

PART
CREATING A POSITIVE
ENVIRONMENT



GETTING STARTED

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART I: CREATING A POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT

Getting Started

1. Who Are You? **3**
2. What Is Overcoming Obstacles? **10**
3. Working In Teams **18**
4. Setting Expectations **26**

WHO ARE YOU?



AGENDA

- Starter
- The Name Game
- If I Were...
- Untying the Knot
- Conclusion
- Student Assessment

Objectives

Students will identify themselves and learn their classmates' names.

Students will explore and share ideas and images that represent them as individuals.

Students will break down personal space boundaries and develop teamwork skills.

Materials Needed

- A sheet of writing paper or interactive electronic device for each student (Part II)

Starter (3 minutes)

Welcome students. Ask them to seat themselves alphabetically, but to complete this task without talking to each other. Allow several moments for students to attempt this task. When students begin to get frustrated, ask them to identify why they are having difficulty completing the assignment. (*Students should say that they don't know each other's names.*)

Tell students that this course is all about them. Explain that if they are going to feel comfortable talking about ideas and learning together, they need to get to know one another.

Explain to students that the purpose of today's lesson is for them to learn each other's names, to learn some facts about one another, and to consider some facts and feelings about themselves.

Part I The Name Game (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students play a game in which they identify themselves and learn their classmates' names.

1. STUDENTS LISTEN TO DIRECTIONS.

Ask students to arrange themselves according to the order of their birthdays. (Allow them to speak as they complete this task.) Once they have arranged themselves, ask them to sit in a large circle. Take a place in the circle yourself. Explain that students will take turns saying their names, along with facts or adjectives about their names or themselves. For example, students might say "My name is Cheryl—with a C," "I'm Mark, after my grandfather," or "I'm Soccer Sally." Give students a few moments to think of how they will introduce themselves.

2. STUDENTS INTRODUCE THEMSELVES TO THE GROUP AND REARRANGE THEMSELVES IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER.

Begin by saying your name and a fact about yourself, and then have students take turns doing the same. As students introduce themselves, invite them to rearrange themselves in alphabetical order by their first names. Explain that students whose names begin with "A" should be together, followed by students whose names begin with "B," and so on. Observe how students accomplish this task. Step in to give guidance or to offer suggestions, but only when necessary.

Afterward, go around the circle and have students introduce themselves again, in alphabetical order. Allow students to make final adjustments in seating.

3. STUDENTS IDENTIFY CLASSMATES BY NAME.

Tell students that they are going to introduce themselves, alphabetically, one more time. This time, challenge them to say their own name and repeat the names of the people who have gone before them. Tell students that they may help each other if they get stuck. If you have a large class, consider dividing students into groups of six or eight for this portion of the activity.

When students have finished, tell them that it will be much easier for them to work together now that they know each other.

Part II If I Were... (20 minutes)

Purpose: Students explore and share ideas and images that represent them as individuals.

1. STUDENTS EXPLORE AND IDENTIFY IDEAS AND IMAGES THAT REPRESENT THEM AS INDIVIDUALS.

Ask students to take out a piece of paper or interactive electronic device.

Ask students to write answers to the following questions. Point out that these questions require students to think about themselves—something this course will help them learn to do.

Pause after each question, allowing students time to jot down answers:

- If you were a book, what book or type of book would you be?
- If you were a character in a story or a movie, who would you be?
- If you were a piece of clothing, what would you be?
- If you were an animal, what would you be?
- If you were food, what would you be?
- If you were one of the four elements—earth, wind, water, or fire—which one would you be?

2. STUDENTS SHARE THEIR ANSWERS.

Choose a group of students who are similar in some way (e.g., all boys in the room wearing black shoes, all girls with blue eyes, all students with birthdays in September, all students in the back row). Invite this group of students to read their answers to the first question. Encourage them to explain their choices. Express interest in and appreciation for all responses. If a student is reluctant to explain, accept this and move on.

As students respond, observe reactions from the rest of the class. Make notes about their reactions for use in forming class guidelines during part III of lesson 3.

Choose a different group of students, and invite them to share their responses to the second question. Continue in this manner until each student in the room has had a chance to respond and all questions have been answered.

3. STUDENTS RECEIVE AFFIRMATION AND INSPIRATION.

Praise students for their participation. Restate that the goal of this course is for students to learn things about themselves and each other. Tell students that they will all have opportunities to discuss issues that are important to them, share opinions, and participate in discussions and activities.

Say, “How much or how little you learn in this course depends on each of you. I promise that if you are active and participate, you will learn something. You will also improve your chances for success in school, in work, and in everything you choose to do!”

Part III Untying the Knot (10 minutes)

Purpose: Students play a group interaction game that breaks down personal space boundaries and helps them develop teamwork skills.

1. STUDENTS FORM SMALL GROUPS.

Set up some open space in your classroom or take the class outside. Ask students to form groups of eight or nine, with boys and girls represented equally in each group. Try to form groups of students who don't seem to know each other well.

2. STUDENTS LISTEN TO DIRECTIONS AND THEN PLAY THE GAME.

Have each group stand in a circle. If space is limited, have only one or two groups working at the same time. Tell students to listen closely to these directions before following them:

- First, reach your right hand into the center of the circle.
- Join your right hand with another person who is not standing next to you.
- Now, reach your left hand into the center of the circle.
- Join your left hand with a different person who is not standing next to you.
- Without letting go of one another's hands, untangle yourselves and form a circle again. When you would like someone to move or take some sort of action, you must address that person by name.

As students work, encourage their efforts. Make observations about the relative success of each group for use in the next step.

3. STUDENTS REFLECT ON THEIR EXPERIENCES.

Comment on the outcome of the game. Ask questions such as the following:

- I noticed that a few groups seemed to work especially well together. How did you manage to untangle yourselves?
- Was this activity easy or difficult?
- I noticed that some groups fell apart right away. What happened?
- What would you do differently if you had to do this activity again?
- What was the most difficult part of this activity?

Ask students if they are able to remember most of their classmates' names. If necessary, go around the room again and have students say their names.

Conclusion (2 minutes)

Ask students to explain why personal involvement in this class is important. Ask students to name some people in the class that they didn't know before and what they have learned about those people. Elicit from students the following **key points** that were taught in this lesson:

- Each student is an important member of this class.
- It's important that everyone in this class makes an effort to get to know everyone else and work together. The success of the class as a whole depends on this.
- Each student needs to take an active role in the class. Individual success depends on this.

Student Assessment

1. Why is it important to get to know everyone in this class?
2. If you could be like someone else in your family, whom would you be like? List three characteristics you admire in this person.
3. List three things you can do to take an active part in learning in this class.

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Using Quotations

Quote: “Men go abroad to wonder at the heights of mountains, at the huge waves of the sea, at the long courses of the rivers, at the vast compass of the ocean, at the circular motions of the stars, and they pass by themselves without wondering.” –St. Augustine

Activity: Have students write what’s wonderful about themselves on strips of paper. Have them share their work with classmates. Suggest that they take their papers home and tape them where they’ll see them every day.

Addressing Multiple Learning Styles

Activity: Have students design cereal boxes with themselves as the hero on the front. Have them include “nourishing facts” about themselves, such as their proudest moments, hobbies, etc. Have them add a coupon redeemable for help with something at which they’re skilled. Have them share their boxes in small groups.

Writing in Your Journal

Activity: Have students choose a word to complete the following sentence: “People always say I’m...” Have them write a paragraph explaining why they agree or disagree with this statement. Have volunteers share their work with the class.

Using Technology

Activity: Have each student find a website devoted to their favorite hobby. Have each student write a oneparagraph review of the site they found. Have students discuss the sites they found in small groups.

Homework

Activity: Have students interview friends and family to find out what others think are each student’s own best qualities. Have students discuss their reactions to what others think are their best qualities.

Additional Resources

Activity: Have students read the poem “Where I’m From” by George Ella Lyon, available at www.georgeellalyon.com/where.html. Have each student write a poem reflecting their heritage and family. They should begin each stanza with “I am from...” Combine the poems to create a class book.

WHAT IS OVERCOMING OBSTACLES?



AGENDA

- Starter
- Thread the Needle
- How'd They Do That?
- It Works!
- Conclusion
- Student Assessment

Objectives

Students will identify traits and skills that are necessary for achieving success.

Students will consider how these traits and skills contributed to a person's ability to successfully overcome obstacles in life.

Materials Needed

- Four sewing needles and four pieces of thread, each about six inches long (If necessary, wrap the points of the needles to keep students from pricking themselves.) (Part I)
- A guest speaker who will spend 10 to 15 minutes explaining how confidence, perseverance, a positive attitude, and a willingness to learn and work helped them succeed in some way (If possible, choose someone who is well-known to students, such as the principal of your school, a popular teacher or coach in school, a member of the police department, your mayor, a doctor, a dentist, etc.) (Part III)

Starter (5 minutes)

Tell students that today they will learn more about this course and what it can do for them. Write the title “Overcoming Obstacles” on the board.

Say, “You won’t have a textbook for this course. You won’t be asked to memorize a lot of dates and places. And there are many lessons that are about the person you know best—you! Sounds easy, right? A no-brainer! But this class will challenge you in other ways.”

Ask the class to define the word “obstacle.” (*Students might respond: something that gets in the way or blocks progress.*) Give an example or two of things that can be considered obstacles, such as hurdles on a running track, a tree across a road or sidewalk, or an unfamiliar word in a sentence. Encourage students to provide examples of their own.

Explain to students that this program will help them identify the obstacles that can keep them from achieving their goals. It will also help them to develop the skills they need to overcome these obstacles.

Part I Thread the Needle (5-10 minutes)

Purpose: Students consider the traits and skills necessary for success as they participate in and observe the completion of a simple task.

1. Students volunteer to demonstrate an activity.

Ask for four volunteers to help with a demonstration. If students are reluctant to volunteer, assure them that they will be asked to do only a simple task that won’t require talking.

2. Volunteers thread needles while others observe.

Have volunteers sit at the front of the room. Give each volunteer a sewing needle and a piece of thread, and ask them to thread the needles. Tell the rest of the class that they are to quietly observe what is happening and consider what must be done in order to thread the needles.

Observe the activity. If a volunteer asks for a pair of scissors to clip a frayed end, supply a pair if you have one. Otherwise, offer no assistance and make no comments. Allow volunteers a few minutes to complete the task. If a volunteer gives up before threading the needle, accept this decision.

Thank the volunteers for their help and ask them to return to their seats. If students seem interested, invite four new volunteers to demonstrate the task, or specifically invite students who seem reluctant to participate.

When the activity is completed, be sure to collect the needles.

Part II How'd They Do That? (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students identify the traits and skills that were necessary for the volunteers to successfully complete the task.

1. Students share their observations with the class.

Prompt students to express their observations about the activity in part I by asking questions such as the following:

- What seemed difficult about threading the needles? (*Students might respond: threading needles can be hard to do because some threads may have frayed ends, some needles may have smaller eyes than others, it's hard to align the thread with the needle's eye and grab it on the other side, and so on.*)
- How could some of these difficulties be overcome? (*Students might respond: the ends of the threads could be clipped to eliminate fraying. One could choose a needle with a large eye or use a needle threader.*)
- Why might some volunteers have had an easier time threading the needles than others? (*Students might say: some may have done this before, some may have better hand-eye coordination, some may have smaller hands, some may be more patient, and so on.*)
 - If a volunteer did not have these advantages, was it impossible for them to thread the needle? (*Students should answer no.*)

2. Students identify the traits and skills necessary for success.

Guide the discussion to identify reasons why some volunteers succeeded in the activity. Ask questions such as the following:

- Were all of the volunteers successful? Why or why not? (*Students might respond: those who were successful kept trying or made some adjustments in order to thread the needles. Those who were not successful gave up.*)
- What did the volunteers need to do to succeed at this task? (*Focus the discussion on personal attributes, such as persistence, patience, wanting to complete the task, and so on. Write the responses on the board.*)
- Was finishing first a characteristic of success here? (*Students should say no.*)
- Was being smart, getting good grades, reading fast, or having a good memory important to being successful here? (*Students should answer no.*)

3. Students reflect on the traits and skills necessary for success.

Explain that researchers have found that characteristics like native intelligence, a photographic memory, and the ability to speed-read are not the main reasons why people succeed in life. It's true that these skills can help people do well in school, but characteristics like confidence, perseverance, having a positive attitude, and being willing to learn and work are the main reasons why people succeed.

Say, "Each and every one of you can have these characteristics. This course will help you develop them."

Part III It Works! (20-25 minutes)

Purpose: Students consider how the traits and skills they identified in the previous activity played a role in someone's ability to successfully overcome obstacles in life.

1. Prepare your guest speaker.

Prior to class, explain to the guest speaker that the goal of this session is to allow students to see a real-life example of how confidence, perseverance, and hard work can lead to success even in the face of obstacles. Explain to your speaker that they should share a personal story of how they overcame an obstacle. Be sure that your speaker understands the purpose of their visit and the time limit.

Have your guest decide whether to entertain questions and comments during or after the presentation, and ask that they inform students of this preference before beginning the presentation. Suggest that your guest offer some personal background information before starting.

2. Prepare students for the presentation.

As a class, discuss appropriate behavior during a guest speaker's presentation (e.g., giving full attention, asking appropriate questions). Establish with students the repercussions of displaying inappropriate behavior or asking inappropriate questions. Encourage students to take notes during the presentation if they wish.

3. Students listen to the presentation.

Introduce your speaker to the class. After the presentation, encourage students to ask any questions they may have.

4. Students respond to what they heard.

Invite students to share their thoughts about what they heard. Ask them to identify traits or skills that enabled the speaker to succeed. You might begin the discussion by sharing a comment or observation of your own. If time permits, prompt further thinking by asking students to consider how things might have been different if the speaker had done something differently or hadn't taken a particular action.

Be sure to thank your guest for coming, and encourage students to do the same.

Conclusion (2 minutes)

Tell students that everyone can expect to face obstacles. Ask students to name a few skills and characteristics that can help them overcome their obstacles. Then, have them describe some of the skills and traits the guest speaker talked about. Emphasize that this course is designed to teach them skills they can use to overcome obstacles. Elicit from students the following **key points** that were taught in this lesson:

- Good grades are important, but they aren't the only things you need to be a success in life. Confidence, perseverance, a positive attitude, and a willingness to learn and work are also needed to succeed in school, in work, and in life.
- Everyone has obstacles to overcome.
- Every person can develop the characteristics and skills needed for success.

Student Assessment

1. Define "obstacle."
2. Describe an obstacle that you have overcome in your life and the skills you used to overcome this obstacle.
3. List three of the main reasons why people succeed in school, in work, and in life.

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Using Quotations

Quote: “Success and failure. We think of them as opposites, but they’re really not. They’re companions—the hero and the sidekick.” –Laurence Shames

Activity: Ask the class to indicate, by a show of hands, whether they agree with this statement. Have volunteers explain their positions. Alternatively, you may have students discuss the quote in small groups and report their opinions to the class.

Addressing Multiple Learning Styles

Activity: Have students make collages that show what success means to them. Have students write brief statements that explain how their collages depict their definitions of success.

Writing in Your Journal

Activity: Have students write a profile of someone in their family who displays the characteristics of a successful person. Have students share with a partner the characteristics they chose to write about and which family member has those traits. Have them summarize their work in a brief class discussion.

Using Technology

Activity: Have students do research on the internet to learn more about a successful person. Remind students that not all successful people are famous. Have students write a brief biography of the successful person they researched. Remind them to include a paragraph that captures the traits that person exhibited in order to become successful.

Homework

Activity: Have students interview someone from the community—a neighbor, a business owner, or someone else they know—to discuss that person’s definition of success and what it takes to become successful. Ask students to share in small groups what they learned about success from the interviews. Have each student summarize in one paragraph what they learned from the interviews.

Additional Resources

Activity: Have students read a biography of someone whom they consider successful. (Magazine articles or TV series like A&E’s *Biography* could be used as sources.) Ask students to give oral reports on the subjects of their biographies. Remind them to capture in their reports the traits the person exhibited to become successful.

AGENDA

- Starter
- Team Sentences
- What's Important to Whom?
- Let's Make a Deal
- Conclusion
- Student Assessment

Objectives

Students will identify the benefits and challenges of working in teams.

Students will identify the traits, people, and future aspirations that they value and those that are valued by others.

Students will synthesize guidelines for the class's work and interactions.

Materials Needed

- Three note cards, each with a topic written on it (Part I)
- Poster board and colored markers (Part III)

Starter (3 minutes)

Ask students to express a preference for something. For example, ask for a show of hands in response to a simple question, such as “Who would rather have a cat than a dog for a pet?” or “Who would rather learn to play the guitar than learn to play a sport?”

Call on a student whose hand is raised and ask a follow-up question, such as “Why would you rather have a cat?” or “Why would you prefer to learn to play the guitar?” Give the student who responds your full attention. If others interrupt, ask that they give the student time to finish speaking.

Say, “This class is about each one of you and the things that are important to you. In this class, each one of you counts.” Ask students whether they think the things that are important to them should be considered important to others. Encourage volunteers to explain their answers. Tell students that in this class, what they value is what’s most important.

Tell students that today they will begin to consider what’s important to them. Using that information, they will also work together to establish some guidelines for the class.

Part I Team Sentences (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students work in teams to create sentences, and begin considering the traits, people, and goals that they value most.

1. Students form small groups and listen to directions.

Divide the class into three teams. Tell students that they are going to play a game. Then, read the following directions out loud:

- Each team will be given a topic and five minutes to write a sentence about it on the board. Each team must work together to write their sentence.
- As a team, you must complete the sentence without talking to one another.
- Only one person from each team can be at the board at a time. The first person will write one word, and then go to the back of the line. The next person will add the next word, and so on.
- You must form a complete sentence. A fragment or a grammatically incorrect sentence will not count. If a team writes an incomplete or grammatically incorrect sentence, it must start over.
- The sentence must end with a period or an exclamation point. When the sentence is complete, the team should cheer.

2. Students work in teams to create sentences.

Have each team line up facing the board. Remind students that each team must work in complete silence. Give the first person in each team a piece of chalk and a notecard with one of the following topics written on it:

- My Role Model
- A Good Friend Is Someone Who
- Happiness Is
- After This School Year Is Over
- As a Freshman in High School

Suggest that students use the topics to start their sentences.

3. Students reflect on the activity.

When students have finished, invite members of each team to describe what was difficult about creating the sentences. Invite members of teams that completed sentences to describe what helped them succeed. Then, ask all students what they would do differently if they were to play this game again.

Part II What's Important to Whom? (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students identify some traits, people, and goals that are important to them, and learn about what is important to others.

1. Students identify personal preferences, plans, and values.

Refer to the sentences that each team created in part I. Say, "I'll bet not everyone in the first group has the same role model." Invite each member of the first group to explain whom they would have written about if they had been working on their own. Ask a volunteer from another group to write the responses on the board.

Proceed in a similar manner with the topics covered in each sentence, eliciting responses from the members of each group. Essentially, ask students to discuss what they value in a friend, what their idea of happiness is, what they will do at the end of the school year, and what they have considered about their freshman year in high school.

2. Students acknowledge differences in their preferences, plans, and values.

Ask students to consider their classmates' various responses and to note similarities and differences between the responses. Summarize by stating how these responses show that people have different goals and value different things. Comment that this makes sense, since we are all different people.

Say, "Different things are important to different people. This class will help you identify what's important to you, your personal goals, and ways you can reach those goals."

3. Students consider the importance of working together.

Make the observation that although each student has individual preferences and values different things, they worked as a team to complete their sentences.

Emphasize the importance of learning to accept one another in order to work together. Say, "It will always be necessary to work with others in life. People may be different from you—they may like different things, come from different places, and have different goals. But as you have seen, people with differences can work together. This course will also help you learn how to work successfully with others."

Remind students that this will happen only if they choose to participate and apply what they learn. State again that the choice to learn is always up to each of them.

Part III Let's Make a Deal (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students mutually create and agree upon a contract that establishes some class guidelines.

1. Students learn about the need to create guidelines.

Explain that in order to make sure that everyone is given the same chance to succeed in this class, everyone—including you, the teacher—needs to consider and decide on some guidelines that the class will follow.

Say, "Let's make a deal. I'm willing to do some things that will help us work well together, and I'd like you to agree to do some things, too. Here's what I promise to do. Tell me what you think."

2. Students listen to the teacher's commitments.

Make a list of things that you, as the teacher, promise to do. If you wrote observations about classroom behavior during previous class sessions, refer to them as you develop your list. Your list might be similar to the following:

- I'll be on time.
- I'll listen respectfully to what each person has to say.
- I'll treat everyone with courtesy.
- I'll never put anyone down.
- I'll make my best effort to be prepared for each class.

Invite a volunteer to write your commitments on the board.

3. Students negotiate and agree to terms.

Once you have written your own list, have students brainstorm a list of commitments that they will need to follow in order for the class to work well together. Write their responses on the board. Students may copy items from your list.

Invite students to discuss each statement. Explain that in making a deal, all parties must agree to the terms. Ask questions such as the following to prompt discussion and thinking:

- Can everyone agree to this?
- Does everyone agree that this is important to us?
- Is there anything else we should add?

Guide the class to discuss and formulate a final list of guidelines containing no more than 10 items. If students are having difficulty reaching a consensus, invite explanations from those who seem to maintain the minority opinion. Then, take a quick “yea” or “nay” vote to resolve the issue. Remind students that everyone is welcome to express an opinion, but not everyone has to agree with it.

Have volunteers use the markers to transfer the final list to poster board. Then, invite each student to sign the list. Afterward, post the list prominently in the room. Refer to specific items on the list as necessary, and remind students of their agreement to these guidelines.

Conclusion (2 minutes)

Ask students to recall what this class is about. Ask them how recognizing differences in traits, goals, and values can be a benefit when working in teams. Elicit from students the following **key points** that were taught in this lesson:

- Each student in this class has goals, and each student values certain traits and certain people.
- In order to work well together, it's important to acknowledge and accept that everyone values different things and has different ideas.
- We have made an agreement to follow a list of guidelines that we think will help us work well together. We need to help each other follow these guidelines.

Student Assessment

1. Why is it important to learn to work with others in a group?
2. List three things you can do to successfully work with others in a group.
3. List three reasons why we set rules or guidelines in the classroom.

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Using Quotations

Quote: “The way a team plays as a whole determines its success. You may have the greatest bunch of individual stars in the world, but if they don’t play together, the [team] won’t be worth a dime.” –Babe Ruth

Activity: Have students write a paragraph explaining how this statement supports the need for rules and cooperation.

Addressing Multiple Learning Styles

Activity: Divide the class into small groups. Have each group come up with five everyday scenes that can be acted out by two or three people (e.g., buying a movie ticket, getting help on a homework assignment). Have students act out the scenarios, while the rest of the class guesses what is happening. Talk about what makes an improv successful (e.g., assigning roles quickly, listening, cooperation). Discuss how these skills can make this class a success.

Writing in Your Journal

Activity: Have students write about an incident in which a lack of cooperation spoiled a plan. Have them include a second paragraph explaining what they might do differently next time. Have students pair off and pose the problems they faced to their partners. Have them brainstorm solutions, and then reverse roles.

Using Technology

Activity: Have students use the internet to locate examples of community service projects (e.g., volunteer organizations, Nickelodeon’s The Big Help, walk-a-thons for various causes). Have students choose one project of interest and list five ways cooperation would be needed in order to complete the project. Have them share their results in small groups.

Homework

Activity: Have students list the rules for simple playground or card games. Divide the class into small groups. Have students try playing the games according to the rules given, revising directions if necessary. Is it easier to play the game when everyone knows the rules?

Additional Resources

Activity: Show students a film that portrays the power of teamwork (e.g., *Miracle*, *The Mighty Ducks*, *Cool Runnings*). Have students discuss the role that collaboration played in the film. Have them brainstorm what might have happened if the team in the film did not work together.

SETTING EXPECTATIONS



AGENDA

- Starter
- This Is Your Life
- Can Dreams Be Real?
- Cloud Nine
- Conclusion
- Student Assessment

Objectives

Students will recognize the importance of having dreams for the future.

Students will identify and explore their dreams and goals for the future.

Students will create visual representations of their dreams.

Materials Needed

- One copy of the “Cloud Nine” activity sheet for each student, plus extras(Part III)

Starter (3 minutes)

Start the class by offering examples such as the following to illustrate how people have worked to make their dreams come true:

- Did you know that Helen Keller overcame her disabilities to become a world famous speaker, author, and activist?
- Did you know that in order to start Apple, Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak sold some of their possessions and built the first Apple computer prototypes in Jobs's bedroom?
- Did you know that Hulda Crooks climbed Mt. Whitney, the highest mountain in North America, when she was 91 years old?

Point out that these people all had dreams—they knew what they wanted to do, and they did whatever they had to do in order to make their dreams come true. Helen Keller had to overcome personal difficulties. Steve Wozniak and Steve Jobs were willing to sacrifice and work with whatever they had to start their company. Hulda Crooks trained hard for her incredible climb, even though there were probably people around her who thought she was too old for such a demanding effort and tried to discourage her.

Say, “You have to work hard to make your dreams come true, but first you need to have a dream. Today, we’re going to talk about some of your dreams.”

Part I This Is Your Life (20 minutes)

Purpose: Students interview one another about the future.

1. Students listen to directions.

Divide the class into pairs. Explain that students will take turns interviewing their partners and being interviewed themselves.

Explain that as interviewers, students are to imagine that they are TV reporters who are preparing brief reports about their partners' lives. Tell students that when they are being interviewed, they are to imagine that a local TV station is interviewing them on their 100th birthday.

Since everyone will play both parts, all students should write down the following interview questions. As they write, encourage students to consider how they would like to answer each of the following questions:

- What kinds of jobs have you had?
- What other things have you done?
- What was your greatest achievement?
- What advice would you give to teenagers today?
- What is one thing that you would like to do this year?

2. Students conduct their interviews.

Set a time limit of four minutes for each interview. Have students take turns interviewing one another. Remind them that when they are playing the role of the reporter, they should take notes that they can use later for a brief report.

3. Students “broadcast” their interviews.

Invite about 10 volunteers to present one-minute “broadcasts” on the people they interviewed. Encourage students to add some personal reflections when they report their stories. After they have finished their reports, thank the students for their presentations.

4. Students reflect on their imaginary lives.

Invite students to reflect on their responses about their lives. Ask them to consider the following questions: When you were being interviewed, did your answers reflect dreams that you have? Did they reflect things that you would really like to do in the future? Encourage students to consider the possibility that the answers they gave could come true.

Part II Can Dreams Be Real? (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students identify and explore their dreams and goals for the future.

1. Students discuss the concept of dreams.

Invite volunteers to offer explanations of what dreams are. Through a brief discussion, prompt and guide students to focus on the definition of dreams as hopes or goals for the future. Write this definition on the board. Circle the words “hopes or goals for the future,” and point out that unlike the dreams we have when we sleep, these kinds of dreams can be real.

2. Students identify their personal dreams.

Ask, “What are your dreams? Did you talk about your dreams in your interview, or do you have different dreams?”

Invite students to talk about things they would like to do or be in the future. Ask two volunteers to take turns writing the responses on the board.

Encourage every student to respond. Say, “It looks like there are as many dreams written here as there are people in this class. I guess everyone has dreams for the future.” Share with students one of your dreams for the future.

3. Students reflect on the importance of having dreams.

Point out to students that keeping their dreams in mind is a good way to feel inspired, especially when they’re faced with an obstacle. That’s why it’s important for them to know what their dreams are. Say, “If you make the effort to think about what you really want to do, you’ve taken the first step toward getting there. As you learn about new things and new options, your dreams may change. That’s okay. The most important thing is to keep envisioning them.”

Part III Cloud Nine (10 minutes)

Purpose: Students draw pictures in order to visualize their dreams.

1. Students focus on their personal dreams.

Explain to students that there will be times when they will get so busy with school, family, and life that they will lose sight of their dreams. Tell them that making a note about their dreams on paper is a good way to remember them. Doing this can help their dreams seem achievable even when life, school, and family seem to be taking up all of their time.

As you hand out copies of the “Cloud Nine” activity sheet, ask the students to think of an image that will remind them of one of their dreams. Tell them to draw this image on the activity sheet. Explain that you have extra activity sheets if anyone wishes to draw more than one dream.

2. Students draw pictures of their dreams.

Allow five minutes for students to complete their drawings. Ask students to save their drawings and bring them to the next class. Explain that students will create folders in which they will store their work. Their dream pictures will be included in these folders.

Conclusion (2 minutes)

Ask students to name the dreams they have for the future. Have them describe the first time they envisioned these dreams. Ask students to identify some benefits of recognizing their dreams. Elicit from students the following key points that were taught in this lesson:

- It's important to think about what you want to do or be in the future.
- Always keep your dreams in mind; they can help you to feel motivated and focused when things seem overwhelming.
- You can make your dreams a reality if you are willing to work for them.

Student Assessment

1. Why is it important to have dreams for the future?
2. List your dreams for the future.
3. List three things you can do this week that will bring you closer to accomplishing your dreams and goals.

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Using Quotations

Quote: “A rock pile ceases to be a rock pile the moment a single man contemplates it, bearing within him the image of a cathedral.” – Antoine de Saint-Exupery, French author and aviator

Activity: Discuss the meaning of this quote. Have students identify their own “rock piles” and describe the “cathedrals” they hope to build (e.g., “I’m great with kids and I’d like to own my own day care center one day”).

Addressing Multiple Learning Styles

Activity: Review ideas about what it takes to realize a dream. Have students come up with slogans that will encourage them to keep their dreams in mind. Have students use the slogans to make posters for the classroom or for their rooms at home.

Writing in Your Journal

Activity: Distribute copies of “The Maya Lin Story” activity sheet. Have students list some reasons why Maya Lin was able to realize her dream. List student responses on the board and discuss them as a class.

Using Technology

Activity: Assign students to search the internet, watch TV, or read newspapers and magazines in search of stories about people who’ve realized their dreams. Have them list the important facts about their news items. Have students take the role of news anchors, individually or in pairs, to share their news items with the class.

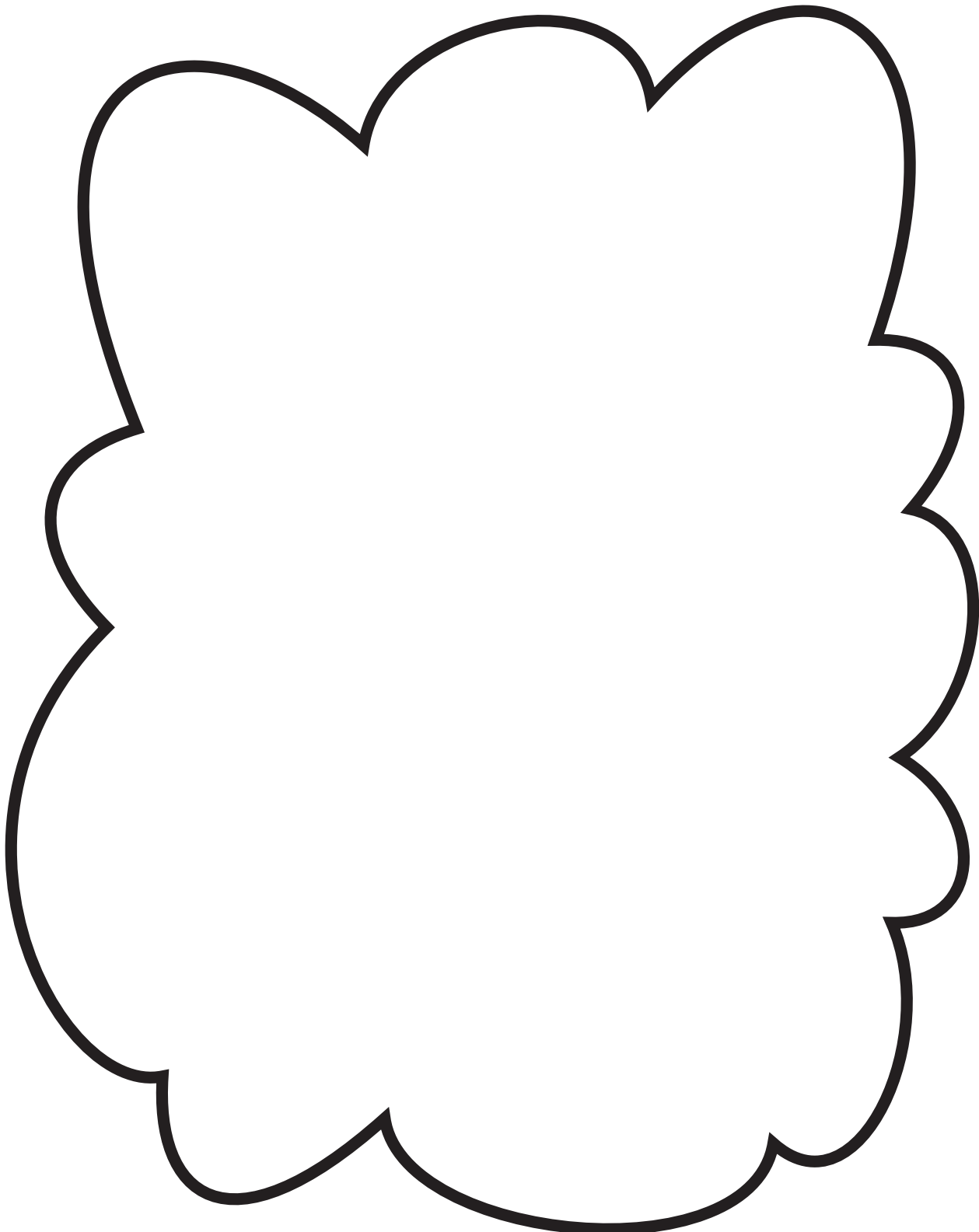
Homework

Activity: Have students interview family members or members of the community about a goal they had when they were younger. Students should find out if their interviewees accomplished their goals and if they experienced setbacks. Have students write about their interviews. Have students share what they learned in small groups.

Additional Resources

Activity: Distribute copies of Langston Hughes's poem "Dream Dust." Explain that Hughes was an African-American man whose poetry celebrated the experiences of African-Americans. Choose a volunteer to read this seven-line poem aloud. Add voices until the whole class is reading together. Have students discuss what the poem means, particularly the lines about "splinters of hail" and "not for sale," and how it makes them feel.

CLOUD NINE



THE MAYA LIN STORY

BY JOSHUA GUILD

What would you do if somebody told you that you couldn't do something because you were too young, or because of your gender? How would you react if people questioned whether you were good enough or smart enough for something because of where your parents were born? When she was just 21 years old, a woman named Maya Lin had to face just such a situation. Remarkably, she was able to overcome the negativity directed at her, using her talent, courage, and strong vision to become one of the most respected architects in the world.

Maya Lin grew up in the town of Athens, Ohio. Her parents were born in China and had both immigrated to the United States. Her father, Henry Lin, was an artist and her mother, Julia Lin, a poet. Both of Maya's parents were professors at Ohio University.

In school, Maya was a good student who excelled in both math and art. She was accepted to Yale University in Connecticut, where she hoped to study sculpture and architecture. Unfortunately for Maya, she had to choose one over the other. She decided to pursue architecture, though she always maintained her love for sculpture.

In the fall of 1980, a national competition was announced seeking designs for a new monument that was to be built in Washington, DC. Nearly 1,500 artists entered the contest to design a monument to honor soldiers who had fought in the Vietnam War. An expert panel of judges sorted through the many entries. In the end, they selected a unique and remarkable design that was unlike any other monument in Washington.

The winning design was not submitted by a famous artist, but by an unknown 21-year-old student named Maya Lin. Maya's proposal featured a long, V-shaped wall made out of polished black granite. The names of the 58,000 Americans killed or missing in action during the Vietnam War were written along the wall. The design was meant to make the viewer think of a massive book. Maya had created it as part of a class project at Yale.

Before the monument was actually built, a group of veterans organized to protest Maya's design. They had hoped for a more traditional monument made out of white marble with statues of soldiers. Many thought that the design's black color symbolized defeat or other negative feelings about the war. People also attacked Maya personally. Some protesters even used sexist and racist slurs, believing an Asian-American woman was not capable of creating an appropriate monument for the war.

Throughout all of the controversy, Maya stuck to her vision. Maya defended her design and her ideas about the monument. She believed in herself and her dream. Eventually, with some compromises, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was built according to her design.

Soon, veterans and people who had lost family members or friends during the war began visiting the monument. Seeing all of the names etched in stone brought tears to many visitors' eyes. Maya Lin was praised for her moving and original design. Today, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is one of the most visited monuments in the United States.

Following her triumph with the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Maya became a highly sought-after designer. Several years later, she was hired to create a memorial for the Civil Rights Movement in Montgomery, Alabama. She has also designed works for universities, museums, and a train station.

Throughout her career, Maya has withstood criticism and stayed true to her vision in order to achieve her goals.