-management** skills. Share the suggested introduction with your students, choose one or more of the activities below, and conclude with the suggested wrap-up. Feel free to modify or revisit activities throughout the week to continue reinforcing **self-awareness and self-management**.



Suggested Introduction:

"Today, we are going to explore the characteristics of **self-awareness and self-management**. **Self-awareness** is how we recognize our feelings, strengths and weaknesses. **Self-management** uses that awareness to stay in control of our reactions and make wise decisions. Together, these skills help us handle stress, respond with empathy in difficult situations and improve our relationships with others. **Self-awareness and self-management** are key skills to navigating through challenges in life."



Activities to Build Self-Awareness and Self-Management:

1

Self-Management in History

Present students with real-world examples of historical figures who resisted societal pressure. Have students analyze how **self-awareness and self-management** played a role in the historical figures' decisions. Discuss what might have happened to them if they had been influenced differently by peer or societal pressure. Have students write a reflection on how they can resist potential peer pressure through the use of **self-management** skills to make responsible decisions.

Examples of historical figures could include:

- Abraham Lincoln
- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Rosa Parks

SELF-AWARENESS & SELF-MANAGEMENT

Teacher Resource



Activities to Build Self-Awareness and Self-Management (Continued):

2 Resiliency Reading Connection

Have students explore **self-awareness and self-management** skills by analyzing a passage from the autobiography *Long Walk to Freedom* by Nelson Mandela from the B.E.S.T. English Language Arts Booklist. Nelson Mandela was a leader in South Africa who fought against apartheid and endured 27 years of imprisonment. He later became the country's first Black president, symbolizing resiliency and triumph. During Mandela's time in prison, he had to practice strong **self-awareness and self-management** skills to control his feelings and actions and stay hopeful. Have students reflect on how Mandela's experiences and choices demonstrated these Resiliency Characteristics.

Example discussion questions could include:

- What feelings do you think Mandela experienced based on his experiences?
- How did he manage his feelings and actions?
- What might have happened if he had reacted differently?

Have students write a reflection on a time when they faced a challenge or difficult situation. Ask students how **self-awareness** can help them make good decisions and how **self-management** can help them stay calm and focused in tough situations. Students should briefly describe the situation, explain how they managed their feelings and actions, and what they might do differently after reading about Mandela.

3 "Self-Awareness and Self-Management Toolbox"

Provide students with a scenario (e.g., "You are upset because a group of friends excluded you."). Have students create a "**Self-Awareness and Self-Management** Toolbox" by listing healthy coping strategies, such as talking to a friend or journaling. Students can also share examples of times when they successfully used **self-management** and **self-awareness** strategies to get through a tough situation (e.g., preparing for a hard test, trying out for a sports team, preparing for a music performance). Be sure to discuss the importance of identifying others' feelings and perspectives and how others can help them resolve misunderstandings.



Suggested Wrap-Up:

"Today, we have explored **self-awareness and self-management**, implemented strategies we can use to reflect on our feelings, and identified ways we can cope with these feelings in a variety of situations. Remember, whether it's staying focused during a stressful test or calm during a heated conversation, the more you practice these skills, the easier it will become to identify your feelings and react to difficult situations with calmness and grace."