

Lesson 5: Power to Think

PURPOSE

To help students recognize the importance of using their power to think in an excellent way.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

1. Recognize the importance of using their power to think in an excellent way.
2. Distinguish between habits of excellent and non-excellent thinking.

MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- Two Truths and a Lie Game
- Excellent and Non-Excellent Ideas Worksheet + Answer Key
- Habits of Thinking: The Script + Answer Key
- Habits of Thinking: Student Review + Answer Key
- THINK You Can Be an Expert? Worksheet + Answer Key

VOCABULARY

- Power to think: the human ability to know 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 what to do in those situations.

Step 2: Discuss how the power to think is a specifically human power which distinguishes humans from all other beings. Human beings use this power in different capacities: in decision making, education, friendship, etc.

Write the definition on the board:

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

This lesson will explore how to best use the power to think in different situations.

To introduce the power to think and to help students get to know each other, ask the class to play the game [Two Truths and a Lie](#). Have students write down two things about themselves that are true and one thing about themselves that is a lie. Afterwards, give each student the chance to share their three “facts” with the other classmates. The classmates must decide which two items are true and which fact is a lie. The class may work together to reach a decision and then explain how they came to that decision.

Ask the students the following questions:

- How did you identify which facts were true and which were false?
- Which one was the hardest to solve? What was your thinking process for this example?
- Could animals (e.g. your pet) or plants (e.g. the tree outside the window) solve these examples from your classmates?
- Why is the power to think important? In what areas of life do we need to use it?

Help the students to see that animals and plants would not be able to solve for the truth in the game [Two Truths and a Lie](#) because they don’t have the uniquely human powers to think and choose. No matter how close a dog is to their owner, that dog would not be capable of deciding which things about their owner are false and which are true.

From these examples, we can also see that to make good guesses about truths and falsehoods, we need to think well and thoroughly. The powers to think and choose are strongly related and they should be developed together.

The power to think is important for all areas of life, e.g. in school, with friends, or deciding how to spend your free time.

Step 3: The powers that human beings have can be used both in excellent and non-excellent ways. Thinking in an excellent way can lead people to excellent ideas and choices, while thinking in a non-excellent way can lead to not-excellent ideas and decisions.

Hand out the [Excellent and Non-Excellent Ideas Worksheet](#). Have students analyze the different habits of thinking and determine which of them are excellent and which are non-excellent. After students have finished the worksheet, help students to describe the reasons or thinking process behind their choice. Review the worksheet examples with the [Answer Key](#) provided in the materials.

Step 4: In order to use the power to think in an excellent way, human beings need to develop these powers through habit. A habit is something you do so often that it comes naturally to you. Just as muscles need exercise in order to grow in strength, our power to think needs practice to properly develop. Present the following ideas on the board one by one and ask the students to identify whether it represents a habit of excellent or non-excellent thinking:

- Listening to different points of view.
- Making a judgement based on good reasons.
- Rushing to conclusions.
- Considering if I might be wrong.
- Discarding valid criticism because it makes me feel bad.
- Disregarding an opinion because I do not like a person who is saying it.
- Asking advice from people with more knowledge or experience.
- Thinking about the consequences of my ideas and actions.
- Letting anger blur my judgement.
- Arguing that something is true simply because I say so.

When analyzing examples one by one, group them into two columns, like in the table below. Read aloud the 5 Habits of excellent thinking and the 5 Habits of non-excellent thinking. Ask the students to explain why they think each habit is excellent or non-excellent.

| 5 Habits of excellent thinking | 5 Habits of non-excellent thinking |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Listening to different points of view. 2. Making a judgement based on good reasons. 3. Considering if I might be wrong. 4. Asking advice from people with more knowledge or experience. 5. Thinking about the consequences of ideas and actions. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rushing to conclusions. 2. Ignoring valid criticism because it makes me feel bad. 3. Not listening to an opinion because I do not like a person who is saying it. 4. Letting anger blur my judgement. 5. Arguing that something is true simply because I say so. |

Step 5: To practice recognizing habits of excellent and non-excellent thinking, ask for three volunteer actors. Have three students read and act out the roles of “Narrator”, “Mom”, or “Des”.

After the play is finished, hand out the [Habits of Thinking: Student Review](#) to each student. Have students identify two excellent or non-excellent habits of thinking from the play, using the table with the list of habits of excellent and non-excellent thinking displayed on the worksheet. Discuss their responses as a class, using the [Answer Key](#).

Step 6: Summarize. Recall that the power to think can be used in both excellent and non-excellent ways. Emphasize some of the excellent and non-excellent ideas students recognized throughout the lesson.

FOLLOW-UP & HOMEWORK

If time permits, ask the students to fill in the [Interim Quiz](#) and review the answers as a class. Otherwise, ask the students to fill out the answers at home so that they are prepared to be **EXPERTS** for the next class!

EXCELLENT AND NON-EXCELLENT IDEAS

| The idea | Is the idea excellent or non-excellent? | Why? |
|--|--|-------------|
| Posting an embarrassing photo of a friend on Instagram. | | |
| Not doing homework because it is boring. | | |
| Putting my phone away at least 30 minutes before I go to sleep. | | |
| Playing video games and staying up late before an important test. | | |
| Rejecting my parents' advice because they are too old to understand me. | | |
| Giving someone my full attention when they are talking to me. | | |
| Skipping piano lessons in order to continue hanging with friends. | | |
| Politely declining a strangers' invitation to drive me home after school. | | |
| Snoozing the alarm in the morning and then rushing to get to school. | | |
| Writing angry comments on social media when I feel bad. | | |
| Cheating on an exam because I did not study enough. | | |
| Listening to a friend who politely tells me that something I did was not nice. | | |

Excellent and Non-Excellent Ideas – Answer Key

| The idea | Is the idea excellent or non-excellent? | Why? |
|---|---|---|
| Posting an embarrassing photo of a friend on Instagram. | Non-excellent | The friend will feel embarrassed in front of those who will see the photo and it will damage the friendship and trust between you. |
| Not doing homework because it is boring. | Non-excellent | Not doing homework is like not attending any basketball practices but expecting to be the best player at the basketball game. Homework is important to do every day as it helps your brain build reading, writing and memory muscles. Choosing to do your homework even when it's boring will help strengthen your brain, prepare you for class, which will also improve your self-confidence. This one choice now has a big impact on your life and education later! |
| Putting my phone away at least 30 minutes before I go to sleep. | Excellent | This choice will help you get a better sleep. Did you know that the blue light from your screen actually prevents your body from feeling tired? Sleep is the time when your body does all of its growing! So, putting your phone away before bed is a great way to help your brain and your body quiet down before sleep. |
| Playing video games and staying up late before an important test. | Non-excellent | Not studying for a test will make you feel more anxious about the test. On top of that, staying up late instead of getting a good sleep will also make it harder for you to focus on the exam, which will make you feel worse about your performance. |
| Rejecting my parents' advice because they are too old to understand me. | Non-excellent | The fact that your parents are older means that they have likely gone through some similar things in their lives. A parent or trusted family member will want to understand how you're feeling and give you advice to help you. |

| | | |
|--|---------------|---|
| Giving someone my full attention when they are talking to me. | Excellent | When you give someone your full attention, it tells them that they are important. It treats them like a subject with human dignity. |
| Skipping piano lessons in order to continue hanging with friends. | Non-excellent | Choosing to attend your lesson, even when you want to stay with friends, shows respect to your piano teacher. The more you practice the more you will also enjoy playing the piano, which is a talent you'll be able to proudly display for the rest of your life. |
| Politely declining a strangers' invitation to drive me home after school. | Excellent | Since you do not know the stranger or their intentions, it is always better to decline. Tell a teacher if you need a safe ride home. |
| Snoozing the alarm in the morning and then rushing to get to school. | Non-excellent | Sometimes you really want to sleep! But, the really excellent choice is to make sure you get to bed earlier at night. Snoozing your alarm in the morning will cause more stress as you have to rush and might forget to take your lunch or important books or gym clothes. This will cause stress for you and for others. |
| Writing angry comments on social media when I feel bad. | Non-excellent | It is better to cool down first, take a walk or get your anger out by writing down your thoughts in a journaling book. If you write it online, it might be something you will regret making public later. |
| Cheating on an exam because I did not study enough. | Non-excellent | Cheating will not improve your knowledge or build excellent habits for your life. It's also dishonest, which will harm your reputation. |
| Listening to a friend who politely tells me that something I did was not nice. | Excellent | Even though it might sound unpleasant to hear it, being able to receive feedback is a sign of maturity. It can also help you become a better person if the advice is to help you make more excellent choices. |

SCRIPT: HABITS OF THINKING**ROLES:** Narrator, Des, Mom

Narrator: Des came home after school. He wanted to play video games but his Mom said he had to do his homework.

Des: Mom, everyone is online now. You are the only Mom that makes me finish my homework first instead of playing video games. All my friends' Moms let them play games!

Mom: I don't care what other Moms do. I am your Mom and you are going to listen to what I say!

Des: (*mad*) I am not going to listen to you because you never understand!

Mom: If you decide not to do your homework now and keep fighting with me, I'll take away your video games for an entire week. You're not being respectful.

Des: (*yells*) Mom! CHILL out!

Mom: (*calmly*) Go to your room and take some time to think about this. Your school should take priority over video games. You were just with your friends this weekend.

Des: (*grumbles*) My homework isn't even a big deal. It will literally take a second. I can do it later!

Narrator: Even though he disagreed with his Mom's demands and he really wanted to play video games after school, he went to his room to rethink the situation.

On the one hand, he thought about being grounded for a whole week and he didn't like that idea. It would mean he couldn't go anywhere except school. Also, he wouldn't be able to play video games for an entire week. It would be harder for him to do his homework later, as he'd only be more tired. But he didn't want his Mom to think she had won and he had lost. If he did his homework now, he would be caving.

He also felt bad for yelling. After some time, he walked out of his room and decided he had the power to choose a different ending.

Des: Hey Mom, I wanted to say I'm sorry for yelling at you. I understand that it is important to do my homework and it's true that I don't need to play games right now.

Mom: I'm glad that you took some time to think about it.

Des: Um, can you help me? There are a few questions I don't understand and I think part of me was just trying to avoid it so that I don't look stupid.

Mom: You are never stupid for asking questions. It takes a lot of maturity to ask for help, so I'm proud of you. I understand how hard it can be when work piles up. Go get your books and let's get started.

HABITS OF THINKING: STUDENT REVIEW

Pay attention! There are habits of excellent and non-excellent thinking at play!

Watch the play closely to identify two instances of excellent or non-excellent thinking habits and the part in the play when it happened. The table with the list of habits of excellent and non-excellent thinking is displayed below.

| 5 Habits of excellent thinking | 5 Habits of non-excellent thinking |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Listening to different points of view. 2. Making a judgement based on good reasons. 3. Considering if I might be wrong. 4. Asking advice from people with more knowledge or experience. 5. Thinking about the consequences of ideas and actions. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rushing to conclusions. 2. Ignoring valid criticism because it makes me feel bad. 3. Not listening to an opinion because I do not like a person who is saying it. 4. Letting anger blur my judgement. 5. Arguing that something is true simply because I say so. |

| Identify the situation or sentence from the play: | Which habit is displayed? | Is the habit excellent or non-excellent? |
|---|---------------------------|--|
| 1. | | |
| 2. | | |

Habits of Thinking: Answer Key

Narrator: Des came home after school. He wanted to play video games but his Mom said he had to do his homework.

Des: Mom, everyone is online now. You are the only Mom that makes me finish my homework first. All my friends' Moms let them play games!

Mom: I don't care what other Moms do. I am your Mom and you are going to listen to what I say!

Arguing that something is true simply because you say so.

Des: (mad) I am not going to listen to you because you never understand! **Letting anger blur your judgement.**

Mom: If you decide not to do your homework now and keep fighting with me, I'll take away your video games for an entire week. You're not being respectful.

Des: (yells) Mom! CHILL out!

Mom: (calmly) Go to your room and take some time to think about this. Your school should take priority over video games. You were just with your friends this weekend.

Des: (grumbles) My homework isn't even a big deal. It will literally take a second. I can do it later!

Discarding valid criticism because it makes you feel bad.

Narrator: Even though he disagreed with his Mom's demands and he really wanted to play video games after school, he went to his room to rethink the situation. **Considering if I might be wrong.**

On the one hand, he thought about being grounded for a whole week and he didn't like that idea. It would mean he couldn't go anywhere except school. Also, he wouldn't be able to play video games for an entire week. It would be harder for him to do his homework later, as he'd only be more tired.

Thinking about the consequences of your ideas and actions.

But he didn't want his Mom to think she had won and he had lost. If he did his homework now, he would be caving. He also felt bad for yelling. After some time, he walked out of his room and decided he had the power to choose a different ending.

Des: Hey Mom, I wanted to say I'm sorry for yelling at you. I understand that it is important to do my homework and it's true that I don't need to play games right now. **Listening to different points of view.**

Mom: I'm glad that you took some time to think about it.

Des: Um, can you help me? There are a few questions I don't understand and I think part of me was just trying to avoid it so that I don't look stupid. **Asking advice from people with more knowledge or experience.**

THINK YOU CAN BE AN EXPERT?**A. True/false questions**

1. T/F Power is the ability of a living being to do something on its own.
2. T/F Human beings have powers that animals and plants do not have.
3. T/F “Universal” means that every person has human dignity.
4. T/F We can be friends with objects.
5. T/F It is an excellent habit of thinking to consider if you might be wrong.

B. For each statement, write a correct question

It's like Jeopardy! For example, if the statement is: “The first letter of the alphabet”, the correct response should be written in the form of a question: “What is the letter A?”

6. The human ability to understand and connect ideas. **What is** _____
7. The power to think and choose. **What are** _____
8. A system in which things are arranged above and below one another according to their importance or complexity. **What is** _____
9. Listening to different points of view, considering if I might be wrong, asking advice from people with more knowledge or experience, making a judgement based on good reasons and thinking about the consequences of your ideas and actions.
What are _____

C. Multiple choice questions. There can be more than one correct choice.

10. For Subjects, we should:
 - a) Respect them
 - b) Dispose of them when they are no longer useful
 - c) Empathize with them
 - d) Do whatever we want with them

11. The word **Intrinsic** means that dignity:
- a) Is with us our entire life
 - b) No one can take it away from us
 - c) Is given to us based on how popular we are
 - d) Is greater in people who are smarter
12. We violate human dignity, when:
- a) We treat a person as an object
 - b) We spread lies about other people
 - c) We use people to gain something from them
 - d) We are kind to people
13. Which of the following are habits of **excellent** thinking?
- a) Rushing to conclusions
 - b) Seeking advice from people with more knowledge or experience
 - c) Considering other viewpoints
 - d) Gathering enough evidence
14. Which of the following are subjects and not objects?
- a) Books
 - b) Janitor
 - c) Classmate
 - d) Bananas
15. Human Dignity is:
- a) The special value of every human person
 - b) An honor that you can receive
 - c) Related to how much money you have
 - d) Something that can be given or taken away

Answer Key

THINK YOU CAN BE AN EXPERT?

A. True/false questions

1. T/F **Power is the ability of a living being to do something on its own.**
2. T/F **Human beings have powers that animals and plants do not have.**
3. T/F **“Universal” means that every person has human dignity.**
4. T/F *We can be friends with objects.* **We can only be friends with subjects.**
5. T/F **It is an excellent habit of thinking to consider if you might be wrong.**

B. For each statement, write a correct question

(It's like Jeopardy!) For example, if the statement is: “The first letter of the alphabet”, the correct response should be written in the form of a question: “What is the letter A?”

6. The human ability to understand and connect ideas. **What is the power to think?**
7. The power to think and choose. **What are uniquely human powers?**
8. A system in which things are arranged above and below one another according to their importance or complexity. **What is a hierarchy?**
9. Listening to different points of view, considering if I might be wrong, asking advice from people with more knowledge or experience, making a judgement based on good reasons and thinking about the consequences of your ideas and actions.
What are excellent habits of thinking?

C. Multiple choice questions. There can be more than one correct choice.

10. For Subjects, we should:
 - a) **Respect them**
 - b) Dispose of them when they are no longer useful
 - c) **Empathize with them**
 - d) Do whatever we want with them

11. The word **Intrinsic** means that dignity:
- a) **Is with us our entire life**
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14. Which of the following are subjects and not objects?
- a) Books
 - b) **Janitor**
 - c) **Classmate**
 - d) Bananas
15. Human Dignity is:
- a) **The special value of every human person**
 - b) An honor that you can receive
 - c) Related to how much money you have
 - d) Something that can be given or taken away

REVIEW: HUMAN DIGNITY IS THE SPECIAL VALUE OF EVERY HUMAN PERSON.

The three characteristics of human dignity are:

- » 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.