

GRATITUDE

Teacher Resource

WHAT IS GRATITUDE?

Being thankful and sharing appreciation with others.

BENCHMARKS

- ✓ **HE.912.R.1.1** Demonstrate effective and respectful communication skills and strategies. Clarification: Differing opinions.
- ✓ **HE.912.R.1.2** Demonstrate empathy in a variety of contexts and situations. Clarification: Identifying others' feelings, perspectives, circumstances, experiences and active listening.

PURPOSE

- ▶ These interactive activities will help your students explore the characteristic of **gratitude** in a variety of contexts and situations and demonstrate effective and respectful communication. 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**, being thankful and sharing appreciation with others. Demonstrating **gratitude** through communication goes beyond simple acknowledgment; it involves active listening, thoughtful responses and an appreciation for others' perspectives. By employing strategies, such as using positive affirmations and practicing empathy, you can demonstrate **gratitude** in your daily life."



Activities to Build Gratitude:

1 Gratitude Debate

Divide students into two teams (pro and con) and debate whether **gratitude** can improve society. Give students time to research and prepare their arguments using credible sources and real-world examples. Structure the debate (opening statement is 2 minutes, rebuttal is 2 minutes, cross-examination is 2 minutes, closing statement is 1 minute). This will develop their communication and critical thinking skills while also exploring the physical and mental health benefits of **gratitude** and the impact it has on others.

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GRADES
9–12



Activities to Build Gratitude (Continued):

2 Resiliency Reading Connection

Share the story of Lieutenant Louis Zamperini from *Unbroken: An Olympian's Journey from Airman to Castaway to Captive* by Laura Hillenbrand from the Resiliency Reading List. Zamperini endured tremendous pain and terror after surviving a plane crash during World War II. He was adrift at sea for 47 days before he was rescued. Then, after thinking that he was about to be saved, Zamperini was taken as a prisoner of war by the Japanese Navy. Even though he suffered and was tortured by his captors, he proved to be resilient. Zamperini never gave up or lost hope during the many challenges and setbacks he faced. Discuss with the class how it could be challenging to demonstrate **gratitude** when faced with such incredible challenges. Ask students to share who or what they are grateful for, both large and small. Conclude the discussion by explaining how having a positive perspective and being grateful can enrich our lives. Encourage students to read *Unbroken: An Olympian's Journey from Airman to Castaway to Captive* to learn more about Zamperini's incredible journey. Visit buildresiliency.org to learn about other books listed on the Resiliency Reading List; each title has a corresponding Family Reading Guide.

3 Gratitude Interview

Have students interview one individual on how **gratitude** has played a role in his or her life. Teachers may choose to develop or assign students to create interview questions. Invite students to share the interview responses to compare and contrast the impact **gratitude** and empathy have on others. Have students reflect on active listening and how understanding others' perspectives can improve communication and build empathy.



Suggested Wrap-Up:

"You have explored **gratitude** throughout your childhood. As you move beyond high school, how can you cultivate **gratitude** in your everyday life? Remember, whether expressed through simple acts of kindness, verbal acknowledgments or meaningful gestures, **gratitude** builds stronger relationships and strengthens our resiliency."