

**World Youth Alliance  
Human Dignity Curriculum**

**GRADE 8**

# Lesson 1: Introductory lesson

## PURPOSE

To prepare students to successfully participate in the curriculum.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand the purpose of the Human Dignity Curriculum.
2. Get to know each other and share their expectations.

## MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- Hidden Treasure
- Topics of the HDC
- Introductory Questionnaire
- The Class Portrait

## VOCABULARY

- No new vocabulary

## PROCEDURE

**Step 1:** Start the lesson by introducing yourself and playing the [Hidden Treasure](#) ice breaker game with the students. Write several icebreaker questions on the sticky side of post-it notes and stick them to the board. Each student takes turns choosing 1 sticky note and answering the question on the back.

Sample questions you can write:

What is the scariest thing you've ever done?  
What is the bravest thing you've ever done?  
What country would you like to visit, and why?  
What is the best band in the world and why?  
What is your favourite school subject and why?  
What three items would you bring on a deserted island?  
What is your favourite day of the week?  
What is something that a classmate has done for you that you appreciated?

Feel free to add additional questions according to the interests of the class.

**Step 2:** Introduce the purpose of the course.

Ask students what they expect to learn in the course and what they think the Human Dignity Curriculum is all about.

After listening to students' comments, explain that the course primarily deals with the following questions:

- a) Who am I?
- b) What am I capable of?
- c) What can I become?

In other courses, students are mostly learning about the world around them. In this course, they have the opportunity to learn about themselves. Knowing oneself is the first step in determining how to live a good life, how to have authentic friendships, how to deal with problems, and how to give and receive respect.

Knowing oneself is the basis of understanding what one is capable of and what one can become. If someone can truly live excellence in everything they do, they can become excellent as a person. One purpose of this class is to learn how to become excellent. During the course of the following lessons, the students will learn what this means.

**Step 3:** Divide the students into groups and give each student the [Topics of the HDC](#) worksheet. Ask the groups to choose up to seven topics that they would like to discuss in the course of the curriculum. The groups should agree on the final list of topics. After all groups finish working, ask them to share their results with the rest of the class.

Explain that the curriculum will deal with the following topics:

1. Hierarchy of being: what makes humans special compared to all other living beings
2. Human dignity: the special value of every human person
3. Subject vs. objects: how to treat everyone (including oneself) with respect
4. Power to think: how to develop excellent critical thinking habits
5. Freedom for excellence: how to make excellent choices and become excellent
6. Creativity: learning to creatively solve even the most difficult problems
7. Friendship: developing excellent friendships
8. Habits of excellence: developing habits that make us excellent
9. Heroism: learning about persons who are excellent and learning from them
10. The Mission: how to find the purpose in everything that one does

Tell students that there will be a fun final quiz at the end of the course.

**Step 4:** Give students the [Introductory Questionnaire](#) and ask them to fill it out individually. Afterwards, ask the students to share some of their answers. Afterwards, ask the students if anyone would like to volunteer to share some of their answers with the class.

**Step 5:** Ask the students to draw [The Class Portrait](#). Each student should write down their name on a piece of paper, fold it, and place it in a box. Mix the papers and ask each student to select one. Everyone should open the paper, read the name, and write that name on a separate post-it note. They should also write one positive thing about that person on the post-it note. Next, all post-it notes should be pasted around [The Class Portrait](#) available in the materials and placed on the wall.

**Step 6:** Summarize. Review the purpose of the course and the main topics the students will learn about. Note that in the next class the topic is human dignity.

**TOPICS OF THE HDC**

Discovering my dignity	Learn history	Make good decisions
Receiving respect from other people	Inventing things	Being humble
Learning about people who changed the world	Treating others with respect	Not talking back to older people
Becoming the best version of myself	How to be successful in life	Developing good manners
Forming excellent habits	Obeying rules	Improving critical thinking
Making jokes	Learning how to be polite	Improving relationships with colleagues
What makes me special	Improving public speaking skills	Learning about great personalities
How to improve in school	Studying English	Finding my mission

## Introductory questionnaire

Please fill in the Introductory questionnaire before the first lesson.

### A. Expectations

1. What do you expect to learn from this curriculum? What skills do you hope to gain?

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2. How would you rate your level of interest for attending this curriculum from 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest)?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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3. What do you hope the curriculum will not contain? What do you hope will not be present in the classes?

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4. Do you have anything else you would like to share regarding the curriculum, the classes, or something else?

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# Introductory questionnaire

## B. Competencies

Do you agree with the following statements? Circle the number from 0 (strongly disagree) to 10 (strongly agree), depending on how much you agree with the statements.

### B.1. Opinions and values

5. People cannot make good choices if they are angry or hurt.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree						Strongly agree	
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

6. Human dignity is connected to possessing enough material goods.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree						Strongly agree	
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

7. Humans are the same as animals, just a bit more developed.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree						Strongly agree	
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

8. Heroism is not possible for normal people.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree						Strongly agree	
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

9. Humans can solve even the most difficult problems.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree						Strongly agree	
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

10. When I make decisions, I consider long-term consequences of my actions.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree						Strongly agree	
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

# Introductory questionnaire

11. People with lower social status have less human dignity than those with a higher status.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree						Strongly agree	
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

12. If a person pursues only selfish interests, they can end up hurting others and themselves.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree						Strongly agree	
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

## B.2. Behaviors

13. When I need to make important decisions, I take some time to reflect on them.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree						Strongly agree	
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

14. I tend to consider how my actions affect other people.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree						Strongly agree	
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

15. I tend to acknowledge both my strengths and weaknesses.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree						Strongly agree	
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

16. I hang out with some people just because it will make me more popular.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree						Strongly agree	
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

17. In difficult situations, I prefer the better solution over the easier one.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree						Strongly agree	
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

## Introductory questionnaire

18. I am actively trying to develop better habits.

Strongly disagree				Do not agree, nor disagree				Strongly agree		
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

19. It is important to know the purpose of the things I do.

Strongly disagree				Do not agree, nor disagree				Strongly agree		
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

20. I try not to put myself above other people.

Strongly disagree				Do not agree, nor disagree				Strongly agree		
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

21. I believe that my choices affect the world.

Strongly disagree				Do not agree, nor disagree				Strongly agree		
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

## THE CLASS PORTRAIT



## Lesson 2: Hierarchy of Being

### PURPOSE

To understand the special place human persons have in the world.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand the powers humans share with animals and other living beings and recognize the powers to think and choose as specifically human powers.
2. Understand that human persons are essentially different from animals and all other living beings.
3. Understand the basic needs all humans share.

### MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- Circle of Self Handout
- Powers of Beings Memory Game
- The Hierarchy of Being Pyramid
- The Table of Human Needs

### VOCABULARY

- Power: the ability of a living being to do something on its own
- Power to think: the human ability to know and connect ideas
- Power to choose: the human ability to knowingly select between options

### PROCEDURE

**Step 1:** Review the previous lesson. Recall the purpose of the course and the main topics that will be covered.

**Step 2:** Play the [Circle of Self](#) game. Give students the [Circle of Self Handout](#) and ask them to fill it in by writing some important facts about themselves, their talents, life-goals and hopes for the future.

Ask the students to form a circle. Every student should share something unique about themselves, from their Circle of Self. For example: “I have four brothers.” If another student also has four brothers, the students who share the ‘not-so-unique’ aspect have to sit down. The goal is to stand as long as possible and therefore to share very special things about oneself that no one else shares.

**Step 3:** Recall that in the earlier grades the students learned that non-living beings, plants, animals and humans form the hierarchy of being according to the complexity of powers they possess. All living beings (plants, animals, and humans) possess certain powers which enable them to do certain things on their own, while non-living beings do not have any powers.

Write the definition of power on the board:

- Power: the ability of a living being to do something on its own.

Divide the students into groups and ask them to play the [Powers of Beings Memory Game](#). Cut out the cards available in the materials and give a set of cards to each group. The groups should connect a power with its definition, and list the living beings that share this power. For example, one row of memory cards should look like this.

The correctly filled table should look like the one below:

Eat	the power to take in nourishment	Plants	Animals	Humans
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To “eat” means “the power to take in nourishment” and this power is found in plants, animals and humans. The groups should line up all the items in the correct way. The group that lines up the answers correctly first wins.

After all groups finish playing, ask them to share their conclusions and lead the class discussion using the *Teacher’s Answer Key* to help students recognize the correct answers.

Recall that plants have the power to grow, to eat, and to reproduce. In addition to these three, animals and humans have powers to move from one place to another, to use senses (taste, touch, smell, sight, hearing), to feel emotions (pain, fear, excitement, etc.) and to use instincts and memory (these two are considered to be internal senses so they are not listed as a separate group in the table). Humans have all these powers, as well as two others, which are unique to them and are not shared by plants and animals. These are the powers to think and to choose. These powers enable human beings to do exceptional things.

All beings form a hierarchy according to the complexity of powers they possess. Some powers are more complex and thus higher in the hierarchy, and some are less complex and thus lower in the hierarchy. With only the powers to eat, grow and reproduce, plants are on the bottom of the hierarchy and above them are animals with powers to use senses and feel emotions. Due to their complex powers to think and choose, humans have a special place at the top of the hierarchy of being.

This also means that human beings should develop these powers in the best way possible in order to live a fully human life.

Write the definitions of the powers to think and choose on the board:

- Power to think: the human ability to know and connect ideas
- Power to choose: the human ability to knowingly select between options

Highlight the fact that because humans have a special place in the hierarchy of being, this means that they should treat each other with respect and that they should not hurt animals or exploit nature beyond its capacity for regeneration. Human greatness comes with great responsibility.

Trees, rocks, dogs and cats are not able to think and choose like we can. While animals may be able to think on a basic level, and to choose between basic sensory preferences (such a chimpanzee choosing fresh food over older food), the human person alone can think abstractly, reason about decisions, make moral judgments and create art.

Give each student [The Hierarchy of Being Pyramid](#) so they can review the main themes of the lesson after school.

**Step 4:** Explain that all human persons have certain needs which everyone shares. This was recognized by many scientists, some of whom grouped those needs into several categories. One of them was the 20th century American psychologist Abraham Maslow, who is famous for his hierarchy of human needs, but there are also others, such as Clayton Alderfer, Manfred Max-Neef, Frederick Herzberg, Edward L. Deci, and Richard Ryan.

These scientists discovered different groups of human needs. Below are listed seven such groups:

Each human has the most basic SAFETY NEEDS, such as the need for personal security, employment, resources, health and property.

Every person also has the need for UNDERSTANDING, which means that all persons naturally strive for acquiring knowledge, comprehending the causes of things, gaining wisdom and achieving mastery in things they do.

Then there are BODILY NEEDS. These are the most basic needs such as the need for air, water, food, shelter, clothing, sleep and reproduction.

All humans also feel the NEED FOR LOVE AND BELONGING, which is realized through the family, love, friendship, community and closeness with others.

There is also a NEED FOR IDENTITY AND ESTEEM from ourselves and others. This need is met by developing a strong personal identity, and thereby receiving respect, recognition, having self-esteem and an experience of strength.

Moreover, everyone has the need for MEANING AND PURPOSE which means understanding the reason “why” one does everything he or she does.

Finally, each person has the NEED FOR EXCELLENCE, which is the desire to develop habits of excellence and become the best person one can be.

The students can remember the list with the help of the acronym S.U.B.L.I.M.E.:

**S** – Safety  
**U** – Understanding  
**B** – Bodily  
**L** – Love  
**I** – Identity  
**M** – Meaning  
**E** – Excellence

Give students [The Table of Human Needs](#) and ask them to individually think about each human need, what they can do to have this need fulfilled for themselves, and how they can help others to fulfill this need. Then they should write both solutions in the table. For example, it is more difficult to fulfill the basic needs of food and shelter for those who are poor, homeless, and without family. If the students are having trouble understanding the assignment, provide them with some examples from the Sample Answers sheet.

After all students finish working on their answers, ask the volunteers to share their answers and lead the class discussion to recognize some common ways of how the basic needs of themselves and others can be met.

**Step 5:** Summarize. Recall the three powers which all living beings share (eat, grow, reproduce), those which only humans and animals share (move, use senses, feel emotions, use instincts and memory) and two which distinguish humans from all other beings: the powers to think and choose. Highlight that the powers to think and choose are those which distinguish humans from all other beings, and which enable human beings to pursue excellence. Recall five types of basic human needs and highlight how the different needs of oneself and others can be met.

My talents

Important things about me

My name:

My life goals

My hopes for the future

## POWERS OF BEINGS MEMORY GAME

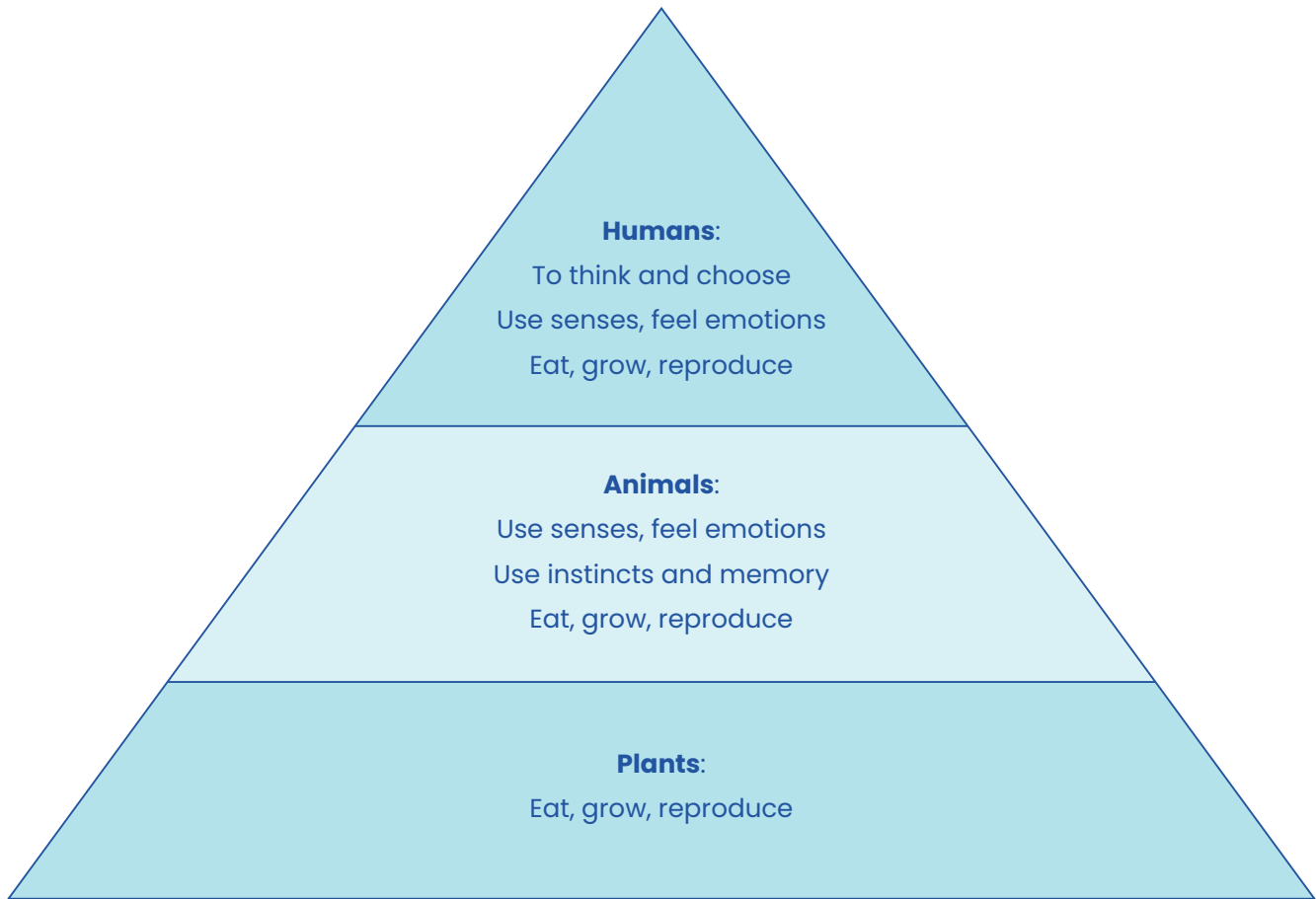
Cut out the cards below for each group

Plants	the power to take in nourishment	Emotions	Power to think
Animals	Humans	Plants	Animals
Humans	the power to create another being of the same kind	Instincts	the human ability to know and connect ideas
Move	Eat	Power to choose	the power for motion from within the body
Humans	Animals	Reproduce	Humans
Animals	the ability to be affected by internal or external stimulus	Animals	Plants
the ability to take action in response to a particular situation	Humans	the power to increase in size from within	Humans
Humans	the ability to remember knowledge gained through the senses	Animals	Humans
Animals	Grow	the human ability to knowingly select between options	Memory
Senses	Animals	Humans	Humans
the power to know with the body concrete details about the world			

**Powers of Beings Memory Game – Teacher’s Answer Key**

Eat	the power to take in nourishment	Plants	Animals	Humans
Grow	the power to increase in size from within	Plants	Animals	Humans
Reproduce	the power to create another being of the same kind	Plants	Animals	Humans
Move	the power for motion from within the body	Animals	Humans	
Senses	the power to know with the body concrete details about the world	Animals	Humans	
Emotions	the ability to be affected by internal or external stimulus	Animals	Humans	
Instincts	the ability to take action in response to a particular situation	Animals	Humans	
Memory	the ability to remember knowledge gained through the senses	Animals	Humans	
Power to think	the human ability to know and connect ideas	Humans		
Power to choose	the human ability to knowingly select between options	Humans		

### The Hierarchy of Being Pyramid



## The Table of Human Needs

Type of need	What can I do to have this need fulfilled?	How can I help others to fulfill this need?
SAFETY: Personal security, employment, resources, health, property		
UNDERSTANDING: Knowledge, comprehension, wisdom, mastery		
BODILY: Air, water, food, shelter, clothing, sleep, etc.		
LOVE AND BELONGING: Family, love, friendship, community and closeness		
IDENTITY AND ESTEEM: Respect, recognition, self-esteem, strength		
MEANING AND PURPOSE: Understanding the reason "why" one does everything they do.		
EXCELLENCE: The desire to become the best person one can be.		

The Table of Human Needs – Sample Answers

Type of need	What can I do to have this need fulfilled?	How can I help others to fulfill this need?
SAFETY: Personal security, employment, resources, health, property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» To study and work hard to find a good job afterwards</li><li>» Avoid walking alone in dangerous neighborhoods</li><li>» To save money</li><li>» To protect my health</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» To give money to the poor</li><li>» Not to intentionally hurt others</li><li>» To stand up for those who are being bullied</li></ul>
UNDERSTANDING: Knowledge, comprehension, wisdom, mastery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» To study regularly</li><li>» To develop useful skills</li><li>» To always learn new things</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» To help others with studying</li><li>» To help others in things I am good at</li><li>» To share things I know with others</li></ul>
BODILY: Air, water, food, shelter, clothing, sleep, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» To eat healthy</li><li>» To have enough sleep each day</li><li>» To drink enough water each day</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» To give food to the needy</li><li>» Not to text my friends during school or too late into the evening</li><li>» Use water economically</li><li>» Not waste food</li></ul>
LOVE AND BELONGING: Family, love, friendship, community and closeness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» To be kind to my family</li><li>» To invest time and care in building friendships</li><li>» To spend time with people who make me a better person</li><li>» To cherish my best friend</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» Decide never to spread gossip about friends</li><li>» Offer listening ear to the friend in need</li><li>» To spend time with a classmate who does not have many friends</li></ul>
IDENTITY AND ESTEEM: Respect, recognition, self-esteem, strength	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» To study hard to perform well in school</li><li>» To respect myself and others</li><li>» To practice music, sports, other hobbies</li><li>» Not to compare myself to others but realize that I'm worthy just by being myself</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» Help a friend who has problems studying</li><li>» Not to make disrespectful comments about others</li><li>» To teach others a skill I am good at</li><li>» Give a compliment to someone that I would like to receive</li></ul>
MEANING AND PURPOSE: Understanding the reason "why" one does everything they do.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» Try always to consider the reason "why" behind the things I do</li><li>» To consider if the things I'm doing are consistent with my long-term goals</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» To help others recognize if they are doing something without an adequate reason</li><li>» To help others recognize good things they should be doing, if they are not</li></ul>
EXCELLENCE: The desire to become the best person one can be.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» To develop good habits</li><li>» To persevere in good things I do</li><li>» To abandon bad habit</li><li>» To get up and try again after I fail</li><li>» To develop my skills and talents</li><li>» To keep going forward when it's hard</li><li>» To try to pursue excellence in my life in all of my actions</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» To motivate others to persevere in good decisions despite hardships</li><li>» To be supportive when someone starts doing something good</li><li>» To want others to pursue excellence and therefore not to encourage friend's bad habits</li></ul>

## Lesson 3: Human Dignity

### PURPOSE

To understand human dignity as the special value of human persons and to distinguish this deeper meaning from other ways in which the word dignity is used.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand human dignity as the universal, intrinsic, and inalienable value of human persons.
2. Understand four different ways in which the word dignity is used and understand human dignity as the most fundamental meaning.

### MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- Dignity Associations – Worksheet 1
- Dignity Associations – Worksheet 2
- Four Meanings of Dignity
- Quiz

### VOCABULARY

- Human dignity: the universal, intrinsic, and inalienable value of a human person.
  - » Universal: every person has dignity.
  - » Intrinsic: dignity is within us, we have it just by being human.
  - » Inalienable: dignity cannot be given to us or taken away from us

### PROCEDURE

**Step 1:** Review the previous lesson. Recall the three powers which all living beings share (eat, grow, reproduce), three which only humans and animals share (move, use senses, feel emotions) and two which distinguish humans from all other beings, or the power to think and choose. Highlight that the powers to think and choose are what distinguish humans from all other beings and that we should use these powers in an excellent way.

**Step 2:** Explain that in this lesson, we will deal with the topic of human dignity. When people use the word dignity, they often mean quite different things. This is probably also the case with all of us. To test this, we will play a game.

Ask the students to work in pairs and give them the [Dignity Associations – Worksheet 1](#). After students finish discussing in pairs, ask them to share their conclusions with the rest of the class.

After listening to students' comments, highlight that the word "dignity" is used in several different ways. Some of the most common meanings are:

## Dignity as honor

We often associate dignity with nobility, which implies having a high social status, being esteemed by others and society as a whole, and having certain privileges.

The distinguishing factor of this kind of dignity is that it is given to us by society, or the amount of dignity we possess depends on how much society respects and values us. Sometimes, persons possess this kind of dignity not by personal effort, but through their membership or belonging to a certain family or group. On other occasions, people acquire this kind of dignity by their own efforts in achieving success in something that society deems valuable or important.

Since this type of dignity depends on how society perceives us, a person who once had dignity can also lose it (for example, a high government official gets fired due to corruption and loses the title "dignitary" he once had).

### **Dignity as well-being**

Sometimes the word dignity is associated with living well and enjoying material and psychological welfare.

This type of dignity depends on the level of material goods and psychological well-being a person possesses, so some people can possess this dignity to a greater or lesser degree than others. It is acquired either by personal effort (by earning money, etc.) or with the help of others (inheritance, social welfare). It also means that this type of dignity can be lost and that some have more dignity than others.

We use this meaning of the word dignity when, for example, we say that poor or homeless people are not living in dignified conditions or with dignity, or when we say that someone deserves a dignified salary.

Sometimes we also imply that society has the obligation to ensure a certain level of material security to people so that they can live a “dignified” life.

### **Dignity as exceptional moral character and integrity**

The third way in which we often use the word dignity is the dignity of having an exceptional moral character or integrity. We could say that the people who behave in a way that is morally upright, who are conscientious, honorable and just, have dignity.

This also implies that persons who exhibit bad moral behavior lack this kind of dignity.

This type of dignity is always acquired by personal effort, which often implies struggle and hard work. It also implies that we can lose this dignity if we start behaving badly or unjustly.

### Dignity as the universal, intrinsic and inalienable value of human persons

Finally, there is another meaning of the word dignity. This type of dignity represents the special value all humans have. We call it “human dignity” since the word “human” implies that all humans have it and that they have it simply by being human.

Human dignity also means that no one gives us this dignity (society, political community, family, etc.) but we have it simply by being who we are (human beings); and that no one can take it away from us.

Thus, this dignity does not exist in degrees – one cannot say that some people have more or less than others--each person is equal in dignity.

This dignity also implies that human persons have certain rights which cannot be taken away from them, rights that are accompanied by certain responsibilities.

**Step 3:** Divide students into groups and ask them to fill in [Dignity Associations – Worksheet 2](#). After all groups finish their work, draw the four columns on the board and ask the groups to share their conclusions. Then, write the answers that the students shared on the board in the appropriate columns. Use the answer key as a guide for where to place the appropriate terms.

Finally, give students the [Four Meanings of Dignity](#) handout so they can review each of the meanings later on if they wish.

Explain that whenever we talk about human dignity in the context of this curriculum, we are referring to the deepest meaning of the word dignity, which is the universal, intrinsic and inalienable value of the human person. After having discussed each view of dignity, we can talk about dignity in its deepest, truest sense. Write the definition on the board:

Human dignity: the universal, intrinsic, and inalienable value of a human person.

We can also define each of the three characteristics of human dignity:

Universal: every person has dignity.

Intrinsic: it is within us, we have it just by being human.

Inalienable: dignity cannot be given to us or taken away from us.

**Step 4:** Draw four columns on the board as shown below:

Dignity as honor	Dignity as well-being	Dignity as moral character	Human dignity

Ask each of the students to take the three post-it notes in which they wrote three words or ideas they associate with dignity in the second question of the first Dignity Associations exercise. Then all the students should pass their post-it notes (the ones they created in the Worksheet 1 exercise) in the appropriate column on the board. Discuss the conclusions with the whole class to see which column contains the most papers.

There is a high likelihood that the fourth column will not have the most papers, or that it will even have the least of them. However, this meaning of human dignity is the most fundamental of all and is actually the reason why we use the word dignity to mean any of the other terms.

We should be attentive and consider how we talk and think about human dignity. For example, we cannot say that some people have more human dignity than others, since human dignity cannot be measured in terms of “more” or “less”. Although some people try to define dignity as being restricted to people who possess good health or complete capacities, all people have human dignity, even those who are in a coma or are disabled.

When someone insults and hurts another person, that person still retains his or her intrinsic dignity. Intrinsic means that each person has a special value, without exception. This also implies that we should always treat others and ourselves with care and respect because we all have dignity.

**Step 5:** Divide students into groups and ask them to play the [Quiz](#). Each group has 5 minutes to complete the Quiz. Afterwards, count the correct answers for each group using the answer key as a guide, and announce the winners. Help students to understand the correct answers.

**Step 6:** Summarize. We learned today about the special value that distinguishes humans from all other living and non-living beings: human dignity. Briefly review the four ways in which the term dignity is used and highlight the most fundamental meaning. Recall the definition of human dignity and its three characteristics: universal, intrinsic and inalienable.

## DIGNITY ASSOCIATIONS – WORKSHEET 1

1. Pick the ideas which you most strongly associate with the word *dignity*. Explain your choice.

Everyone has it	Honor	Integrity	Connected to happiness and prosperity
Having good mental health	Respect	It is hard to acquire	Depends on how society views us
Some have it more than others	Being exceptional	We have it just by being human	Special value of human persons
Depends on having enough material goods	Having outstanding character	We lose it when behaving badly	Graceful
It cannot be taken or given away from us	One needs to deserve it	Success	Living an enjoyable life

2. Write, on separate post-it notes, your top three choices and set them aside.
3. Do you think that some terms above should *not* be associated with dignity? Explain why or why not.

**FOUR MEANINGS OF DIGNITY**

Type	Meaning	How is it acquired? Does it require personal effort?	Can it be lost or taken away from us and how?	Does it admit of degrees?	Who has it?
Dignity as honor	Having a high social status, being esteemed by others and society as a whole, or having certain privileges.	It is given to people by society, whether by personal effort, or belonging to a certain family or tribe. (e.g. by achieving success in something that society deems valuable).	Yes, a person who once had dignity can also lose it (e.g. a high government official gets fired because of corruption and loses the title ("dignitary") he once had).	Yes, some more successful or esteemed people are given these titles.	Persons who are successful and enjoy a high social status.
Dignity as well-being	Living well, enjoying material and psychological well-being.	It is acquired by having enough material goods and living a sufficiently comfortable life, either by one's own effort (by earning money, etc.) or with the help of others (inheritance, social welfare).	Yes, it can be lost if a person loses material security, undergoes psychological distress, etc.	Yes, people with more wealth and more comfortable lives have it more than others.	People with sufficient degree of material goods and psychological comfort.
Dignity as moral character and integrity	Being morally upright, having moral character, behaving with integrity.	It is acquired through our personal effort, which often implies struggle and hard work.	We can lose this dignity if we behave badly and unjustly. Persons who exhibit bad moral behavior are said to lack this kind of dignity.	Yes, people who are more virtuous and who have more integrity have it more than others.	People who are behaving morally upright, who are conscientious, honorable and just.
Human dignity	The universal, intrinsic, and inalienable value of human persons.	No one gives a person this dignity (society, political community, family, etc.)	No, it cannot be lost or taken away from us.	No, everyone is equal in human dignity.	All human beings.

**DIGNITY ASSOCIATIONS – WORKSHEET 2**

Assign each of the terms from Worksheet 1 into the appropriate column in the table below. Some terms can fall into multiple categories.

DIGNITY AS HONOR	DIGNITY AS WELL-BEING	DIGNITY AS MORAL CHARACTER	HUMAN DIGNITY

**Answer key for the teacher.**

DIGNITY AS HONOR	DIGNITY AS WELL-BEING	DIGNITY AS MORAL CHARACTER	HUMAN DIGNITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Honor</li> <li>» Respect</li> <li>» Depends on how society views us</li> <li>» Some have it more than others</li> <li>» Graceful</li> <li>» Success</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Connected to happiness and prosperity</li> <li>» Having good mental health</li> <li>» Some have it more than others</li> <li>» Depends on having enough material goods</li> <li>» Living an enjoyable life</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Integrity</li> <li>» Being exceptional</li> <li>» It is hard to acquire</li> <li>» Some have it more than others</li> <li>» Having outstanding character</li> <li>» We lose it when behaving badly</li> <li>» Graceful</li> <li>» One needs to deserve it</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Everyone has it</li> <li>» We have it just by being human</li> <li>» Special value of human persons</li> <li>» It cannot be given or taken away from us</li> </ul>

Note:

1. One needs to deserve it – can sometimes apply also to dignity as honor, but it is not always the case.
2. Dignity as well-being can also be connected to success, but it is not always the case.

You can accept different versions of these answers as correct.

**DIGNITY QUIZ**

Mark the sentences as true or false.

1. T / F Not all people have human dignity.
2. T / F The power to choose is shared by all living beings.
3. T / F If we live in difficult circumstances with a lot of distress, we still have human dignity.
4. T / F Society gives us human dignity.
5. T / F Bad people do not have human dignity.
6. T / F People in a coma and people with disabilities have less human dignity.
7. T / F People can have more or less honor, well-being and moral character, but everyone has the same human dignity.
8. T / F Well-being and honor are intrinsic to people.
9. T / F Moral character and integrity is given to us by society.
10. T / F When behaving badly, we lose human dignity.
11. T / F It is wrong to violate human dignity to achieve material well-being or gain honor.

## Quiz – Teacher Answer Key

1. False. Every person has dignity.
2. False. The powers to think and to choose are unique to humans.
3. True. Human dignity is within us and it can't be taken away, regardless of our circumstances.
4. False. Society can give us honors, but human dignity cannot be given or taken away.
5. False. Human dignity is the special value of EVERY human person.
6. False. People in a coma and people with disabilities have the same special value, just by being human.
7. True. People can have more or less honor, well-being and moral character, but everyone has the same human dignity.
8. False. Well-being and honor are things that one can achieve but human dignity is intrinsic.
9. False. Moral character and integrity are related to habits that we can choose to practice.
10. False. Even if we behave badly, our human dignity cannot be taken away.
11. True. It is wrong to violate the human dignity of ourselves or another human being.

## Lesson 4: Subjects vs. Objects

### PURPOSE

To help students understand and respect human dignity in their everyday lives.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand that persons should always be treated as subjects, and never merely as objects.
2. Recognize the violations of human dignity in their immediate surroundings (e.g. school, family, country, sports clubs, friendships etc.) and think of ways to respond to the recognized violations.

### MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- Subject-Object Case Studies
- Violations of Human Dignity in School
- Violations of Human Dignity Outside School

### VOCABULARY

- Treating persons as subjects: valuing persons for their intrinsic worth
- Treating persons as objects: using persons for one's pleasure or benefit

### PROCEDURE

**Step 1:** Review the previous lesson. Recall human dignity as the special value that distinguishes humans from all other living and non-living beings. Recall the ways in which the word dignity is usually understood. Highlight that human dignity is the most fundamental meaning. Recall the three characteristics of human dignity: that it is universal, intrinsic and inalienable.

**Step 2:** Introduce the subject-object distinction with the [Subject-Object Distinction Handout](#). Explain that we use objects as means to achieve some other goals or ends. Subjects can never be used as means. Subjects are to be valued for their dignity.

All non-living beings fall under the category of objects (things, technology, tools, etc.) and, to a certain extent, plants fall under the category of objects as well (though not in the same way as mere things). Human persons alone fall under the category of subjects.

Ask students to suggest what should be written in the empty lines to complete the table? Use the [Subject-Object Distinction Handout - Teacher's Answers](#) below to help make suggestions. Have students write down the answers to fill in and complete their Handout.

Objects	Subjects
Are to be used	Are to be valued
We manipulate	We respect
The most we can do is like them	We can love
We don't care how they feel	We show empathy
We do with them as we please	We ask for their opinion
Can be disposed of	Should be cared for
Have price	Priceless / worth the infinite / have dignity
We can own, buy and sell	Own themselves
Get rid of when no longer useful, productive	Protect when they can't do it themselves
Don't enter into relation with us (relation is one-sided)	Develop (two-sided) relationships
Talk at	Talk to

**Step 3:** Ask the students what would happen if we switched the right and left columns on the table above. For example, it would mean:

- Care for objects, and dispose of subjects
- Talk at subjects, and talk to objects
- Own, buy and sell subjects (has this ever happened before?)
- Value objects and use subjects, etc.

Introduce the idea that because we, as persons, have dignity, we should always be treated as subjects, and never merely as objects. Persons should never be valued simply for their usefulness, etc. Highlight that whenever a person is treated as an object, this violates their dignity.

Write on the board:

- Treating persons as subjects: valuing persons for their intrinsic worth
- Treating persons as objects: using persons for one's pleasure or benefit

The opposite of love is not hate, but use. Hate is an emotion that can only be directed toward another person. We can't hate a thing. We use things – like toothbrushes, cars , computers – to achieve an end. But a person is valuable in and of themselves.

Highlight once more: what does it mean to treat someone as an object?

When we treat other people as objects, we use that person for our pleasure, advantage or benefit. Rather than recognizing what would be good for that person, we focus on what the person can do for us. When we use people merely to get what we want rather than caring for their wellbeing, we are treating them like we treat tools such as cell phones or a hammer. This way of treating human beings goes against their dignity.

Ask the students if they can think of any examples from their surroundings where persons were treated as objects. You can help them by mentioning some cases:

- Spending time with someone because they have money and I can benefit from it
- Manipulate someone because I want to achieve some goal
- Spending time with someone so they will do me a favor
- Gossiping about someone to make myself look better than them
- Appear that I'm interested in someone just because I want to approach his friend
- Lying to someone to make them do something I want, etc.
- Using others for pleasure (prostitution/ sex trade).

**Step 4:** Divide students into groups. Each group will get one [Subject-Object Case Study](#) to analyze. Students should be able to recognize if the person in the case was treated as a subject or an object, explain why the situation violates human dignity and come up with solutions to the situation (e.g. what would you do differently). Each group should also consider if a similar situation happened in their class or school, how they would react.

After students discuss the cases in groups, have each group present its conclusions in front of others. Lead the discussion using the *Teacher's Answer Key*.

**Step 5:** Divide students into groups and give them the [Violations of Human Dignity in the School Worksheet](#). Each group should think about three situations which represent violations of human dignity in their class or school and write them on the worksheet. To help the students understand the task, you can provide them with the sample answer available in the Materials.

After groups finish the discussion, each group will present its results to the others, and the teacher will lead the discussion with the whole class. The discussion should lead to deciding which actions are disrespectful of human dignity – actions that they will stop choosing in class, and actions they can take to affirm the human dignity of each classmate.

**Step 6:** To expand the student's understanding of how persons can be treated as objects in situations other than those in school, lead the class discussion based on the [Violations of Human Dignity Outside School Discussion Guide](#).

Explain that people have an innate sense that a person is different from an insect, is different from a tree and that human beings should be treated differently. People have an innate desire to be respected by others, and an innate repulsion when they realize they are being used by someone.

**Step 7:** Summarize the lesson. Recall the subject-object distinction and different examples of actions where persons are used as objects inside and outside school. Highlight that persons should always be treated as subjects, never merely as objects.

**SUBJECT-OBJECT DISTINCTION HANDOUT**

<b>Objects</b>	<b>Subjects</b>
Are to be used	Are to be valued
We manipulate	We respect
The most we can do is like them	We can love
We don't care how they feel	We show empathy
We do with them as we please	We ask for their opinion
Can be disposed of	Should be cared for
Have price	Priceless / worth the infinite / have dignity
We can own, buy and sell	
Get rid of when no longer useful, productive	
	Develop (two-sided) relationships
	Talk to

**SUBJECT-OBJECT CASE STUDIES****Case study 1**

One day you were heading out for lunch, when you heard yelling around you. You noticed students were starting a fight. You couldn't tell at the beginning what was happening. It seemed there were two groups of students fighting. When one student was pressed onto the wall, you could see that it was actually four students against one. He couldn't fight them off and you weren't sure that he was even trying. None of the students standing around did anything. When teachers approached, the students who were fighting ran away. Only the student who was attacked stayed there, but the teachers assumed he was to blame. The teachers started asking bystanders if they had seen who was fighting. The student who was attacked was terrified and too afraid to say anything. The rest just said they didn't know anything. This was obviously a lie since everybody knew who the attackers were but didn't want to get called snitches. The teachers told the students that they would punish the student, since they thought he had started it. After the teachers left, the attacked student asked some of the bystanders why they didn't tell the truth, but everybody said that it was none of their business and that everybody was old enough to take care of themselves.

**QUESTIONS FOR A DISCUSSION:**

- Are any of the persons in this story treated as an object? If yes, which one and by whom?
- Is this person's dignity fully respected? Why or why not?
- In this case, what behavior would be consistent with respecting human dignity?

**Case study 2**

The school year started and there were several new students in your school, including a girl in your class who transferred from a nearby town. She seemed quite shy and introverted. She is not very talkative and doesn't approach other students, but rather, waits for others to approach her. She is not very confident and is always hiding her face with her dark hair. You think this makes her look strange and a bit scary. One day you met with a friend who attends the new girls' former school. During the conversation, you mentioned the new girl and your friend recognized her name. She told you that she transferred to your school because she was weird, she looked funny, and is awkward when people try to befriend her. The way she described her made you laugh because those were precisely the things about her that bothered you and you were glad that you weren't the only one who found her strange. The next day, when you came to class, you told the classmate who sits next to you about the things you learned about the new girl. She also found it funny. Soon, everyone in the class knew about the funny stories. During a lunch break, you noticed she tried to sit with other classmates at the table, but other students told her there was no room for her. She came to your desk too, but you laughed and your friends told her your desk was full, although there were a few empty chairs.

**QUESTIONS FOR A DISCUSSION:**

- Are any of the persons in the story treated as objects?
- Is this person's dignity fully respected? Why or why not?
- In this case, what behavior would be consistent with respecting human dignity?

**Case study 3:**

You joined a school journal club a year ago. Since it is a very small club, each person carries a lot of responsibility. Because of this, a few students quit the club. A few months later, you were chosen as president, which resulted in even more responsibilities. This year, a very enthusiastic student joined. He is a great help to you and you talk to each other often, but you don't think you value his friendship as much as he values yours. Still, you spend time with him as you don't want him to feel rejected and leave the club. You also don't want the responsibilities falling onto you again. You continue to make him think that you are good friends and give him more and more tasks to do in the club. At one point he starts saying that he doesn't have so much time anymore to help with the club and he would like to take a break. You said you understand but flatter him to make him feel happier and more appreciated. You also invent a story about the English teacher saying to you privately that those who will be most engaged in the book club will get a higher grade at the end of the year. You know that having the highest grades is important to him and that this will motivate him. After a few days, you tell him that if he wants to get a higher grade, he should take on some additional responsibilities. So, you give him some tasks you don't feel like doing. He also doesn't like doing them, but still does them, thinking this will help his grade. Later, he talks to you and says that he really has a hard time doing all the tasks and that they are really stressing him out. You appear to be very understanding but bring up the fake story about the teacher asking you to report the most active students in the club so that they could be rewarded at the end of the year. Obviously, this is a lie, but you want to make sure that the student stays in the club and does the tasks that need to be done.

**QUESTIONS FOR A DISCUSSION:**

- Are any of the persons in the story treated as objects?
- Is this person's dignity fully respected? Why or why not?
- In this case, what behavior would be consistent with respecting human dignity?

**Subject-Object Case Studies – Teacher Answer Key****Case study 1:**

1. The student who was attacked was treated as an object by the students who attacked him. It could also be argued that the bystanders treated the attacked person as an object of their curiosity without concerning themselves with the question of what would be good or helpful for that person.
2. The person's dignity is not fully respected since physical and psychological violence violates the human dignity of the attacked person. Also, lying to teachers, which led to the attacked student being punished, does not respect the dignity of another person.
3. Respectful behavior would imply stopping the harassment either by the attackers themselves, or the bystanders could at least try to help the student by making it clear that they do not approve of such behavior, instead of passively encouraging it by standing there and watching it happening.

**Case study 2:**

1. The girl who transferred from a nearby town is treated as an object by those who are making fun of her behind her back, and especially by the main character in the situation where she does not let her sit at the table with others.
2. This person's dignity is not fully respected since making fun of her behind her back does not lead to them respecting her human dignity, but instead treats her as the object of their conversation as a joke. Not allowing her to sit at the table together with the others is also disrespectful of her dignity since it will embarrass her in front of everyone.
3. The respectful behavior would be to stop making fun of the new student and sharing every bit of gossip about her behind her back. Also, after hearing the similar gossip, one could turn things to a positive side and say that she is new and it is understandable that she is shy, and that everyone just needs to get to know her better. A great occasion for this would be inviting the new student to sit together at the table with the others so that everyone can get to know her better and help her to feel comfortable.

### **Case study 3:**

1. The enthusiastic student was treated as an object by the president of the school journal club because he used flattery and outright lies for his own benefit, i.e. to make things easier for himself.
2. This person's dignity is not fully respected since the president did not consider what would be good or helpful for that person and act accordingly, but he fully disregarded the person's well-being for his own benefit.
3. The president should acknowledge the enthusiastic student's feedback and discuss with him how they jointly make things easier for him. The president could also think how he could attract more enthusiastic students who could take some work from him. The president could make sure that the student is happy with his engagement in the club and reduce the total number of activities if there are not enough volunteers to do them.

**VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN DIGNITY IN SCHOOL**

Think about one example in which persons are treated as objects or their dignity is otherwise disrespected at school. Explain why this situation is not respectful of that persons' dignity. Propose how the class should deal with this situation.

Description of the situation	Why it is disrespectful of human dignity	Possible solutions

**Violations of Human Dignity in School – Sample Answer**

Think about one example in which persons are treated as objects or their dignity is disrespected at school. Explain why this situation is not respectful of their dignity. Propose a solution for how the class should deal with this situation.

Description of the situation	Why it is disrespectful of human dignity	Possible solutions
<p>A student who is not very outgoing and who studies hard is often called a “nerd” and teased by other students. A group of “cool” guys from our class and some other classes are often making fun of him in front of others. Sometimes this also turns into bullying and some form of physical violence (e.g. slapping him, throwing his things around). Most of the other students are usually just standing by not doing anything. Some are laughing at this, some feel uncomfortable but don’t say anything.</p>	<p>Calling someone names that are intended to undermine their confidence, is not respecting their dignity. Calling someone a “nerd” does not respect their dignity as it ignores how a person will feel. Making fun of someone is a way of treating someone as an object, to be used for a joke or a laugh. They are also treating this person as an object instead of a subject, if they are not talking to him, but at him; they are not trying to develop a relationship with him.</p>	<p>Those who stand by and look at how the student is being bullied should stand up and say that what’s happening is not right.</p> <p>They should also report to educators if the situation continues to happen.</p> <p>Those in the group of “cool” kids who feel that what they are doing is not right, should motivate the group to find another kind of amusement which will not be disrespectful of anyone’s human dignity (e.g. sports, dance, physical exercise etc.).</p>

**VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN DIGNITY OUTSIDE SCHOOL DISCUSSION GUIDE**

If time permits, choose from the following questions and lead the class in discussion. Use the answer key below each question.

» Are persons sometimes treated as objects in romantic relationships?

Answer key:

Persons are treated as objects in romantic relationships whenever someone uses the other person for their own pleasure or enjoyment, and doesn't respect their dignity. In these situations, the one who treats the other as an object, always cares more for what he can get from the other person, rather than respecting the other and what's good for them. It can happen that two people mutually treat each other as objects for their pleasure or enjoyment. This can seem like a happy relationship but it is still treating a person as an object, which goes against their dignity, even if it's mutual.

» Do employers sometimes treat workers as objects?

Answer key:

In the workplace, it is necessary that both employers and workers agree on the common goal they are pursuing, such as producing better quality food, providing better education, offering a restful experience to the hotel guests, etc. This can apply to companies, to the military, or almost any other organization. To more efficiently achieve goals of the organization, often in the organization some people with more knowledge, skills or experience are in charge, and some others follow them. Nevertheless, it sometimes does happen that persons in charge: leaders, owners, presidents or CEOs, do treat their subordinates as objects. This happens whenever they want to achieve the goal of the company at the expense of the individuals: e.g. asking them to work overtime and not paying the extra hours, exposing their workers to harm (safety or health hazards employees are not informed about), lying about company goals or activities, asking them to do something that goes against their values, etc.

**» Do we sometimes treat persons as objects in the family?**

Answer key:

This unfortunately sometimes also happens. Even though the family is the best place to learn to treat others as subjects, this does not always happen. Sometimes parents treat children as objects: e.g. when excessively punishing them even though this will not help children improve themselves, or when parents of older children want to impose their wishes on them (e.g. with regard to deciding which career to pick). Sometimes children treat parents as objects: e.g. when they are being careless if they are hurting their parents with their words, if they are lying to their parents to get something from them (such as a new gadget or money), or if they expect their parents to do all of the housework or clean up after them.

**» Is there objectification in the media and culture?**

Answer key:

Yes, unfortunately there is objectification in the media and culture. We can see that in TV or online commercials where women or men are shown simply for their physical looks or what they can offer to someone else (pleasure, money, access, fame, etc.) Some movies and books also promote achieving success by using other persons for personal advantage. On the other hand, objects are sometimes treated almost like persons (e.g. we are suggested that they can bring happiness, that we can build relationships with them or love them). One person said that the problem with the world today is that we treat persons as objects, and objects as persons.

## Lesson 5: Power to Think

### PURPOSE

To acquire good decision-making skills with respect for human dignity and personal mission.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson students will be able to:

1. Understand the importance of making excellent decisions in everyday life.
2. Understand and apply the principles of excellent decision-making.

### MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- The Solution Seeker game
- Seven Steps of Excellent Decision-making
- Decision-making Worksheet

### VOCABULARY

- Power to think: the human ability to understand and connect ideas

### PROCEDURE

**Step 1:** Review the previous lesson. Recall the subject-object distinction and the proper ways to treat both subjects and objects. Emphasize that persons should always be treated as subjects, never merely as objects. Recall some situations in which persons are treated as objects and how one can deal with such situations.

**Step 2:** Recall that the power to think is a specifically human power which distinguishes humans from all other beings. This power is very important for different domains of human functioning: e.g. in education and career, in making decisions, choosing friends, choosing how to spend one's free time, finding solutions to problems, etc.

Write the definition on the board:

Power to think: the human ability to know and connect ideas

To introduce the power to think and to motivate students to use their critical thinking skills, ask the class to play [The Solution Seeker](#) game. Divide the students into groups of six and ask them to form a circle. Each person in a group should write down a question on a blank sheet of paper. Possible questions may be:

- “How can I get my parents to change my curfew?”
- “What should you do to try and fit in?”
- “What would you say to someone who is showing off to try and be more popular?”

Each person then passes their paper to the right. Everyone takes one minute to read the question and write the first solution that comes to mind. After one minute, pass the paper to the right again. Repeat this process until everyone receives their original paper again. Since there are six students in each group, there will be six one-minute rounds.

After the game finishes, ask the volunteers to share the solutions they received and ask them if the solutions were helpful and applicable to their case. Then, lead the class discussion by asking the following questions:

- Was it hard to think about a solution in just one minute?
- Would you be able to find the solution without using the power to think?
- Why is the power to think important for making decisions?
- Does it matter which solution we choose?

Highlight that one of the hardest things about this game was that there was only one minute available to solve a difficult problem that would usually take much more time to solve. That is why it is important that everyone reserves enough time to come up with thoughtful solutions for problems and decisions in everyday life.

For this reason, it is very important to use one’s power to think in an excellent way when making decisions. Our everyday choices matter because they have consequences for our lives and those of others. This is especially so when making choices about which school to go to, which career path to choose, with whom one should be friends with, how to spend one’s free time, etc. Using the power to think in an excellent way is essential for making excellent decisions.

**Step 3:** Explain that one of the most important areas in which we use the power to think is the area of making decisions. It is important to use the power to choose in a way that is excellent for ourselves and others. From simple decisions (whether to study or play video games, exercise or chill with our phone) to more complex decisions, using the power to think in an excellent way is essential for making excellent decisions.

Explain that to make excellent decisions, there are seven key steps or questions one should think about:

**Dilemma** – what is the question/problem I need to resolve? Define: when, what, who.

**Values** – does it promote values you want to promote? Does it promote the value of human dignity?

**Goals** – is it in line with your long-term mission or goals?

**Others** – how does it affect others and the whole group?

**Consequences** – what it will likely lead to? Is this desirable?

**Alternatives** – are there other choices? In which way are they better?

**Information** – what is the information on which we are basing our solutions? Are they based on facts, evidence, and sound reasoning?

Guide the students through each step and help them to understand the questions. Explain that it is of crucial importance to correctly define, in the first step, the question/problem you want to resolve. Only if you are clear about the dilemma/challenge can you find the most excellent solution.

It is also important to consider whether the possible solutions are in line with values, such as human dignity. While some decisions might seem attractive, they can go against our human dignity or the dignity of others. Moreover, one should consider if a decision is in line with one's long-term mission or goals. For example, if you want to be an excellent musician, the decision to skip practice in order to play video games is definitely not the most excellent one.

Also, it's important to remember that every action that a person chooses has a ripple effect on the lives of others, whether they realize it or not. For example, a decision to leave trash on the floor might make our lives easier in the short-term, but it will have a negative effect on others who are left to clean it up. Every decision leads to consequences that should be considered. For each possible decision, it is helpful to consider whether there are alternatives. Often problems can be resolved in several different ways. These different ways should be evaluated before choosing the best option.

Finally, it is of crucial importance to think about whether the possible solution is based on facts, evidence, and sound reasoning, not mere opinions, rumors, hearsay, gossip, fear, etc.

**Step 4:** Divide students into small groups and provide each group with the [Decision-making Worksheet](#). Each group should choose one example of decision making from the list and go through all seven steps. After all groups finish working, ask a few volunteers to share their decisions and the discussion process from their group. Ask them if they are satisfied with their decision and provide any additional feedback to improve on the decision-making process if needed.

Give each student the [Seven Steps of Excellent Decision-making sheet](#). Have each student take a few minutes to reflect individually on a decision they would like to make, or choose a question listed on the previous worksheet. Have each student follow the seven steps to work on mapping out that decision. Explain that while it is not required, students may volunteer to share their individual decisions and solutions with the class.

**Step 5:** Summarize. Recall the importance of using the power to think in an excellent way when making decisions. Highlight once more the seven steps of excellent decision making and motivate the students to apply those principles of decision-making in their daily lives.

**DECISION-MAKING WORKSHEET**

NO.	STEP	QUESTION	
1.	Dilemma	What is the question or a problem you want to resolve?	
2.	Values	Does it promote values you want to promote? Does it respect human dignity? Does it violate any values?	
3.	Goals	Is it in line with your long-term mission or goals?	
4.	Others	How does it affect others and the whole group?	
5.	Consequences	What will it likely lead to? Is this a desirable outcome?	
6.	Alternatives	Are there other choices? Are there better or worse choices than this one? In what way?	
7.	Information	What information are you are basing your decision on? Is it based on facts, evidence, and sound reasoning?	

Possible questions to choose from:

- What high school should I choose?
- What career should I choose?
- Should I be friends with person X?
- Should I start / stop practicing piano / sports / club program, etc.?
- Should I talk to person X to discuss something that is on my mind for some time now (e.g. something that is bothering me, etc.)?
- Should I change some habits or develop a new one? Which one?
- Should I change my behavior to my parents / siblings / friends / teachers, etc.?
- Should I buy something with the money I have?

## SEVEN STEPS OF EXCELLENT DECISION-MAKING

NO.	STEP	QUESTION
1.	Dilemma	» What is the question or a problem you want to resolve? » Define: When, what, who?
2.	Values	» Does it promote values you want to promote? » Does it respect human dignity? Does it violate any values?
3.	Goals	» Is it in line with long-term mission or goals?
4.	Others	» How does it affect others and the whole group? » Does it respect human dignity?
5.	Consequences	» What will it likely lead to? » Is this a desirable outcome?
6.	Alternatives	» Are there other choices? » Are there better or worse than this one? In which way?
7.	Information	» What information are you are basing your decision on? » Is it based on facts, evidence, and sound reasoning?

Dilemma, values, goals, others, consequences, alternatives, information.

## Lesson 6: Freedom for Excellence

### PURPOSE

To motivate students to live freedom for excellence in their lives.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

1. Identify and distinguish between freedom for excellence and freedom of indifference.
2. Recognize Viktor Frankl as an example of using freedom for excellence even in the most difficult circumstances.

### MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- [Video](#) *Man's Search for Meaning* by Viktor Frankl
- Excerpt from *Man's Search for Meaning* by Viktor Frankl
- Freedom for Excellence Worksheet

### VOCABULARY

- Freedom for excellence: using one's freedom to make excellent choices.
- Freedom of indifference: using one's freedom to choose carelessly; failing to consider whether one's actions are excellent or non-excellent.

### PROCEDURE

**Step 1:** Review the previous lesson. Recall the importance of using the power to think in an excellent way when making decisions. Highlight the seven steps of excellent decision making and motivate the students to apply those steps when thinking through important decisions in their lives.

**Step 2:** In previous lessons, the class learned that the power to choose is one of the most important human powers and that it distinguishes humans from all other living beings. However, it can be hard at times to know what to choose. We want to be free but do we know what true freedom means? Ask the students if they can recall the two meanings of freedom they learned about in Grade 7: freedom of indifference and freedom of excellence.

Freedom of indifference, hinges upon the idea that to be free simply means that people can do whatever they want. People who argue for freedom of indifference state that to be free means to have the option to choose anything on their own. In this view of freedom, the choice one makes does not matter so much as the idea that each person has the ability to make the choice that they want to. According to freedom of indifference, the defining characteristic of freedom is the capacity to choose, regardless of whether or not a choice is in fact good or bad, an excellent or non-excellent decision for yourself or for others, in the end.

The second idea of freedom, freedom for excellence, hinges upon the idea that freedom is not simply the exercise of choice itself, but that true freedom lies in choosing the good and the excellent over the bad or not-excellent. Freedom for excellence is using your power to think and to choose what is most excellent for you and for others.

Write the definitions on the board:

Freedom for excellence: using one's freedom to make excellent choices.

Freedom of indifference: using one's freedom to choose carelessly; failing to consider whether one's actions are excellent or non-excellent.

**Step 3:** In this lesson, we will learn about a person named Viktor Frankl and see which idea of freedom he chose in his life. Viktor Frankl was a Doctor of Medicine and a Doctor of Philosophy in Vienna, Austria. During the war, his wife and family members were sent to Nazi concentration camps and killed. He survived Dachau and Auschwitz concentration camps and after the war, he published a book called *Man's Search for Meaning*, based on his observations and experiences in the concentration camps. In it, Frankl shows how freedom for excellence can be exercised even in the most difficult circumstances.

To introduce students to Frankl's book and his experiences, play the [video](#) Man's Search for Meaning by Viktor Frankl. After watching the video, ask the students to share the ideas they consider the most important. Write down the key ideas on the board or in the visible place in the classroom. Some of the ideas can be:

- He who has a "why" can bear any "how".
- Meaning enables us to go through suffering.
- A person always has a choice of how he or she will respond to a situation.
- Everything can be taken from a person, except the freedom to choose our attitude.
- Don't aim at success, it is always a by-product of striving for meaning and purpose, etc.

**Step 4:** Divide the students into groups and ask them to read the Excerpt from Man's Search for Meaning, by Viktor Frankl. Clarify that the use of the word 'man' throughout Frankl's writing refers to mankind, which includes all human persons, both man and woman. Give the groups the Freedom for Excellence Worksheet and ask them to answer the questions in the worksheet after reading the text.

After the groups finish working, help the class to answer the questions correctly by using the Teacher's Answer Key as a guide.

Finally, lead the class discussion by asking the following questions:

Did anything surprise you about Viktor Frankl's story?

Can you think of an example from your own life when you struggled to overcome freedom of indifference and choose freedom for excellence?

Does Frankl justify the behavior of those who have been victim to terrible treatment?

What's stopping you from becoming the best version of yourself? Are there habits of indifference in your life that you will need to break to pursue freedom for excellence?

Highlight that Frankl does not justify the behavior of those who have been victim to terrible treatment but mentions the "commonplace truth that no one has the right to do wrong, not even if wrong has been done to them."

After finishing the discussion, ask the students to name two things they can do to practice freedom for excellence in their life. They can write it down in the following form:

Using my power to think and choose freedom for excellence, I will practice this habit at

School:

Using my power to think and choose freedom for excellence, I will practice this habit at

Home:

After students have had a minute to write down their responses, ask if any students would like to volunteer to share their responses with the class.

**Step 5:** Summarize. Recall the distinction between freedom for excellence and freedom of indifference. Recall some of the lessons by Viktor Frankl and how he lived the freedom for excellence. Motivate the students to pursue freedom for excellence in their daily lives by developing excellent habits.

Note that time permitting, [Interim Quiz 1](#) can be assigned at the start of the next lesson. It is a useful evaluation of student understanding and retention of key concepts in the course up to this point and can offer important feedback about any questions that should be addressed or clarified before moving forward in the course. The interim quiz also provides content that is contained in the final quiz, helping to reinforce concepts to students and to prepare them to successfully complete the course.

**Excerpt from Man's Search for Meaning, by Viktor Frankl**

Is that theory true which would have us believe that man is no more than a product of many conditional and environmental factors—be they of a biological, psychological or sociological nature? Is man but an accidental product of these? Most importantly, do the prisoners' reactions to the singular world of the concentration camp prove that man cannot escape the influences of his surroundings? Does man have no choice of action in the face of such circumstances?

We can answer these questions from experience as well as on principle. The experiences of camp life show that man does have a choice of action. There were enough examples, often of a heroic nature, which proved that apathy could be overcome, irritability suppressed. Man can preserve a vestige of spiritual freedom, of independence of mind, even in such terrible conditions of psychic and physical stress.

We who lived in concentration camps can remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms – to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way.

And there were always choices to make. Every day, every hour, offered the opportunity to make a decision... Even though conditions such as lack of sleep, insufficient food and various mental stresses may suggest that the inmates were bound to react in certain ways, in the final analysis it becomes clear that the sort of person the prisoner became was the result of an inner decision, and not the result of camp influences alone...

It is apparent that the mere knowledge that a man was either a camp guard or a prisoner tells us almost nothing... we must not try to simplify matters by saying that these men were angels and those were devils. Certainly, it was a considerable achievement for a guard or foreman to be kind to the prisoners in spite of all the camp's influences, and, on the other hand, the baseness of a prisoner who treated his own companions badly was exceptionally contemptible. Obviously, the prisoners found the lack of character in such men especially upsetting, while they were profoundly moved by the smallest kindness received from any of the guards. I remember how one day a foreman secretly gave me a piece of bread which I knew he must have saved from his breakfast ration. It was far more than the small piece of bread which moved me to tears at that time. It was the human "something" which this man also gave to me—the word and look which accompanied the gift.

During this psychological phase one observed that people with natures of a more primitive kind could not escape the influences of the brutality which had surrounded them in camp life. Now, being free, they thought they could use their freedom licentiously and ruthlessly. The only thing that had changed for them was that they were now the oppressors instead of the oppressed. They became instigators, not objects, of willful force and injustice. They justified their behavior by their own terrible experiences. This was often revealed in apparently insignificant events. A friend was walking across a field with me toward the camp when suddenly we came to a field of green crops. Automatically, I avoided it, but he drew his arm through mine and dragged me through it. I stammered something about not treading down the young crops. He became annoyed, gave me an angry look and shouted, "You don't say! And hasn't enough been taken from us? My wife and child have been gassed—not to mention everything else—and you would forbid me to tread on a few stalks of oats!"

Only slowly could these men be guided back to the commonplace truth that no one has the right to do wrong, not even if wrong has been done to them.

**FREEDOM FOR EXCELLENCE WORKSHEET**

True or False? Respond to the following statements, using a quote from the reading to show whether the statement is true or false.

1. Frankl says that freedom is just a product of environment, biology, psychology, and sociology and that we aren't in control of our moods.

2. Frankl says that we always have the freedom, if nothing else, to choose our attitude in a situation.

3. According to the reading, people can generally be divided into two groups: angels and devils.

4. This reading makes the case that Freedom for Excellence is not really possible if we are tired, angry, stressed, or hurt.

5. Frankl illustrates that practicing Freedom for Excellence can be as simple as a word or a look, as in the example he gives of the foreman.

6. In this reading, the example of the friend trampling on someone else's crops in anger illustrates how easy it is to justify our actions using Freedom of Indifference.

**Freedom for Excellence Worksheet – Teacher’s Answer Key**

1. Frankl says that freedom is just a product of environment, biology, psychology and sociology and that we aren’t in control of our moods.

**FALSE.** Frankl says: “The experiences of camp life show that man does have a choice of action. There were enough examples, often of a heroic nature, which proved that apathy could be overcome, irritability suppressed. Man can preserve a vestige of spiritual freedom, of independence of mind, even in such terrible conditions of psychic and physical stress.”

2. Frankl says that we always have the freedom, if nothing else, to choose our attitude in a situation.

**TRUE.** Frankl says: “We who lived in concentration camps can remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms – to choose one’s attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one’s own way.”

3. According to the reading, people can generally be divided into two groups: angels and devils.

**FALSE.** Frankl says: “It is apparent that the mere knowledge that a man was either a camp guard or a prisoner tells us almost nothing... we must not try to simplify matters by saying that these men were angels and those were devils. Certainly, it was a considerable achievement for a guard or foreman to be kind to the prisoners in spite of all the camp’s influences, and, on the other hand, the baseness of a prisoner who treated his own companions badly was exceptionally contemptible.”

4. This reading makes the case that Freedom for Excellence is not really possible if we are tired, angry, stressed, or hurt.

**FALSE.** Frankl says that “there were always choices to make. Every day, every hour, offered the opportunity to make a decision... Even though conditions such as lack of sleep, insufficient food and various mental stresses may suggest that the inmates were bound to react in certain ways, in the final analysis it becomes clear that the sort of person the prisoner became was the result of an inner decision, and not the result of camp influences alone...”

5. Frankl illustrates that practicing Freedom for Excellence can be as simple as a word or a look, as in the example he gives of the foreman.

**TRUE.** Frankl says: “I remember how one day a foreman secretly gave me a piece of bread which I knew he must have saved from his breakfast ration. It was far more than the small piece of bread which moved me to tears at that time. It was the human “something” which this man also gave to me—the word and look which accompanied the gift.”

6. In this reading, the example of the friend trampling on someone else’s crops in his anger illustrates how easy it is to justify our actions using Freedom of Indifference.

**TRUE.** Frankl says: “During this psychological phase one observed that people with natures of a more primitive kind could not escape the influences of the brutality which had surrounded them in camp life. Now, being free, they thought they could use their freedom licentiously and ruthlessly. The only thing that had changed for them was that they were now the oppressors instead of the oppressed. They became instigators, not objects, of willful force and injustice. They justified their behavior by their own terrible experiences. This was often revealed in apparently insignificant events. A friend was walking across a field with me toward the camp when suddenly we came to a field of green crops. Automatically, I avoided it, but he drew his arm through mine and dragged me through it. I stammered something about not treading down the young crops. He became annoyed, gave me an angry look and shouted, “You don’t say! And hasn’t enough been taken from us? My wife and child have been gassed—not to mention everything else—and you would forbid me to tread on a few stalks of oats!”

**INTERIM QUIZ 1****A. True/false questions**

1. T/F Human dignity implies enjoying material well-being.
2. T/F All people have the need for love and belonging.
3. T/F Freedom is just a product of environment, biology, psychology and sociology.
4. T/F We can develop two-sided relationships with objects
5. T/F To make excellent decisions it is of crucial importance to correctly define in the first step the question or problem one wants to resolve.

**B. Essay questions**

6. What are Viktor Frankl's key insights on freedom?

**C. What is... vocabulary?**

For example, if the answer is "The first letter of the alphabet", the question is "What is the letter A?". Or, if the answer is "A paste used to help clean and maintain health of the teeth", the correct question is "What is toothpaste?"

7. The human ability to knowingly select between options.
8. Choosing carelessly by failing to consider whether one's actions are excellent or non-excellent.
9. Valuing persons for their intrinsic worth.
10. The universal, intrinsic, and inalienable value of human persons.
11. The human ability to know and connect ideas.

**D. Multiple choice questions**

12. Dignity as well-being:
  - a) Is connected to happiness and prosperity
  - b) Depends on having enough material goods
  - c) Is intrinsic and inviolable
  - d) Is always acquired by one's personal effort
13. Mark the true sentences about freedom:
  - a) Freedom for excellence is not really possible if we are tired, angry, stressed, or hurt
  - b) Freedom for excellence can be as simple as a word or a look
  - c) We always have the freedom, if nothing else, to choose our attitude in a situation
  - d) Freedom is just a product of environment
14. Which of the following is false? Dignity as moral character and integrity:
  - a) Is acquired through one's personal effort
  - b) Can be lost if one behaves immorally
  - c) Is equal in everyone
  - d) Is hard to achieve
15. Which of the following is a necessary step of excellent decision making:
  - a) Thinking about consequences of one's actions
  - b) Considering alternatives
  - c) Not spending too much energy on thinking
  - d) Deciding whatever makes one feel good
16. Subjects:
  - a) We can love
  - b) We should care for
  - c) We can dispose of when no longer useful
  - d) We can own
17. Intrinsic means that:
  - a) All persons have dignity
  - b) No one can take dignity away from us
  - c) Dignity is with us our entire life, we have it just by being human
  - d) Dignity is not earned

## Teacher answer key:

1. F – this applies to dignity as well-being
2. T
3. F – Frankl says that man is always free, regardless of his environment.
4. F – we can develop two-sided relationships only with subjects.
5. T
6. Frankl shows how freedom for excellence can be exercised even in the most difficult circumstances of concentration camps. He says that the person is always free, no matter the circumstances, since he always has a choice how he will respond to a situation. Therefore, he says that everything can be taken from man, except the freedom to choose his attitude in any given circumstance. According to Frankl, to be free, man needs meaning and purpose.
7. What is the power to choose?
8. What is freedom of indifference?
9. What does it mean to treat persons as subjects?
10. What is human dignity?
11. What is the power to think?
12. a, b
13. b, c
14. c
15. a, b
16. a, b
17. c

## Lesson 7: Power of Creativity

### PURPOSE

To help students appreciate the power of creativity and inspire them to become creative problem solvers.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand creativity and humor as uniquely human powers that engage our ability to see the world in different and new ways.
2. Understand that humor and humility are important qualities that help us see the world in new ways.
3. Use creativity and imagination to help us change ourselves and the world in positive ways.

### VOCABULARY

- Creativity: using one's imagination and ideas to shape the world

### MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- [Video](#): Prove them Wrong
- Article: Creative people aren't afraid to fail
- Excerpt: "Tear-Water Tea" by Arnold Lobel
- Three kinds of humor exercise

### PROCEDURE

**Step 1:** Review the previous lesson. Recall the distinction between freedom for excellence and freedom of indifference. Recall some of the lessons by Viktor Frankl and how he lived freedom for excellence. Motivate the students to pursue freedom for excellence in their daily lives by developing excellent habits.

Complete or review Interim Quiz 1. Discuss any insights or questions that might have emerged from the quiz for students.

Step 2: Write the definition of creativity on the board:

Creativity: using one's imagination and ideas to shape the world

Show the [Video: Prove them Wrong](#), which was written and narrated by a high school student. In the video, the student talks about obstacles and abilities and shares his own experience of having a limp and only one hand, and how he became a high school basketball athlete. Discuss the idea presented in the video of moving from obstacles to abilities. What does the narrator say about proving people wrong when they misjudge others? Invite individual student sharing.

**Step 3:** Distribute the article, [Creative People aren't Afraid to Fail](#). The article showcases the mistakes and failures of inventors, writers, and musicians. Experiences of failure can often prompt us to stop trying or convince us that we're not good enough to succeed. But, people who have the humility to persevere despite their failures, and to learn from them in order to achieve new successes, are truly creative.

Divide students into groups and have them read the article together. After students have finished reading the article, discuss the article as a class. Explain that human creativity can help us find solutions to different challenges in our own lives as well as in the world around us. The power of creativity enables humans to express deep dimensions of reality which are hard to express otherwise. An area where creativity is expressed is humor. Funny people tend to think creatively about how to discover humor in life's ordinary circumstances.

**Step 4:** Explain that there are many theories about humor; what it is and where it comes from. Today we'll look at three general types of humor:

*Relief theory* argues that laughter and humor are ways of blowing off psychological steam and stress. This kind of humor breaks the tension of a sad or tense situation.

*Superiority theory* was originally formulated by thinkers Plato and Aristotle. In this theory, humor is a means of declaring one's superiority over others. (If you're looking to cultivate a sense of humor to improve your leadership skills, this is not the kind you want to acquire!)

*Incongruity theory* argues that humor arises when two contrasting ideas are put together. Many joke punchlines are often the result of an unexpected ending. This kind of humor subverts a more conventional way of looking at the world.

In the following excerpt from a children's book, *Owl at Home*, author Arnold Lobel uses humor in a simple but effective way to surprise his audience. Lobel combines both relief and incongruity theory, describing familiar household objects to evoke sad feelings (relief). He then surprises the reader by gathering his tears to make tear water tea (tears are the body's way of relief and tea is a typical drink of comfort, but the combination of the two is also an example of incongruity theory).

If time permits, divide students into groups and have each group perform a skit of tear water tea. Students can re-write the text to suit their style or use objects in the classroom around them.

**Step 5:** Summarize. Review the ideas of creativity, humor and failure. Ask if linking these ideas surprised the class, and if it gave them new confidence to explore new ideas as they learn and grow in excellence. Emphasize the need for persistence, as they pursue excellence.

## Creative People Aren't Afraid to Fail



The essential part of creativity is not being afraid to fail.”

*Edwin Land, scientist*



Humor is the great thing, the saving thing after all. The minute it crops up, all our hardnesses yield, all our irritations, and resentments flit away, and a sunny spirit takes their place.”

*Mark Twain*

Creative people aren't afraid to fail. Why? Because creative people learn to accept failure as an inevitable part of the process. The great jazz musician, Herbie Hancock fondly recalled one such instance. During a 1960s concert, Hancock played what he judged as a very pronounced wrong chord. He flinched, fearing that he had ruined the whole night. A gifted improviser, Miles Davis responded with a series of notes that made Hancock's chord sound intentional. And the band played on.

One trait of truly creative people is resilience. When they fail, they adapt and try again. What happens when a chef discovers that all of their French bread has gone stale? *The end of the world!* The menu is ruined! No, they create bread pudding.

Thomas Edison was told by a teacher that he was 'too stupid to learn anything'. And for a while, Edison might have wondered if his teacher was right. Thomas Edison made one THOUSAND *unsuccessful attempts at inventing the light bulb*. Can you imagine how he must have felt? Amazingly, Edison kept trying and for all of those unsuccessful attempts, he went on to hold more than 1,000 patents, including the phonograph and electric lamp.

Ever heard of Jerry Seinfeld? He's one of the most successful comedians of all time. But his first time on stage he saw the audience and froze. Then, he delivered his set and was booed off the stage. He had two choices: pack it up and accept that comedy wasn't really "his thing" or return to the same stage the next night and try again. He edited and tightened his material and chose to try again.

J.K. Rowling was financially broke, on welfare, struggling with depression, recently divorced and a single mother writing a novel while studying. Have you ever heard the saying, "persistence pays off"? From woe to wizard, her bestselling books about Harry Potter have been read around the world.

Humorist and cartoonist James Thurber once said, “It is better to know some of the questions than all of the answers.” Creativity can help us in all areas of our life, from problem solving the steps in a homework assignment, to brightening our spirit, and even shedding light on difficult issues. But we have to be willing to stay humble, stay curious and maybe even look a little bit foolish in the eyes of the world.

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Parts of the text are based on the article: 15 Highly Successful People Who Failed Before Succeeding.  
<https://www.lifehack.org/articles/productivity/15-highly-successful-people-who-failed-their-way-success.html>

## SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

## TEAR-WATER TEA

Excerpt from *Owl at Home*, by Arnold Lobel

Owl took the kettle out of the cupboard. "Tonight I will make tear-water tea," he said. He put the kettle on his lap. "Now," said Owl, "I will begin." Owl sat very still. He began to think of things that were sad. "Chairs with broken legs," said Owl. His eyes began to water. "Songs that cannot be sung," said Owl, "because the words have been forgotten." Owl began to cry. A large tear rolled down and dropped into the kettle. "Spoons that have fallen behind the stove and are never seen again," said Owl. More tears dropped down into the kettle. "Books that cannot be read," said Owl, "because some of the pages have been torn out." "Clocks that have stopped," said Owl, "with no one near to wind them up." Owl was crying. Many large tears dropped into the kettle. "Mornings nobody was because everybody was sleeping," sobbed Owl. "Mashed potatoes left on a plate," he cried, "because no one wanted to eat them. And pencils that are too short to use." Owl thought about many other sad things. He cried and cried. Soon the kettle was filled up with tears. "There," said Owl. "That does it!" Owl stopped crying. He put the kettle on the stove to boil for tea. Owl felt happy as he filled his cup. "It tasted a little bit salty," he said, "but tear-water tea is always pretty good."

## Lesson 8: Friendship and Solidarity

### PURPOSE

To motivate students to practice solidarity by pursuing excellence together as a group.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand solidarity as the group pursuit of excellence and acting in a way that respects the dignity of each person.
2. Recognize the Liberian women as a historical example of solidarity.

### VOCABULARY

- Solidarity: a group of people unified in the pursuit of excellence for themselves and others

### MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- Escape from a Deserted Island Game
- [Video](#): The Wisdom of Geese
- [Video](#): Advertisement on Solidarity
- Ordinary Women End Extraordinary Violence
- Supplementary Material video: [Trailer](#) for the Liberian Documentary *Pray the Devil back to Hell*

### PROCEDURE

**Step 1:** Review the previous lesson. Recall the definition of creativity and how it is used in peoples' lives. Reflect together with the students on how they used their power of creativity in their classroom skits.

**Step 2:** Play the game, *Escape from a Deserted Island*. Have each student write down on a piece of paper, one item that they would bring with them if they were stranded on a deserted island. Then, ask each student to think about and write down how they would escape the deserted island by only using this one item.

Divide the class into groups of four to five students. Give each group five minutes to think about and discuss how they would combine the items each one brought with them in order to escape from the island. Encourage students to be ready to explain their particular scenarios of escape.

After the groups finish, ask them to share their escape strategies with the class and respond to the following questions:

- » How did you collaborate to find the best possible escape strategy?
- » Was it easier to find a good strategy together with others rather than on your own?
- » Did having more items (i.e. four or five) increase the possibilities for devising a good strategy?

After hearing students' comments, highlight that in the second step of the exercise the students needed to use teamwork and collaboration to accomplish the task. Working together with others on a common mission to escape the deserted island certainly increased their chances of devising a successful escape strategy compared to when they had to do it alone. This is not just because having more items increased their possibilities of escape, but also because working together allowed them to jointly come up with new ideas and to help each other accomplish the task.

**Step 3:** Emphasize how the exercise shows us that the human person is a social being. All of our powers, and especially the uniquely human powers of thinking and choosing, are creatively enhanced when exercised in collaboration with others. A person cannot fully flourish in isolation from others. Pursuing excellence and a meaningful life is only possible in relation with others.

Recall that in grade 7, the class learned about friendships of excellence. Write the vocabulary definition on the board:

Friendship of excellence: friendship based on pursuing excellence for oneself and others

A friendship of excellence is a relationship where friends learn to respect one another's dignity and pursue excellence together. This experience of friendship between two people extends to other people through the principle of solidarity. Because the human person is a social being, it means that we ought to behave in a certain way. If a person only pursues selfish interests without thinking about how it will affect others, they will end up hurting both others and themselves. Since persons are connected in common humanity, what one person does affects others around them.

Show the [Video: The Wisdom of Geese](#). Explain that the video illustrates solidarity at work in the natural world and how each goose contributes to the uplifting of the whole. Another short video, playfully depicts the power of solidarity in standing up to an “enemy” as well as coming together to creatively overcome challenges. Show the short [Video Advertisement on Solidarity](#).

Likewise, alone, one can only achieve so much, but together, people, too, can achieve great things. The principle of solidarity enables people to promote and respect human dignity and strive for excellence not just on an individual but also on a group or societal level. Solidarity is the principle that makes the unified pursuit of excellence a reality. Write the definition of solidarity on the board:

Solidarity: a group of people unified in the pursuit of excellence for themselves and others

**Step 4:** In this lesson, the class will learn about an example of solidarity through a group of women who pursued and achieved excellence for their country, together. To learn about this example, divide the students into groups and provide them with the text, [Ordinary Women End Extraordinary Violence](#). This reading looks at the example of the women of the African nation of Liberia who, through their action and solidarity, managed to bring peace to their country, which was for many years torn apart by civil war.

After students have finished reading, discuss the associated questions with the text as a class, with the Teacher’s Answer Key provided.

**Step 5:** Summarize. Recall the definition of solidarity and the importance of pursuing excellence on a group level. Highlight the Liberian women as an example of a group who pursued and achieved excellence together.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

Watch the trailer for a documentary about the Liberian Women. The trailer shows images of the war, and the young boys that were recruited into the army. The teacher should review the trailer in advance to decide if this content is appropriate for the class or not.

Trailer for the documentary: [Pray the Devil back to Hell](#).

## Ordinary Women End Extraordinary Violence

The west African nation of Liberia was founded by freed American slaves. The country's coat of arms declares, "The love of liberty brought me here."

However, in the last years of the 20th century and the early years of this one, Liberia was anything but a land of liberty. Drug-fueled militias maimed and killed civilians. Government and rebel forces alike raped with impunity. Hundreds of thousands fled. Others were trapped by the unending violence, unable to flee. As one Liberian woman later remembered, "My children had been hungry and afraid for their entire lives."

In spring 2003, a group of women decided to try to end the conflict once and for all. Dressed all in white, hundreds of them sat by the roadside, on the route taken daily by President Charles Taylor, rebel leader-turned-president. The president's motorcade swept past, slowing down only briefly. But the women returned, day after day. In pouring rain and blazing sunshine alike, they danced and prayed. In the words of Comfort Lamptey, author of a book on the Liberian peace movement of those years, the women were "fighting for the right to be seen, heard, and counted."

Taylor mocked the women for "embarrassing themselves." Still, though, the protests gained momentum. Religious leaders—imams and bishops alike—spoke out in support of the women's demands. Radio stations began reporting sympathetically on the roadside protests. Leymah Gbowee, one of the protest leaders, declared in front of the cameras, "We are taking this stand because we believe tomorrow our children will ask us: 'Mama, what was your role during the crisis?'"

Pressed on all sides, Taylor agreed to talk. He met with the women's leaders in the presidential palace. Peace talks with the warring factions began in Ghana a few weeks later.

It soon became clear, however, that the talks were going nowhere. Even as the warlords basked in the comfort of their luxury hotel, they worked the phones, directing renewed violence at home in the Liberian capital, Monrovia.

The women decided that enough was enough. Determined to focus on the human cost of the war, they barricaded delegates into the room where the talks were taking place. One of the negotiators, Nigerian General Abdulsalami Abubakar, remembered later: "They said that nobody will come out till that peace agreement was signed." As described in the 2008 documentary film *Pray the Devil Back to Hell*, one warlord tried unsuccessfully to kick his way out of the room. Others tried (and failed) to escape through the windows.

The men with guns agreed to talk seriously at last. A peace deal was struck. Charles Taylor went into exile. International peacekeepers arrived in Monrovia, greeted by cheering crowds. In 2006, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf became Liberia's first peacefully elected president, Africa's first woman leader.

Johnson-Sirleaf said: "It was ordinary Liberians who reclaimed the country and demanded peace."

**QUESTIONS FOR A DISCUSSION:**

- How did the Liberian women practice solidarity in this example? What was an excellent aim that they were pursuing?
- Would it have been possible to achieve peace in Liberia if the women had not collaborated and worked together to achieve this aim?

**Ordinary Women End Extraordinary Violence – Teacher’s Answer Key:**

1. The Liberian women decided to try to end the conflict in their country once and for all. Dressed all in white, hundreds of them sat by the roadside, and decided to protest against violence. The excellent aim they were pursuing was stopping the violence and achieving peace in their country.
2. Achieving peace in Liberia was only possible because a critical group of people worked together in practice of solidarity to achieve an excellent aim, which was peace. One person can only do so much, but if everyone works together, then great things are possible on a larger scale. The Liberian women understood that and joined forces in peaceful protests to end violence in their country. Finally, through persistence and determination they achieved their goal – a peace deal between opposing sides.
3. This example shows that pursuing and achieving excellence on a group level is not just reserved for extraordinary individuals, but that ordinary people can achieve excellent things if they work together. Ordinary Liberian women, and not the country’s leaders and warlords, managed to achieve precisely this. As Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf who became Liberia’s president, noted: “It was ordinary Liberians who reclaimed the country and demanded peace.”

## Lesson 9: Habits of Excellence: Humility

### PURPOSE

To help students understand and practice habits of excellence, especially the habit of humility.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand what habits of excellence are and how to develop them.
2. Understand the habit of humility.
3. Motivate students to develop humility.

### VOCABULARY

- Habits of excellence: behaviors acquired through regular practice which help people achieve excellence as persons.
- Humility: knowing and acknowledging both one's strengths and limitations

### MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- [Video](#): Atomic Habits: How to Get 1% Better Every Day – James Clear
- Humility Is / Is Not Worksheet
- The Failure Premortem
- The Success Post-Birth

### PROCEDURE

**Step 1:** Review the previous lesson. Recall the definition of solidarity and the importance of pursuing excellence on a group level. Highlight the Liberian women as an example of achieving excellence by working together. Recall the definition of freedom for excellence that the students learned in earlier lessons and the importance of pursuing excellence in everyday life.

**Step 2:** Recall that in grades 6 and 7, students learned about habits and how to develop excellent ones. Ask the students if they can recall what habits are and explain that the more someone performs a certain action, the more that action becomes ingrained in our brain as a habit. Ask the students if they can recall what habits are and explain that a habit is something you do so often that it becomes natural to you.

Ask students if they can think of examples of excellent and non-excellent habits. Write a table with two columns on the board, one for excellent and one for non-excellent habits. Write down the students' examples.

Mention some of the most important habits of excellence and write them on the board:

perseverance  
resilience  
courage  
wisdom  
truthfulness  
kindness  
generosity  
humility  
patience

Write the definition on the board:

Habits of excellence: behaviors acquired through regular practice which help people achieve excellence as persons.

Highlight that habits of excellence lead to the excellence of a person *as a person*, or of the person as a whole. While being excellent in a particular subject or skill, such as being an excellent musician or getting the highest grade in math is certainly noteworthy, developing habits of excellence primarily refers to becoming excellent as a human person. Everyone's most important task is to become excellent as a person.

This is because what we are is reflected in how we act and what we do. If we become excellent ourselves, we will perform excellent actions. For example, we can only perform courageous or kind actions over time if we become courageous or kind ourselves. And becoming excellent will also have the consequence of becoming more successful in different areas of one's life: e.g. a person who perseveres will be more successful at studying for school; a person who grows in patience, will also develop better leadership or mentorship skills, etc.

The good thing about habits of excellence is that no one is born with them, but everyone can acquire them through practice and learning. By making excellent choices in everyday situations, we ourselves become excellent. Developing excellent habits is hard at first and we would most like to avoid the hard work of developing them, but the good news is that it becomes easier through time. It is just important to start!

**Step 3:** To learn how to develop habits of excellence and motivate the students for developing them, play the [Video: Atomic Habits: How to Get 1% Better Every Day](#). After watching the video, ask the students to highlight some of the ideas from the videos that stuck with them.

After hearing the student's comments, make sure to highlight the following:

If you are able to get 1% better each day, you would end up 37 times better at the end of the year.

We should build our physical environment to stimulate positive habits.

Optimize for the starting line, and the outcome will come.

Good habits have immediate costs and delayed reward. You need to figure out how to bring reward into the present moment.

Every action that you take is a vote for the type of person you wish to become.

True change is not behavior change but identity change: e.g. the goal is not to read a book, but to become a reader.

The way to become something is through doing.

If you can change your habits, you can change your life!

**Step 4:** Explain that in this lesson, the students will learn about one habit of excellence: humility. Humility is one of the habits that is often misunderstood or viewed negatively. To better understand humility, divide students into groups and ask them to work on the [Humility Is / Is Not Worksheet](#). Groups should cut out all the cards from the worksheet and determine for each card whether it applies to humility or not. Students should be prepared to provide arguments for their thinking process and choice.

After all groups finish discussing, ask them to share their conclusions with the class. If groups differ with regards to some answers, ask them to present their reasoning to the class. Have the whole class vote on which group provided better arguments to support their choice. Clarify each of the examples on the basis of the Teacher's Answer Key provided with the worksheet.

**Step 5:** Explain that humility is definitely not a sign of weakness as it is sometimes portrayed. Only strong and mature persons can be truly humble. Humble persons do not diminish their worth or dignity by being humble, they are aware that they possess an immense value, as well as certain talents, strengths and qualities. As one saying goes, "Humility is not thinking less of yourself, it is thinking of yourself less." Write the vocabulary definition of humility on the board:

Humility: knowing and acknowledging both one's strengths and limitations

Humble people are aware that other people have dignity and unique qualities and for this reason they do not place themselves above others. They are also aware that they have limitations, weaknesses, and are prone to occasional failures. Humble people know that part of the human condition is to be imperfect. Nevertheless, this does not make them despair but motivates them to move forward and always work on developing habits of excellence in trying to improve themselves further. By knowing and accepting the truth about themselves, they are able to feel at ease with themselves and work cheerfully on developing greater habits of excellence in their lives.

Motivate the students to develop the habit of humility in their everyday lives. Ask them to think which kind of actions would help them become humble and work on [The Failure Premortem](#) exercise proposed by James Clear in the video they watched earlier.

In the second part of the exercise, ask them to work on [The Success Post-Birth](#) worksheet to reflect on how to achieve success in developing the habit of humility.

**Step 6:** Summarize. Recall the definition of habits of excellence and the key ideas from the video by Jack Clear. Recall the definition of humility and the characteristics of humble people. Motivate the students to practice developing humility in their lives moving forward.

#### HUMILITY IS / IS NOT WORKSHEET

A sign of weakness	Being aware both of one's strengths and weaknesses	Being passive in the face of adversity
Not standing up for oneself	Not thinking too highly of one's talents and achievements	Lacking self-confidence
A sign of strength	Insecurity	Not being a show off
Being aware that one always has room for improvement	False modesty	Good for teamwork

**Humility Is / Is Not Worksheet – Teacher’s Answer Key**

Humility is not:

- A sign of weakness – on the contrary, one needs to be strong to recognize and acknowledge their limitations.
- Being passive in the face of adversity – humble people do not just remain passive in the face of adversity; they fiercely oppose it.
- Not standing up for oneself – humility is not opposed to standing up for oneself. Humble people do not put themselves above others, but they also do not have to allow others to disrespect them.
- Lacking self-confidence – humility is not lacking self-confidence but feeling at ease with one’s strengths and limitations.
- Insecurity – humility is not insecurity but humble people are aware of their strengths and their value of intrinsic dignity.
- False modesty – humility is not false modesty since humble people do not falsely negate their strengths, but they acknowledge them in the right amount (i.e. not overemphasizing them, not negating or diminishing them).

Humility is:

- Being aware of both of one’s strengths and weaknesses – humble people are aware of their strengths and talents, but they are also aware of their limitations and weaknesses.
- Not thinking too highly of one’s talents and achievements – humble people are aware of their talents and achievements to a right degree, i.e. they do not overemphasize them or falsely inflate them.
- A sign of strength – to be humble and acknowledge one’s limitations, a person needs to be strong. Only strong people can be humble.
- Not being a show off – humble people are not show offs; they do not brag about their looks, what they have, how much money they make or what they have achieved.
- Being aware that one always has room for improvement – humble people are aware that no matter how good or proficient they are, they can always be better. This serves as a positive motivation to keep developing habits of excellence.
- Good for teamwork – humble people are usually good team players since they do not put their own desires or needs above others, but they are aware that others have desires and needs which should be equally observed.

**THE FAILURE PREMORTEM**

Think of developing the habit of humility. Now, imagine six months from now that you failed in developing it. Tell the story of why you failed by answering the following questions.

1. Why did you fail in developing greater humility?

2. What challenges did you encounter?

3. What took you off your course?

4. What could you have done differently to improve the chances of succeeding?

**THE SUCCESS POST-BIRTH**

Think of developing the habit of humility. Now, imagine six months from now that you succeeded in developing it. Tell the story of why you succeeded by answering the following questions.

1. How did you develop humility? Which actions did you take?

2. How did you overcome challenges that you encountered?

3. What did you do to not be taken off your course?

4. Which little things you did to improve the chances of succeeding?

## Lesson 10: Heroism

### PURPOSE

To motivate students to embody heroism in their daily lives.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand the main characteristics of heroism.
2. Understand how heroism and humility are connected.
3. Recognize Nelson Mandela as a person who embodied heroism and humility at the same time.

### VOCABULARY

- Heroism: possessing habits of excellence

### MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- [Video](#) One key leadership lesson everyone can learn from the US Marines
- [The Heroism of Nelson Mandela](#)

### PROCEDURE

**Step 1:** Review the previous lesson. Recall the definition of habits of excellence and the key ideas from the video by Jack Clear. Recall the definition of humility and the characteristics of humble people. Motivate students to continue to practice developing the habit of humility.

**Step 2:** Explain that in this lesson students will deal with the topic of heroism and how they can embody it. Recall the vocabulary definition of heroism. Write the definition on the board:

Heroism: possessing habits of excellence

Highlight five characteristics of heroism:

Heroes are not born; heroism is developed through the everyday practice of excellent choices.

Heroism is about possessing habits of excellence.

Heroism involves sacrificing for others.

Heroism is not about never making mistakes; it's about always trying to get back on the right track after making them.

Heroes don't become heroes by themselves; every person needs excellent friendships.

Ask the students to comment on each of the traits and if they would add any others.

**Step 3:** Show the class the [video](#): One key leadership lesson everyone can learn from the US Marines. The U.S. Marines have a rule: "Officers eat last." It's a fundamental philosophy of Marine Corps leadership that officers wait to eat until all Marines beneath them in rank have gotten their food.

After watching the video, ask the students to share their reflections and connect the rule that "officers eat last" with the habit of humility.

After hearing the students' comments, explain that heroism and being a true leader involves humility. The greatness of a leader consists in how powerfully they lead by example. This is practiced every day in a simple way during meals in the US Marine Corps when officers sacrifice their own hunger pangs, to let others eat first. In this small way, the rule exemplifies that regardless of rank, the greatest leader looks after others.

**Step 4:** Ask students to think about and name a person in their lives who embodies habits of excellence. After listening to the students' responses, introduce the history of Nelson Mandela. Nelson Mandela was born in 1918, in what was then known as the Union of South Africa. Though the majority of its inhabitants were black, they were dominated by a white minority that controlled the land, the wealth, and the government—a discriminatory social structure that would later be codified in the country's legal system and called apartheid.

Many South Africans defied apartheid, through civil disobedience campaigns, national strikes and boycotts. Nelson Mandela joined this struggle as a young lawyer. By the 1950s, he had become a leader in the anti-apartheid movement.

The South African government responded to demands for equality and freedom with repression and violence. They shot and killed unarmed protestors. Restrictions were put in place to take away the few rights that black workers had, including the right to organize and strike. The government outlawed the two main anti-apartheid organizations and then went after its organizers and leaders. The government launched a national manhunt for Nelson Mandela. After eluding capture for 17 months, Mandela was caught, charged with treason and condemned to hard labor. In court, Mandela stood and spoke:

*... During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die<sup>1</sup>.*

Mandela served 27 years in prison. Released in 1990, at 71, Mandela led efforts to negotiate an end to apartheid, which resulted in the 1994 multiracial general election in which Mandela became president. Leading a broad coalition government which promulgated a new constitution, Mandela emphasized reconciliation between the country's racial groups and created the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to investigate past human rights abuses. Widely regarded as an icon of democracy and social justice, he received more than 250 honors, including the Nobel Peace Prize.

**Step 5:** Divide the students into groups and ask them to read, [The Heroism of Nelson Mandela](#). After the groups finish reading, ask students to share their responses with the class. Lead a discussion with the class, using the Teacher's Answer Key provided with the text.

**Step 6:** Summarize. Recall the definition of heroism and five important characteristics of heroism. Highlight Nelson Mandela as an example of someone who embodied heroism and humility at the same time. Conclude by motivating the students to think about how they can embody heroism and humility through choices in their daily life.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.facinghistory.org/confronting-apartheid/chapter-2/mandela-trial>

## The Heroism of Nelson Mandela

Nelson Mandela was a great leader. A great number of people in his country followed him and the world leaders held him in high esteem. During a lifetime of resistance, leading to imprisonment, Nelson Mandela led South Africa out of apartheid and into an era of reconciliation. His presidential leadership was not one of revenge, getting even or seeking power. His heroism was born of decades of struggle.

At the same time, Mandela exhibited a deep humility. He showed humility when he stepped down from the role of president after one term, although he could have stayed a president for life. One of his most famous descriptions of himself which also shows his humility is: "I am not a saint unless you think of a saint as a sinner who keeps on trying." He was definitely a person who was aware of both his strengths and his limitations. He made mistakes. Heroism is trying to get on the right track again after making them.

Heroism is enhanced by excellent friendships. Mandela knew that ending apartheid would never be possible if not for friends, working together in solidarity. "I was in the company of great men," he once said, "some of them more qualified than me." Shortly after he turned 80, Mandela received an honorary doctorate from Harvard. "I know that through this award, you are not so much recognizing any individual achievement, but are rather paying tribute to the struggles and achievements of the South African people as a whole," he said in his address.

He was not centered around himself. As a special guest on The Oprah Winfrey Show, when he came to the studio, he asked the producer what was the subject of tonight's show. "You, sir, are the subject," replied the producer. Mandela couldn't believe he was the subject for the whole hour.

Mandela also embodied different habits of excellence. Perhaps, most notable, was his forgiveness. "Resentment is like drinking poison and hoping it will kill your enemy," he said about his oppressors. He made peace with those who sought to destroy and kill him, starting the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as president.

Being humble means that our purpose in life is not to seek power and fame, but to seek how much of a difference we can make in the lives of others. In this way, Mandela's long walk to freedom was a sacrifice for a greater cause. "To be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others."

### QUESTIONS FOR A DISCUSSION:

How did Mandela display humility?

How were five characteristics of heroism\* embodied by Nelson Mandela?

\*Five characteristics of heroism are:

1. Heroes are not born; heroism is developed through the everyday practice of excellent choices.
2. Heroism is about possessing habits of excellence.
3. Heroism involves sacrificing for others.
4. Heroism is not about never making mistakes; it's about always trying to get back on the right track after making them.
5. Heroes don't become heroes by themselves; every person needs excellent friendships.

**Heroism and Humility of Nelson Mandela – Teacher’s Answer Key**

1. Mandela displayed great humility when he stepped down from the role of a president after one term, although he could have stayed a president for life. One of his most famous descriptions of himself which also shows his humility is: “I am not a saint unless you think of a saint as a sinner who keeps on trying.” He was definitely a person who was aware of both his strengths and his limitations.

Even after becoming famous, he was always insisting that other people should be put alongside, or even before, him. One time he said: “I was in the company of great men: some of them more qualified than me.” Shortly after he turned 80, Nelson Mandela received an honorary doctorate from Harvard at a special convocation. “I know that through this award, you are not so much recognizing any individual achievement, but are rather paying tribute to the struggles and achievements of the South African people as a whole,” he said in his address.

2. Mandela embodies five characteristics of heroism in the following way:
  - His heroism was not born overnight, but he developed it slowly through many years of struggle, and by making excellent choices in day to day situations.
  - He showed that heroism is not about never making mistakes, but rather, always trying to get on the right track after making them. He said: “I am not a saint unless you think of a saint as a sinner who keeps on trying.”
  - He embodied the fact that heroism is enhanced by excellent friendships. He knew that ending the apartheid would never be possible without friends working together in solidarity.
  - He also embodied different habits of excellence. Maybe most notable is the habit of forgiveness. He was famous for rejecting resentment toward his oppressors by saying: “Resentment is like drinking poison and hoping it will kill your enemy.” He made peace with his oppressors and started a Truth and Reconciliation Commission after becoming president.
  - Mandela’s heroism was aimed at sacrificing for others, and not increasing his own importance. His main aim was building peace and transforming his country in a positive way.

## Lesson 11: The Mission

### PURPOSE

To help students to pursue a mission of excellence and to respect human dignity in their lives.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand their lives as a long-term mission to strive for excellence and to respect human dignity.
2. Recognize the purpose behind actions they take or things they do each day in the light of their personal mission.

### VOCABULARY

- Mission: one's higher purpose or a goal

### MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- Finding Your Mission [video](#)
- How to Write a Personal Mission Statement! [video](#)
- The Mission Statement
- The Steps for Achieving the Mission
- Interim quiz 2

### PROCEDURE

**Step 1:** Motivate students to practice heroism and humility, by considering the rule of the US Marines and how they can apply this to their life (e.g. offering to help a parent or a family member; considering the needs of others as well as our own.)

**Step 2:** Explain that one of the most important “ingredients” necessary for becoming a hero is having a mission, a motivating purpose, or a reason “why” behind everything one does. Explain that, in this lesson, the class will explore more of what this mission entails.

Start by writing the definition of a mission on the board:

Mission: one's higher purpose or goal

To introduce the topic of the mission, play the *Finding Your Mission* [video](#) and ask students to take notes on what their mission is or could be while watching the video. Afterwards, ask them to share their thoughts and impressions.

Note that the video emphasizes some important characteristics of the mission:

Mission is about helping other people.

Mission involves asking myself what genuinely interests me.

Mission involves asking myself what my talents and skills are.

One's mission does not have to be extraordinary.

All people can and should have a mission.

The video captures the nature of mission with the following sentence: "Where your skills and aptitudes meet with the needs of the world, that is your mission."

Ask the students why having a mission or purpose is important. After listening to the students' comments, explain that having a mission provides us with the reason why we should do something or stop doing something. To become excellent, a person needs to grasp the reason why he or she does what they do. Understanding one's mission and purpose is essential to overcoming difficulties and problems in life. If, on certain occasions, someone does not feel motivated to do something like exercising, studying, overcoming anger or being kind to a friend, reminding oneself of the purpose of doing all of these things can help lend willpower.

**Step 3:** Explain that in order to discover one's personal mission, it is helpful to answer the questions: What are my talents? What do I enjoy doing? Who do I want to become? How can I get where I want to be? What are the obstacles I will likely face? What will keep me going after I fall?, etc.

In this class, the students will craft their own personal mission statement. A mission statement is an inspiring statement, usually one or two sentences long, which guides one's actions.

A good mission statement is:

Personal – it should be customized for you and not be generic  
 Positive – it is focused on everything good that you want to be and do  
 In the present tense – you should aim to live this mission already now  
 Visual – it should enable you to imagine who you should be and what you should do  
 Emotional – it should be rooted in values you deeply care about

For example:

"To help save lives by being the best doctor I can be."  
 "To be a best friend, husband, father, colleague there is."  
 "To inspire people to become the best they can be."

A person can also have more than one higher goal in life. All of these goals can be encompassed by the mission statement, either by defining the mission statement in bullets to encompass more than one goal, or to find an overarching mission that incorporates all goals. Show students the [video](#): *How to Write a Personal Mission Statement!*

**Step 4:** Hand out [The Mission Statement](#) worksheet and go through it with the students. Give students a few minutes to reflect and write. Note that they can improve their mission statement at home if they want to take more time.

Ask the students to fill in [The Steps for Achieving the Mission](#) worksheet. The exercise involves working out which life goals are in line with your mission and which steps or actions you will need to take to achieve those goals. When students finish the exercise, ask the volunteers who feel comfortable to share their answers.

Finally, highlight that following one's mission often involves making difficult decisions to practice excellent habits and avoid non-excellent ones throughout life. This is a hard task but certainly achievable. Following one's mission through both hardships and happy times brings true fulfillment. That is why following it is worth the effort and sacrifice.

**Step 5:** Summarize. Recall the importance of having a mission in one's life and repeat the definition of a mission. Remind students of the steps for crafting their mission statement and the goals and actions needed to pursue their mission.

#### **FOLLOW-UP & HOMEWORK**

Ask the students to complete [Interim quiz 2](#) at home and bring it to the next class. Let them know that solving the interim quiz will help them in the Final quiz, which will be administered during the final class.

## THE MISSION STATEMENT

Who am I?

My strengths are:  
 My weaknesses are:  
 I enjoy doing:  
 What do I consider important:

Who do I want to become?

In 10 years, I would like to be:  
 My life goals are:  
 I can help others by:  
 My talents that can help the world are:

How can I become who I want to be?

To get where I want to be in the future, I need to:  
 Habit of excellence I need to develop:  
 Obstacles I will likely face:  
 A person who can help me:

Personal Mission Statement:

Copy your...

Personal Mission Statement:

To achieve my mission, I will need to accomplish these goals:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

*(you can add additional goals if necessary)*

To accomplish these goals and achieve my mission, I will need to do the following actions:

*(write in the present tense)*

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

*(you can add additional actions if necessary)*

***The Steps for Achieving the Mission – Sample Answer***

Copy your...

Personal Mission Statement:

"To help save lives by being the best surgeon I can be."

To achieve my mission, I will need to accomplish these goals:

1. Finish medical school with good grades.
2. Practice as a top-tier surgeon in a hospital for more than 10 years.
3. Be ready to listen to people and be available to help them.

To accomplish these goals and achieve my mission, I will need to do the following actions:  
(write in the present tense)

1. Study hard.
2. Make healthy choices.
3. Practice patience, empathy and kindness towards people in everyday life.
4. Help others whenever I can.

### A. True/false questions

1. T/F Humans can use their creativity to solve even the most difficult problems.
2. T/F By making excellent choices in everyday situations, one develops habits of excellence.
3. T/F Solidarity is only possible within small groups.
4. T/F Heroism involves possessing academic excellence.
5. T/F Where your skills and aptitudes meet with the needs of the world, that is your mission.

### B. Essay questions

6. What are some common misconceptions about humility? Mention at least 3.

### C. What is... vocabulary?

For example, if the answer is “The first letter of the alphabet”, the question is “What is the letter A?”. Or, if the answer is “A paste used to help clean and maintain health of the teeth”, the correct question is “What is toothpaste?”

7. Behaviors acquired through regular practice which help people achieve excellence as persons.
8. Knowing and acknowledging both one’s strengths and limitations
9. Using one’s imagination and ideas to shape the world.
10. A group of people unified in the pursuit of excellence for themselves and others.
11. One’s higher purpose or a goal.

**D. Multiple choice questions**

12. Nelson Mandela embodied heroism by:
- a) Putting others before himself
  - b) Not thinking too highly of himself
  - c) Speaking in front of large crowds
  - d) Being aware that he makes mistakes
13. The mission statement should be:
- a) Positive
  - b) Visual
  - c) Often changed
  - d) Abstract
14. Solidarity:
- a) Is founded on the social nature of persons
  - b) Does not have anything to do with human dignity
  - c) Involves pursuing only one's selfish interests
  - d) Enables people to strive for excellence on the group level
15. Creativity is used:
- a) In art
  - b) Only by artists
  - c) In problem-solving
  - d) By all human beings
16. Which of the following is a habit of excellence:
- a) Sleeping late
  - b) Humility
  - c) Weakness
  - d) Being easily insulted
17. What are the common traits of humble people:
- a) They acknowledge their limitations
  - b) They believe they are worse than others
  - c) They are weak
  - d) They do not boast about their achievements
18. Which of the following applies to heroism:
- a) It is developed through the everyday practice of excellent choices
  - b) It is reserved only for a small number of people
  - c) It involves never making mistakes
  - d) It is enhanced by excellent friendship

**Answer key:**

1. T
2. T
3. F – solidarity is also possible in bigger groups.
4. F – heroism involves possessing habits of personal excellence
5. T
6. One common misconception is that humility is a sign of weakness. It is wrong because one needs to be strong to recognize and acknowledge his limitations. The second misconception is that humility means being passive in face of adversity, but on the contrary, humble people do not just remain passive in face of adversity, but they can fiercely oppose it. Also, sometimes humility is perceived as not standing up for oneself, but humility is not opposed to standing up for oneself. Humble people do not put themselves above others, but they also do not have to allow others to disrespect them. Similarly, humility is not insecurity but humble people are aware of their strengths and their dignity. It is also not lacking self-confidence but feeling at ease with one's strengths and limitations. Finally, humility is not false modesty since humble people do not falsely negate their strengths, but they acknowledge them to the right degree (i.e. not overemphasizing them, not negating or diminishing them).
7. What are habits of excellence?
8. What is humility?
9. What is creativity?
10. What is solidarity?
11. What is the mission?
12. a, b, d
13. a, b
14. a, d
15. a, c, d
16. b
17. a, d
18. a, d

## Lesson 12: Final Quiz

### PURPOSE

To review the content of the whole curriculum with students and evaluate their learning.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

1. Identify and further refine their knowledge of the core contents of the curriculum.

### VOCABULARY

- No new vocabulary.

### MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- Final Quiz
- Evaluation sheet

**NOTE:** Copies of the Final Quiz Game will need to be printed for each group in advance of the class. A timer is also needed for the Game.

### PROCEDURE

**Step 1:** Ask the students if they have completed [Interim quiz 2](#). Ask them if some of the questions were difficult and help clarify the answers if so.

**Step 2:** Announce to the students that the main part of the class will be the [Final quiz](#) and give instructions for the quiz. Have a volunteer assist in handing out the questions and help calculate the points of the groups. Divide the rest of the students into a maximum of four groups and have them play the quiz. Students should name their groups after a hero and explain their choice to the rest of the class. The groups will compete against one another to answer the questions correctly. Lead the quiz by using the Final quiz worksheet. The objective of the quiz is to review the main ideas from previous lessons. After all four rounds of the quiz are completed, calculate the points of each group and announce the winners.

**Step 3:** Ask students to fill out the [Evaluation sheet](#). Offer closing remarks and thank students for participating in the Human Dignity Curriculum.

**FINAL QUIZ****A. MARK SENTENCES AS TRUE OR FALSE. EACH CORRECT ANSWER GIVES 1 POINT.**

Instructions: Give printed questions to each group. The groups get 3 minutes to answer all questions. After the groups finish, pick up the sheets with the answered questions. With the help of a volunteer, read aloud the correct answers and calculate the number of points for each group. Write the points of each group on the board.

1. T / F Human dignity implies enjoying material well-being
2. T / F All people have the need for love and belonging.
3. T / F Viktor Frankl said freedom is a product of our environment
4. T / F We can develop two-sided relationships with objects.
5. T / F To make excellent decisions you have to understand the problem you want to resolve.
6. T / F Humans can use their creativity to solve even the most difficult problems.
7. T / F By making excellent choices in everyday situations, one develops habits of excellence.
8. T / F Solidarity is only possible within small groups.
9. T / F Heroism involves possessing only one habit of excellence but to a high degree.
10. T / F Where your skills and aptitudes meet with the needs of the world, that is your mission.

**B. WRITE THE ANSWER TO THE ESSAY QUESTIONS. EACH CORRECT ANSWER GIVES 3 POINTS.**

Instructions: Give printed questions to each group. Groups get 5 minutes to answer all three questions. After all groups finish, pick up the sheets with answered questions. Read out loud the answers of each group on the following scale: 3 – the answer is comprehensive enough and explains the main point, 2 – the answer is correct but it is missing some important elements, or it is partially true and partially false, 1– the answer provides very limited accurate explanation, 0 – no answer is provided or it is completely false. Calculate the number of points for each group and write them on the board.

11. What are Viktor Frankl's key insights on freedom?

12. What are some common misconceptions about humility and why are they wrong? Mention at least 3.

**C. FOR EACH ANSWER, MAKE A CORRECT QUESTION. EACH CORRECT ANSWER GIVES 1 POINT, EACH WRONG ANSWER GIVES -1 POINT.**

Instructions: After hearing the question, the group that raises their hand first gets to answer the question. If they answer correctly, they get 1 point. If they answer incorrectly, they lose a point and the other group gets to answer.

13. The human ability to knowingly select between options.
14. Choosing carelessly by failing to consider whether one's actions are excellent or non-excellent.
15. Valuing persons for their intrinsic worth.
16. Dilemma, values, goals, others, consequences, alternatives, information.
17. The universal, intrinsic, and inalienable value of human persons.
18. The human ability to know and connect ideas.
19. Behaviors acquired through regular practice which help people achieve excellence as persons.
20. Knowing and acknowledging both one's strengths and limitations.
21. Using one's imagination and ideas to shape the world.
22. A group of people unified in the pursuit of excellence for themselves and others.
23. One's higher purpose or a goal.

**D. THINK AND CHOOSE: MULTIPLE CHOICE!**

Instructions: Give each group the multiple choice questions, face down. When ready, have each group complete the questions together. Each answer that is correct is worth one point. Each answer that is incorrect is minus a point. Tally the scores from each section to see which group wins!

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>24. Dignity as well-being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Is connected to happiness and prosperity</li> <li>b) Depends on having enough material goods</li> <li>c) Is intrinsic and inviolable</li> <li>d) Is always acquired by one's personal effort</li> </ul>  | <p>26. Which of the following is a necessary step of excellent decision making:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Thinking about the consequences of one's actions</li> <li>b) Considering alternatives</li> <li>c) Not spending too much energy on thinking</li> <li>d) Doing what is the most popular</li> </ul> |
| <p>25. Mark the true sentences about freedom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Freedom for excellence is not really possible if we are tired, angry, stressed, or hurt</li> <li>b) Freedom for excellence can be as simple as a word or a look</li> <li>c) We always have the freedom, if nothing else, to choose our attitude in a situation</li> <li>d) Freedom is just a product of environment</li> </ul> | <p>27. Intrinsic means that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) All persons have dignity</li> <li>b) No one can take dignity away from us</li> <li>c) Dignity is with us our entire life, we have it just by being human</li> <li>d) Dignity is not earned</li> </ul>   |
|  | <p>28. What are the common traits of humble people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) They acknowledge their limitations</li> <li>b) They believe they are worse than others</li> <li>c) They are weak</li> <li>d) They do not boast about their achievements</li> </ul>   |

29. Which of the following applies to heroism:
  - a) It is developed through the everyday practice of excellent choices
  - b) It is reserved only for a small number of people
  - c) It involves never making mistakes
  - d) It is enhanced by excellent friendships
30. The mission statement should be:
  - a) Positive
  - b) Visual
  - c) Often changed
  - d) Abstract
31. Nelson Mandela embodied heroic humility by:
  - a) Putting others before himself
  - b) Not thinking too highly of himself
  - c) Speaking in front of large crowds
  - d) Being aware that he makes mistakes
32. Solidarity:
  - a) Is founded on the social nature of man
  - b) Does not have anything to do with human dignity
  - c) Involves pursuing only one's selfish interests
  - d) Enables people to strive for excellence on the group level
33. Creativity is used:
  - a) In art
  - b) Only by artists
  - c) In problem-solving
  - d) By all living beings
34. Which of the following is a habit of excellence:
  - a) Sleeping late
  - b) Humility
  - c) Weakness
  - d) Being easily insulted
35. Which of the following is false? Dignity as moral character and integrity:
  - a) Is acquired through one's personal effort
  - b) Can be lost if one behaves immorally
  - c) Is equal in everyone
  - d) Is hard to achieve
36. Which powers animals and humans share:
  - a) Power to think
  - b) Power to feel emotions
  - c) Power to move from one place to another
  - d) Power to choose
37. Subjects:
  - a) We can love
  - b) We should care for
  - c) We can dispose of when no longer useful
  - d) We can own

**Teacher's Answer Key:**

1. F – this applies to dignity as well-being
2. T
3. F – Frankl says that humans are always free, regardless of our environment.
4. F – we can develop two-sided relationships only with subjects.
5. T
6. T
7. T
8. F – solidarity is also possible in bigger groups.
9. F – heroism involves possessing different habits of excellence
10. T
11. Frankl shows how freedom for excellence can be exercised even in the most difficult circumstances of the concentration camps. He says that the person is always free, no matter the circumstances, since he always has a choice how he will respond to a situation. Therefore, he says that everything can be taken from man, except the freedom to choose his attitude in any given circumstance. According to Frankl, to be free, man needs meaning and purpose.
12. One common misconception is that humility is a sign of weakness. It is wrong because one needs to be strong to recognize and acknowledge his limitations. Second misconception is that humility means being passive in face of adversity, but on the contrary, humble people do not just remain passive in face of adversity, but they can fiercely oppose it. Also, sometimes humility is perceived as not standing up for oneself, but humility is not opposed to standing up for oneself. Humble people do not put themselves above others, but they also do not have to allow others to disrespect them. Similarly, humility is not insecurity but humble people are aware of their strengths and their dignity. It is also not lacking self-confidence but feeling at ease with one's strengths and limitations. Finally, humility is not false modesty since humble people do not falsely negate their strengths, but they acknowledge them in the right amount (i.e. not overemphasizing them, not negating or diminishing them).
13. What is the power to choose?
14. What is freedom of indifference?
15. What does it mean to treat persons as subjects?
16. What are seven steps of excellent decision making?
17. What is human dignity?
18. What is the power to think?

19. What are habits of excellence?
20. What is humility?
21. What is creativity?
22. What is solidarity?
23. What is the mission?
24. a, b
25. b, c
26. a, b
27. c
28. a, d
29. a, d
30. a, b
31. a, b, d
32. a, d
33. a, c, d
34. b
35. c
36. b, c
37. a, b

**FINAL EVALUATION****A. Curriculum**

1. What did you like most about the curriculum? Were the examples and materials (videos, readings, discussion guides) interesting and illustrative of the content?

2. What do you think you have learned from the curriculum? Do you think you gained any new skills? Which ones?

3. Did you change any opinions you held before? If so, which ones?

4. Is there anything you disliked?

5. Did the curriculum meet your expectations? How? Would you recommend it to a friend?

## B. Agree or Disagree?

Do you agree with the following statements? Circle the number from 0 (strongly disagree) to 10 (strongly agree), depending on how much you agree with the statements.

### B.1. Opinions and values

6. A person cannot make good choices if they are angry or hurt.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree						Strongly agree	
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

7. Human dignity is connected to possessing enough material goods.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree						Strongly agree	
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

8. Humans are just a bit more developed animals.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree						Strongly agree	
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

9. Heroism is not possible for normal people.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree						Strongly agree	
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

10. Humans can solve even the most difficult problems.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree						Strongly agree	
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

11. When I make decisions, I consider the long-term consequences of my actions.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree						Strongly agree	
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

## Behavior

12. People with lower social status have less human dignity than those with a higher status.

Strongly disagree				Do not agree, nor disagree				Strongly agree		
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

13. If a person pursues only his selfish interests, he can end up hurting both others and himself.

Strongly disagree				Do not agree, nor disagree				Strongly agree		
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

## B.2. Behaviors

14. When I need to make important decisions, I take some time to reflect.

Strongly disagree				Do not agree, nor disagree				Strongly agree		
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

15. In my actions, I tend to consider how they affect other people.

Strongly disagree				Do not agree, nor disagree				Strongly agree		
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

16. I tend to acknowledge both my strengths and weaknesses.

Strongly disagree				Do not agree, nor disagree				Strongly agree		
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

17. I hang out with some people just because it will make me more popular.

Strongly disagree				Do not agree, nor disagree				Strongly agree		
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

18. In difficult situations, I prefer the better solution over the easier one.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree						Strongly agree	
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

19. I am actively trying to develop better habits.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree						Strongly agree	
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

20. It is important to me to know the purpose of the things I do.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree						Strongly agree	
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

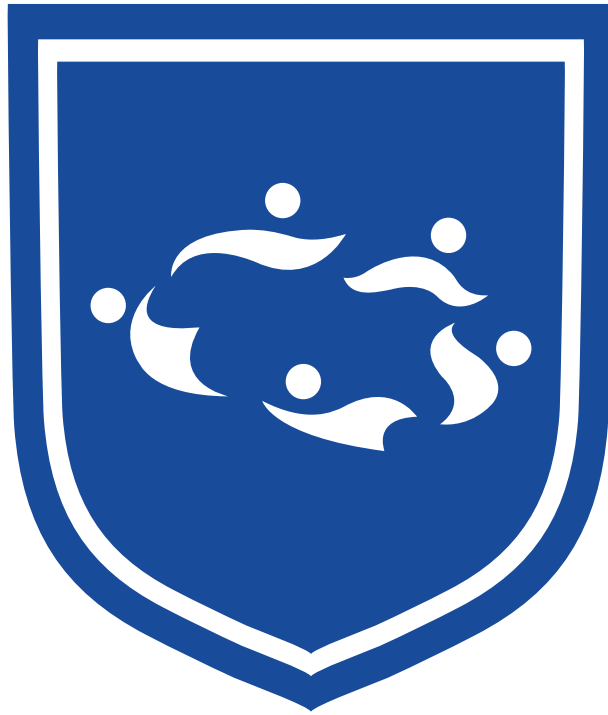
21. I am trying not to put myself above other people.

Strongly disagree			Do not agree, nor disagree						Strongly agree	
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

## C. Teacher

22. Did the teacher explain the content in a clear and effective way?

23. Did the teacher give examples that made the content more interesting and relevant to your life?



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[humandignitycurriculum.org](http://humandignitycurriculum.org)