

Respect

In the first week of this unit, students will learn about how their mindset impacts their ability to respect themselves and others. They will also have the opportunity to discuss how respect fits into making (and learning from!) their mistakes, trying new things, and assessing and forming habits.

Begin the unit with the whole class lesson and then aim to complete at least two of the mini lessons with your students throughout the week. Each mini lesson is designed to present elements of the main lesson in new and engaging ways.

Main Lesson

Whole Class Lesson
30 minutes



The Mindset of Respect

In this lesson, students are introduced to the concept of growth mindset and learn a little bit about how the brain works and forms new connections for learning. This opens the door for engaging conversation about how we process information, approach learning, embrace difficult things, and learn from mistakes. (See page 3 for lesson details.)

Mini Lessons

For Small Groups
15 minutes



The Value of Mistakes

In small groups, talk about mistakes. What are they and how do we feel when we make a mistake? Does American culture respect the fact that people make mistakes? Do the adults in your life respect that you will make mistakes? How can we turn a mistake into something positive? How do you respect others' right to make mistakes?

Supplemental video (could be watched on a tablet in each group or as a whole class before breaking into groups): [LearnStorm Growth Mindset: Ceiba Prep Students on mistakes.](#)

For Partners
15 minutes



Trying New Things

With your partner, talk about why people can be afraid to try new things. Share something you want to try but are afraid. What could help make you try this new thing? How do we show respect for ourselves when we try new things?

For Individuals
15 minutes



Respect is my Superpower

Visualize yourself having a growth mindset. Then, draw a picture of yourself as a respect superhero with a growth mindset. What do you look like? What things are you thinking or saying? What can you draw that will remind you to be respectful in all situations and to approach every task with a growth mindset?

Technology-Focused

15 minutes



Forming New Tech Habits

What is a tech habit you have? Is it positive or negative? If negative, what do you need to do in order to rewire your brain about that habit? (If all the ideas were positive, discuss negative tech habits (checking social media all the time, for example) and how people can rewire their brains about that habit.) How does having positive habits, especially with regard to technology, help us show respect for ourselves and others?

The Mindset of Respect

In this lesson, students are introduced to the concept of growth mindset and learn a little bit about how the brain works and forms new connections for learning. This opens the door for engaging conversations about how we process information, approach learning, embrace difficult things, and learn from mistakes, all while showing respect for ourselves and others.

Lesson Timeframe

30 minutes

Required Materials

☐ Computer/Projector/or Whiteboard

Standards Map

This lesson aligns with CASEL Competencies, National Health Education Standards, International Society for Technology in Education Standards, when applicable, and Common Core State Standards. Please refer to the [Standards Map](#) for more information.

Lesson Objective

Students will:

- Understand basic brain functions and how we create new neural pathways.
- Connect growth mindset with confidence and ability in learning.
- Apply respect to the concept of hard work and advance learning through neuroplasticity.

Teacher Connection/Self-Care

Welcome to the Respect Unit! As you guide your students through the lessons in this first week, remember that your students' ability to learn and demonstrate respect begins with you. How do you model respect for your students, for your colleagues, and, most importantly, for yourself? Students at this age can be skeptical about the power of respect, but active modeling can show them how being respectful can completely change attitudes, relationships, self-perception, and even culture. As you go into this week, focus specifically on how you show respect for yourself.

Do you believe that you are a good educator? Are you proud of your classroom culture? Do you value your health or are you pushing yourself too hard? Do you communicate your needs? Can you be calm in the midst of conflict? If you feel you could improve how you show respect for yourself, take some time this week to write down all the things you are doing well right now. What are some things about your classroom that students love? What are students doing well this week? That is a reflection of you! Need a nap or a long, brisk walk? Take one, even if it feels like you have no time. This week, work on improving how you see, care for, and respect yourself.



Share

5-7 minutes

Welcome to the first lesson in our Respect unit. We will talk about a lot of interesting things related to respect, but today we are going to start at the top: our brains!



Inspire

3-5 minutes

To begin, let's review our definition of respect. (Invite student responses.)

Good. Respect is treating people, places, and things with kindness. How do we show respect for others? (Invite student responses.)

What about ourselves? How do we treat ourselves with respect? (Invite student responses.)

Great ideas! Now, has anyone ever heard of something called a growth mindset? (Invite student responses.)

A growth mindset is the belief that we control and can grow our intelligence. It is the belief that hard work, effective study strategies, tutoring, and good educational opportunities can make you smarter. You are not born and stuck with a certain level of learning ability. You can learn more, differently, and better if you work toward it. That is what growth mindset is.

How many of you have a growth mindset? (Invite student response; perhaps share your own experience/belief with this concept when you were in 8th grade.)

We are going to watch a few videos now about how the brain works and then we'll talk about how respect and having a growth mindset fit in.



Empower

15 minutes

Watch the following three videos before moving on to the discussion questions. If you cannot watch the videos in class, discuss the notes that follow each video:

[How the Brain Works](#): (1:36)

- The brain is the instinct, emotion, and thinking center of the body. It is the most complex organ.
- It is made up of mostly water (90%) and fat (10%).
- It uses 20% of your body's energy.
- The brain's basic building blocks are known as neurons and we have around 100 billion of these. Each neuron has between 1,000 to 10,000 connections to other neurons, creating neural pathways or roads between them.
- There are trillions of neural pathways in our brains.
- The neurons that travel these neural pathways generate electrical impulses that, if converted to actual electricity, could illuminate a light bulb; by the end of the day, the amount of electrical impulse energy your brain has produced is equivalent to the amount of electricity needed to power the global telephone system.

Areas of the Brain: (3.06)

- There are three primary regions of the brain: primitive, feeling, and thinking.
 - The primitive region helps keep us alive by helping us do automatic body functions like breathing, blinking, and pumping blood through the heart. It also helps us sense our surroundings (looking for danger) and triggers our fight, flight, or freeze response. The primitive region is at the base of the brain, right above the spinal cord.
 - The feeling region is in the center and helps us connect with our emotions. The primitive brain actually helps the feeling brain fire up, when it senses danger, for example, or surprise or something wonderful. The feeling region of the brain responds with an emotion based on the messages the primitive brain sends it. The feeling region also helps us form memories and attach emotions to them.
 - The largest (and last to develop) region is the thinking region. This is the part of the brain that helps us process information, make decisions, think critically, and establish preferences. This region also allows us to communicate with others. All three regions must work together to navigate each day. Often the primitive and feeling regions respond faster, or are more developed at younger ages, than the thinking brain which is why it can be hard to “be rational” about something or make a good choice. The fight/flight/freeze response clouds our judgement.

Neuroplasticity - (2:03)

- Scientists used to believe that the brain you were born with was the brain you had to stick with, meaning that, after childhood, you could not form new neural pathways. We now know you can. Your brain is changeable. This is called neuroplasticity. A neural pathway is built each time you do something new and repeat that action or idea in your mind. Over time, your brain will travel this default pathway without even thinking. So, if you want to change this neural pathway or manner of thinking, then you need to create a new neural pathway. Both learning a new task and consciously choosing a different emotion in a stressful situation can help you create a new, healthier neural pathway.
- When you create a new neural pathway, you are experiencing neuroplasticity which supports the idea of a growth mindset. Just because you have never liked numbers or didn't feel you were a good reader or writer, you can still recognize and develop your potential for greatness in math and English classes. That potential is real and it is inside your brain already.

The following can be large-group or small-group questions/discussion starters. Bring small groups (if used) back to the large group for the wrap-up.

- What is something new you learned about the brain?
- What do you think is stronger in your brain right now: the feeling center or the thinking center?
- How we think about ourselves (meaning, how we respect and care for ourselves) impacts our ability to try new things, embrace our mistakes, and learn. What are some pathways/habits we already have that we want to work on changing?

- How does having a growth mindset help us create new neural pathways?
- How does having a growth mindset allow us to respect ourselves and others better?



Reflect

5-7 minutes

Let students share their answers (if discussing in small groups); if still in the large group, use this time to finish up the discussions.

Ask students to think about an area they would like to improve their mindset. Which class or activity do they want to try even though they have been told or have been led to believe (sometimes by past experience and often by themselves) that they wouldn't be good at that class/activity? As they approach that task this week, invite them to stop any negative thoughts, breathe deeply, and write down the words "growth mindset". Keep that physical cue/reminder out until the task is done. Remind yourself to try new things or try old things differently; they will be surprised at the results!