

Developing a Growth Mindset

Lesson Objective:

Students will understand the concept of a growth mindset, the power of “yet,” and how effort leads to improvement over time

Materials Needed:



- Copy of Betty’s Big Brainstorm, Book 6, Chapter 1: *Betty Learns About the Power of a Growth Mindset*
- Pencils and markers
- S.T.A.R. Strategy Poster
- Activity 1: Growth Mindset Phrases Poster
- Activity 2: Persistence Brain Teasers Worksheet
- Home Connection Letter



Introduction to the Topic (10 minutes)

Greeting Outline:

- Welcome the children and have them sit in a circle (if applicable)
- Begin with a brief discussion on a growth mindset

Greeting and Circle Time Teacher Script

1. Warm Welcome and Opening Discussion:

- "Good morning, class! Today, we’re going to learn about something called a growth mindset. Does anyone know what that might mean?"

2. Discussion Starter

- "A growth mindset is when you believe that even if something is hard right now, you can improve with practice and effort. We’re going to read a story about Betty and her friends learning about the power of a growth mindset."

Read the Chapter (15 minutes)

Story Time Outline:



- Read Chapter 1 aloud. Pause at key moments to engage students and make sure they are following the story.
- Ask questions during key parts of the story.

Story Time Teacher Script:

Prepare the Students for the Story:

- "Let's find out how Betty faces a challenge and what she learns."
- (Read the chapter aloud, pausing at key moments to ask questions and engage the children.)

Read the Chapter with Emphasis on Key Moments:

- **While reading**, pause during key moments.
- **Ask Questions:**
 - "What problem is Betty facing while building the birdhouse?"
 - Why does Betty think she isn't good at building things?"
 - How do Betty's friends react when they see her frustration?"
 - "What does Grandma say about a growth mindset?"
 - "Why do you think Buzz shared his story about learning to ride his bike?"
 - "What do you think the phrase 'I can't do it yet' means?"
 - "What changes for Betty after hearing about a growth mindset?"
 - "What does Betty do differently when she tries to build the birdhouse again?"
 - "Why does Betty feel proud after trying again?"
 - "How do you think the group worked together to help Betty understand the growth mindset?"

Chapter 1: Betty Learns About the Power of a Growth Mindset

It was a sunny afternoon, and Betty, along with her friends Ollie, Harriet, Buzz, Sammy, and Bennie, gathered in the park for their weekly project. This time, they were building a small wooden birdhouse. Betty, known for being great at problem-solving, was excited to help her friends build the perfect birdhouse for the park's birds.

As the group worked, Betty ran into a problem. The pieces of wood didn't seem to fit together the way she had planned. She tried again, but nothing worked. Feeling frustrated, she sat down with a sigh. "I don't think I can do this," she mumbled.

Harriet noticed Betty's frustration and came over. "What's wrong, Betty?" she asked.

Betty frowned. "The pieces aren't fitting together, and I've already tried a bunch of times. Maybe I'm just not good at building things like I thought."

The rest of the group gathered around, worried about their friend. Ollie, always the thinker, remembered something their teacher had talked about recently in class. "Betty, have you heard about a growth mindset?"

"A growth mindset?" Betty asked, looking confused. "What's that?"

Grandma, who had been sitting nearby, smiled and joined the conversation. "A growth mindset means believing that your abilities can improve with effort and practice. When you run into a challenge, like this birdhouse, instead of thinking 'I can't do this,' you can think, 'I can't do this yet. But if I keep trying and learning, I'll get better.'"

Betty listened closely, still unsure. "But I've already tried a bunch of times. Doesn't that mean I'm just not good at this?"

"Not at all," Grandma replied. "Your brain learns by making mistakes and figuring out new ways to solve problems. When you say, 'I can't do it,' your brain predicts that you've reached your limit. But if you tell yourself, 'I can learn how to do it,' your brain starts to make new predictions about how to solve the problem."

Buzz, always full of energy, buzzed over. "It's like when I tried learning to ride my bike. I kept falling, and at first, I thought I'd never figure it out. But then I kept practicing, and now I can ride faster than anyone!"

Ollie nodded. "Exactly! A growth mindset is all about believing that effort makes you better at things over time."

Harriet added, "And it's okay to make mistakes. That's how you learn. Just because it's hard now doesn't mean it'll be hard forever."

Betty thought about what her friends were saying. She had always believed that if something didn't work right away, it meant she wasn't good at it. But maybe her friends were right—maybe she could get better if she didn't give up.

Grandma smiled warmly. "Your brain uses past experiences to make predictions about how things will go. If you've struggled with something in the past, your brain might predict that it will be hard again. But when you approach a challenge with a growth mindset, you teach your brain that effort and practice can lead to improvement."

Betty nodded slowly. "So, if I keep trying, I'll get better at building the birdhouse?"

"Exactly," Grandma said. "Your brain will start to predict that with more effort and learning, you'll figure it out. And the more you practice, the better you'll get."

Feeling encouraged, Betty stood up. "Okay, I'll give it another try."

With her friends' support, Betty tried again, taking her time to carefully fit the wooden pieces together. This time, instead of getting frustrated when something didn't work, she paused, thought about what she could do differently, and kept going.

After a while, the birdhouse started to take shape. Betty's face lit up with a big smile. "It's working!" she said excitedly.

"See?" Harriet grinned. "You didn't give up, and now it's coming together!"

Bennie, who had been helping with the nails, added, "It wasn't about being good or bad at building. It was about learning and sticking with it."

Betty felt a sense of pride. "I guess I just needed to remember that I can improve if I keep trying. It doesn't have to be perfect the first time."

Grandma nodded. "That's the power of a growth mindset. When you believe that you can grow and improve with effort, you give yourself the chance to succeed. And even if it takes time, you know you're learning along the way."

By the time they finished the birdhouse, the group was beaming with pride. Not only had they built something together, but Betty had learned a valuable lesson about how her mindset could help her face challenges.

As they hung the birdhouse in the tree, Betty turned to her friends. "Thanks for helping me. I'm going to try to use a growth mindset from now on, especially when things get hard."

Ollie smiled. "Me too. It's a good reminder that we're all learning, and mistakes don't mean we can't do something—they just mean we're getting better."

"Exactly," Grandma said. "Remember, growth takes time and practice, but with a growth mindset, you'll keep improving and discovering what you're capable of."

With that, the group celebrated their teamwork and the lesson they had learned. They knew that from now on, when they faced challenges, they would approach them with the belief that effort and learning would help them grow—and that mindset would carry them through whatever obstacles came their way.

And Betty, with a new sense of confidence, felt ready to take on any challenge, knowing that her abilities could grow with each step she took.

Post-Chapter Teacher Script

- **Teacher:** “So Betty learns that mistakes aren’t a bad thing after all. Mistakes just mean that we’re working on getting better and improving our skills.”

Post-Chapter Questions

Ask these questions to help students reflect on the chapter and connect it to their own experiences:

- "Why do you think Betty was frustrated at first?"
- "Have you ever felt like Betty, where something didn't work right away?"
- "What do you think Grandma meant when she said, 'Your brain learns by making mistakes'?"
- "Why is it important to remind yourself, 'I can't do it yet'?"
- "How did Betty's friends help her change her mindset?"
- "How do you feel when you make mistakes? What could you tell yourself to keep trying?"
- "What would have happened if Betty had given up?"
- "How do you think a growth mindset can help you at school?"
- "Can you think of a time you learned something new by practicing?"
- "What can we all learn from Betty's story?"

Do an Activity (20 minutes)

- Students will practice using growth mindset phrases and persistence when faced with challenges.

Please choose from the following 2 activities:

Activity 1: Growth Mindset Phrases(15 minutes)

Introduce Activity

“Today, we are going to learn about some things we can say to ourselves and each other that will encourage us to keep going and to have a growth mindset, even when it can be difficult. We’re going to brainstorm some phrases and then we’ll work with a partner to create a poster with the phrases we like best.”

Activity Instructions

- Ask the students to brainstorm phrases that support a growth mindset. For example:
 - "I can't do it yet."
 - "Mistakes help me learn."
 - "I'll keep trying."
- Write the suggestions on the board. Discuss why these phrases are helpful.
- Here are 10 growth mindset phrases that are simple and easy for third graders to understand:
 1. "I can't do it yet, but I'm learning."
 2. "Mistakes help me get better."
 3. "I can try a new way if this doesn't work."
 4. "I'll keep practicing, and I'll improve."
 5. "Every time I try, I get a little better."
 6. "Challenges make my brain stronger."
 7. "It's okay to ask for help when I'm stuck."
 8. "If I work hard, I can figure this out."
 9. "Learning takes time, and that's okay."
 10. "I can always learn something new."

These phrases encourage persistence, resilience, and a positive attitude toward learning.

- Have students work in pairs to create a poster with one of the growth mindset phrases. They can decorate it and add drawings to make it fun.

Activity 2: Persistence Brain Teaser Activity(15 minutes)

Introduce Activity

"Part of having a growth mindset is persistence. Persistence is when you keep trying, even when the task is hard. It means to have "stick-to-it-ness". So, today, we're going to practice having persistence. You will work in small groups on a Brain Teaser worksheet. Some of the questions might be harder than others, but I want to see everyone working together and not giving up. After, we'll talk about how it felt and what you did to keep going even when "the struggle was real".

"Sometimes we come across challenges that feel really hard at first. In this activity, you'll work in teams to complete a task. Remember, if you get stuck, tell yourself, 'I can't do it yet, but I'll keep trying.' Let's see how a growth mindset helps!"

Activity Instructions

- Divide the class into small groups.
- Hand out the Brain Teaser worksheet - 1 per group.
- Give the groups time to work on the riddles
- After the groups have completed the worksheet (or as much of it as possible) discuss:
 - “How did it feel when you were struggling to answer the questions?”
 - “What did you tell yourself to encourage you onward?”
 - “What did you say to your group members to help keep everyone going?”
 - “How did you feel when you were able to solve one of the riddles?”

Persistence Brain Teaser Worksheet Answer Key

1. The Missing Number

Puzzle:

What number should go in the blank?

2, 4, 8, 16, __, 64

Answer: 32

Why: Each number is multiplied by 2.

2. The Farmer’s Animals

Puzzle:

A farmer has chickens and cows. Altogether, there are 10 animals and 28 legs.

How many chickens and how many cows does the farmer have?

Answer: 6 chickens and 4 cows

Why: Chickens have 2 legs, cows have 4. Try combinations to match 28 legs.

3. Secret Word Code

Puzzle:

Each letter stands for a number.

If $C + A + T = 12$

and $C = 5$, $A = 3$, what is T ?

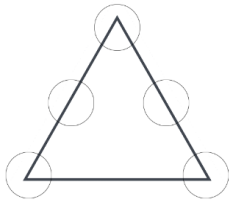
Answer: 4

Why: $5 (C) + 3 (A) = 8 \rightarrow 12 - 8 = 4$

4. Magic Triangle

Puzzle:

Fill in the missing numbers (1–6) in the triangle so that the numbers on each side add up to 9.



Answer: Multiple solutions, but one is:

Top = 3

Left = 2, Right = 4

Bottom = 1, 5

Why: $3+2+4 = 9$, $2+1+6 = 9$, etc. Try combos that make 9.

5. How Many Squares?

Puzzle:

Look at this 3x3 grid of squares. How many squares can you count in total?

Answer: 14

Why: $9 (1 \times 1) + 4 (2 \times 2) + 1 (3 \times 3) = 14$ squares.

6. The Mixed-Up Clock

Puzzle:

My clock has numbers, but they are in the wrong places. The numbers 12, 3, 6, and 9 are all missing! Where should they go?

Answer: They go at the top (12), right (3), bottom (6), and left (9)

Why: Think of the clock like a compass—North, East, South, West.

7. Word Flip

Puzzle:

What 5-letter word becomes shorter when you add two letters to it?

Answer: Short

Why: Add “-er” to “short” → “shorter”

8. The Juice Boxes

Puzzle:

You have 10 juice boxes. You want to share them equally with 3 friends and yourself.

How many juice boxes does each person get, and how many are left over?

Answer:

Each person gets 2 juice boxes, with 2 juice boxes left over.

Why:

$10 \div 4 = 2$ with a remainder of 2.

9. The Box of Chocolates

Puzzle:

A box contains 10 chocolate pieces. You eat half of them. Then your friend eats 2.

How many are left?

Answer: 3

Why: $10 \div 2 = 5$. Then 2 more eaten $\rightarrow 5 - 2 = 3$.

10. Riddle Me This

Puzzle:

I speak without a mouth,

I hear without ears.

I have no body,

but I come alive with wind.

What am I?

Answer: An echo

Review and Reflection Teacher Script

Gather in a Circle for Reflection:

- “Let’s all come back together in a circle.”

Closing

- “Today, we talked about a growth mindset and persistence. Talked about the fact that when we make mistakes, or when things are hard, that’s when we’re making the most progress and learning and growing. We came up with some phrases to help keep us going when the going gets tough.”
- "What did we learn today about a growth mindset?"
- "How did it feel to face challenges with a growth mindset?"
- "Remember, just like Betty, we all can improve if we keep trying and believe that effort helps us get better."

Home Connection Letter

1. Sending Information Home:

- “Before you go, I have a letter for you to take home. The letter shares that we talked about a growth mindset and persistence. I encourage you to share what you learned with your family today.
- Hand out the letters as the children prepare to leave.

Parent Letter

Sending Information Home:

- Provide each child with a letter to take home to their parents explaining the lesson.

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

Today in class, we learned about the power of having a growth mindset.

We read a story about Betty, who faced a challenge while building a birdhouse. At first, she felt frustrated and wanted to give up, but her friends and Grandma taught her that with effort and practice, she could improve.

This is called a growth mindset—the belief that we can grow our abilities by working hard and not giving up.

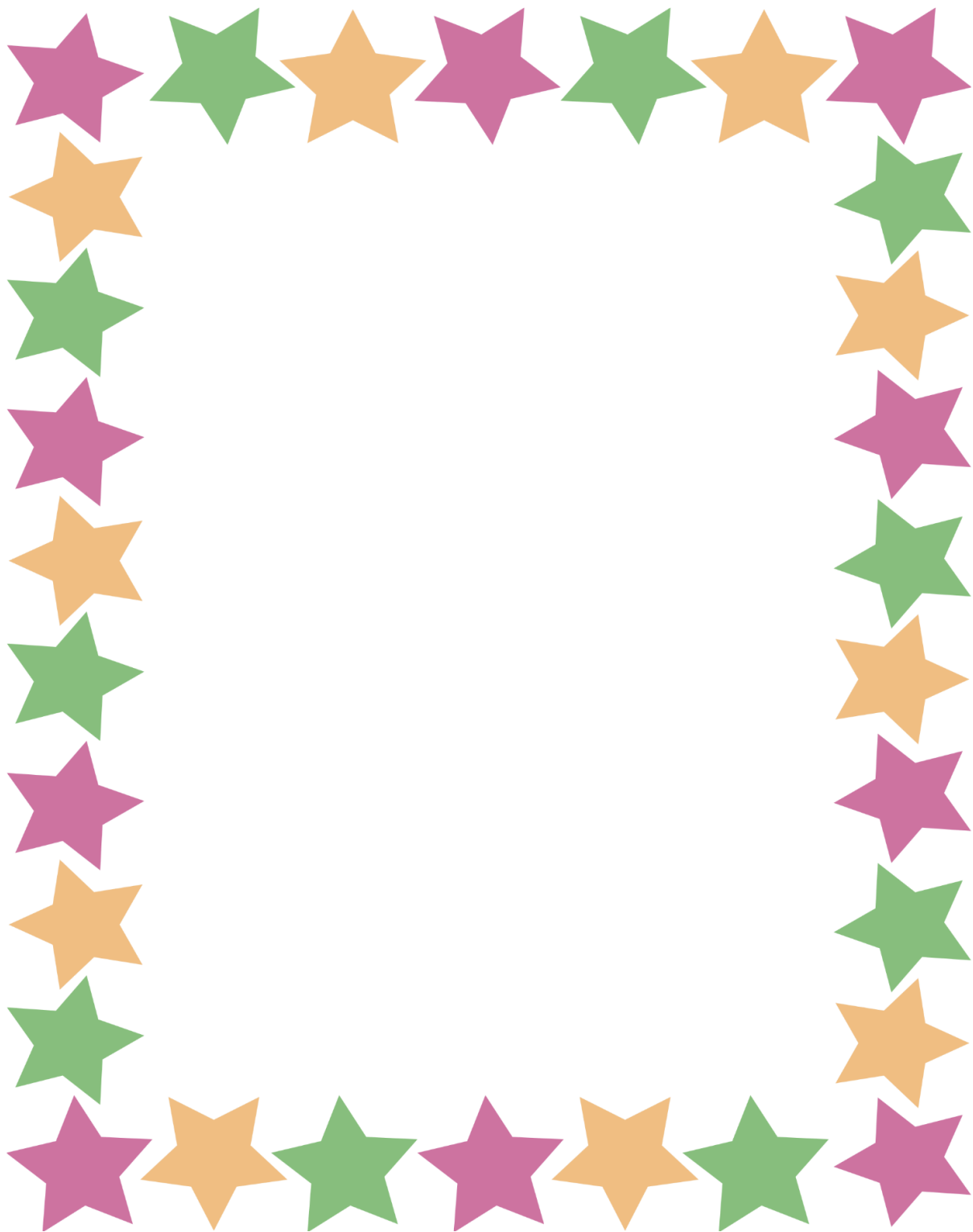
We also talked about how our brains learn through making mistakes, and how we can remind ourselves to say, "I can't do it yet" when something feels difficult.

Please ask your child about the activities we did in class and how they can use a growth mindset at home when they face challenges.

Together, let's encourage persistence and a positive attitude toward learning!

Best Regards,

Growth Mindset Poster



Persistence Brain Teasers

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Answer:

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Answer:

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Answer:

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Answer:

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Answer:

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