



## Gratitude

### Materials:

- Blank note cards or plain white or colored paper (optional)
- Colored pencils (optional)
- Worksheet

### Brainstorm

Read aloud each statement and ask students to raise their hands if they think the following statements are true:

- Showing gratitude to others can actually make you happier.
- Showing gratitude positively impacts the health and wellness of both the giver and receiver of gratitude.
- Showing gratitude improves your mental health immediately after doing it.
- Practicing gratitude can help you do better in school.

### Discuss

Explain: Let's go over each one. Showing gratitude to others actually CAN make you happier! Researchers at Harvard found that people who show gratitude are not just happier, they're also healthier, too! And those benefits are for the people who receive the gratitude and those who give it. Many people only show gratitude at certain times of the year, such as Thanksgiving, but showing gratitude is a practice that you can integrate into your daily routine because you may not experience the positive effects of showing gratitude right away - it can take time. And while we don't have any research that makes a direct connection between academic outcomes and gratitude, showing gratitude can also help you to have better relationships with others and be more resilient. What examples do you have of demonstrating gratitude recently? Accept student responses.

### Dive in!

Explain to students: **Gratitude** is when we show our thanks and appreciation for something. We can show gratitude for big things, such as being awarded a college scholarship. We can show gratitude for little things, such as someone helping us carry a heavy item. We can express gratitude for things that are tangible, such as a gift, or things that are intangible, such



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as friendship. To receive the benefits of gratitude, you must make sure it's sincere, and try to show your gratitude immediately. If someone does something for me now, I'm going to say thank you now, not in a week from now. There are many ways we can show gratitude. We can say "thank you" and we can write a note or card. If you're an artist, you can draw them a picture. Or maybe you can help them with a specific job. We can also do something nice for other people. What other ways can you think of to show gratitude?

### Activity

For this activity, students can work independently, in pairs or small groups. However, each student should complete the worksheet. Explain: Today we are going to start to cultivate a gratitude attitude. We'll start by identifying three things we feel thankful for and then brainstorm how we can show our appreciation. Then, you can use the paper and colored pencils I have provided to make hand-made cards or letters if you'd like. When you're done, make sure to follow through on this activity by delivering the notes to the recipient. When you've completed the gratitude challenge, respond to the question at the bottom of the worksheet.

### Reflect

Once students have had a chance to show their gratitude, have them respond to the Reflect prompts on the worksheet: How did it make you feel to show gratitude? How did it make the recipient feel? Do you think you'll continue to make showing gratitude a daily practice? Why or why not?

**Optional Home Connection** → Have students share the activity with family members and identify someone in their family or the community to express gratitude for.

### Professional Development

Take 5 minutes and reflect on what you are grateful for. How do you demonstrate gratitude for the things you appreciate?

### Extend and Enrich

Challenge your students to cultivate a gratitude attitude by practicing gratitude daily (or at least once per week). Some ways to do this include: Being mindful of the positive things in our lives, keeping a gratitude journal, creating a gratitude wall in the classroom, and writing thank you notes.



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### For Further Study

- Social Emotional Us Podcast, *Cultivating Gratitude* (26 mins):  
<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/cultivating-gratitude/id1583845892?i=10005398>
- Emmons, Robert A. *The Little Book of Gratitude*. Octopus Books, 2016.
- Nathan, Brenda. *The One-Minute Gratitude Journal for Teen*. BrBB House Press, 2020.
- TeensHealth, *Gratitude for Teens*: <https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/gratitude.html>