**Positive Psychology**

**Resource Pack:**

**Gratitude**



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**Information for Teachers:**

Gratitude is a spontaneous feeling but, increasingly, research demonstrates its value as a practice, that is, making conscious efforts to count one’s blessings. Studies show that people can deliberately cultivate gratitude and there are important social and personal benefits to doing so. It is possible to feel grateful for loved ones, colleagues, animals, nature, and life in general. The emotion generates a climate of positivity that both reaches inward and extends outward.

Psychologists find that, over time, feeling grateful boosts [happiness](http://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/basics/happiness) and fosters both physical and psychological health, even among those already struggling with mental health problems. Practicing gratitude curbs the use of words expressing negative emotions and shifts inner [attention](http://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/basics/attention) away from such negative emotions as resentment and [envy](http://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/basics/jealousy), minimizing the possibility of ruminating, which is a hallmark of [depression](http://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/basics/depression). Studies have also shown that gratitude is associated with well-being in adolescents, and that well-being as related to less depression, drug use, and behavioural problems. Furthermore, expressing gratitude has been associated with more school-related success and satisfaction, and may help promote positive peer relationships.

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| I am aware of and able to express my feelings and am developing the ability to talk about them. **HWB 2-01a / HWB 3-01a** |
| I know that friendship, caring, sharing, fairness, equality and love are important in building positive relationships. As I develop and value relationships, I care and show respect for myself and others. **HWB 2-05a / HWB 3-05a** |
| I recognise that each individual has a unique blend of abilities and needs. I contribute to making my school community one which values individuals equally and is a welcoming place for all. **HWB 2-10a / HWB 3-10a** |

**A close up of a logo

Description automatically generatedExperiences and Outcomes**



**Introduction to Lesson:**

This lesson focuses on the concept of gratitude, what the benefits are and how pupils can practise being grateful.

**Learning intentions and Success Criteria:**

Learning Intentions:

By the end the lesson I will learn about the meaning of gratitude, why it is important and learn how I can practise being more grateful.

Success Criteria:

I will have been successful if I can:

* Understand what gratitude means
* Know the benefits of gratitude
* Identify ways that I can practice gratitude

**Activity**: **What does Gratitude mean?**

Pupils could work in pairs to come up with a definition, or individually write their thoughts on the meaning of gratitude on a post-it-note and stick it on the board at the front of the class.

Issue pupils with the following definition of gratitude:

According to the world’s leading gratitude researcher Robert Emmons, gratitude is an “affirmation of goodness where we affirm that there are good things in the world”.

In more simple terms, Gratitude is the ability to recognise and acknowledge the good things, people and placed in our lives.

Ask students to compare their definitions with the one they have been given.

**Activity: What I am grateful for...**

Pupils could write a list of things and/or people they are thankful for.

Or pupils could write a letter of thanks.

These can be shared with another pupil or as a class if they feel they want to.

**Video Clip**

*Did you know that being ‘thankful or showing gratitude makes you happier?*

Watch one of the gratitude videos below (Choose a video that is most appropriate to the age and needs of the class):

* Kid President: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yA5Qpt1JRE4> (Primary level)
* The Gratitude Experiment: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHv6vTKD6lg> (Secondary level)



**Activity: Gratitude Quotes**

Pupils could be split into small groups or work in pairs for this task.

Issue pupils with one of the quotes below, give them 5 minutes to discuss and plan, and one minute each to teach their quote and its meaning to the rest of the class. They may wish to act out their quote of give some examples.

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| “There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle.” - Albert Einstein |
| “None is more impoverished than the one who has no gratitude. Gratitude is a currency that we can mint for ourselves and spend without fear of bankruptcy.” - Fred De Witt Van Amburgh |
| "If you count all your assets, you always show a profit." - Robert Quillen |
| "Be thankful for what you have; you'll end up having more. If you concentrate on what you don't have, you will never, ever have enough." - Oprah Winfrey |

**Activity: What are the benefits of gratitude?**

Ask pupils to think about, and then share their thoughts on what they think the benefits of gratitude might be.

Afterwards, share the following benefits with the class:

Research shows that [gratitude](https://positivepsychology.com/gratitude-appreciation/) can:

* Help you make friends. One study found that thanking a new acquaintance makes them more likely to seek a more lasting relationship with you.
* Improve your physical health. People who exhibit gratitude report fewer aches and pains.
* Improve your psychological health. Grateful people enjoy higher well-being and

happiness and suffer from reduced symptoms of depression.

* Enhance empathy and reduces aggression. Those who show their gratitude are less likely to seek revenge against others and more likely to behave in a prosocial manner, with sensitivity and empathy.
* Improve your sleep. Practising gratitude regularly can help you sleep longer and better.
* Enhance your self-esteem. People who are grateful have increased self-esteem, partly due to their ability to appreciate other peoples’ accomplishments.
* Increase in mental strength. Grateful people have an advantage in overcoming trauma and enhanced resilience, helping them to bounce back from highly stressful situations. (Morin, 2014).

**Activity: How can I practice gratitude?**

Pupils could share their ideas on how they think they could practice gratitude, and what they might task their selves with over the next week.

Some examples include:

**Journal About Gratitude**: Take a few minutes every evening to write down five good things about your day. The entries don’t have to be major events—they might be as simple as a good meal, talking to a friend, or getting through a difficult challenge. Even on a bad day there are normally some things that we can feel good about. Taking time to be grateful is not about ignoring the bad things – it just helps us focus our attention more on the positive, rather than dwell on the negative.

**Write a Letter:** Think about someone who has had a major impact on your life, someone who you would like to thank, or someone who you appreciate having in your life. Write a letter with specific details about what it is you appreciate about them, and send it.

**Visit Someone who you Appreciate:** Write a letter to someone you appreciate as described above, but instead of mailing it, deliver the letter in person. Don’t tell them why you’re visiting! Read them the letter, and then allow them to keep it as a memento.

**Say “Thank You”:** Keep your eyes open throughout the day for reasons to say “thanks”. Try to recognize the small actions people do every day that might be overlooked such as a colleague who always goes the extra mile, or a friend who always seems willing to listen.

**Take a Gratitude Walk:** Go for a walk and make a special effort to appreciate your surroundings. You might notice the smell of flowers, a pretty building, or a soothing breeze. Spend a few minutes focusing on each of your senses (sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch) to find new things you may not have noticed.

**Activities: practising gratitude classroom activities**

Below are some activities that could be used to help pupils practise gratitude in the classroom:

* **Gratitude journal:** Pupils could take five minutes in class every day to write down 3–5 things they are grateful for.
* **ABC Gratitude brainstorm**: Ask pupils to list generate an alphabetical list of things there are grateful, or pupils could go around the class and each say something they are gratefully for that matches with their letter.
* **Positive gossip about classmates**: Pupils could write on a post it note something they appreciate about another person in the class and leave it on their desk.
* **Gratitude collage/ word picture:** Pupils can create a collage or work picture of things that they feel grateful for. pupils can do this individually or in groups.