

WELCOME

Train the "pause, think, choose" reflex.

8 ready-to-teach 30-minute lessons on the social-emotional skills that quietly run everything else: honesty, patience, apology, boundaries, mistakes, speaking up, listening, resilience.

What's inside

- **8 complete lesson plans** — each with an objective, 5-min warm-up, 3 scenarios, 10-min discussion prompts, 5-min exit ticket, and CASEL framework alignment
- **4 reusable student worksheets** — Scenario Journal, Self-Rating Ladder, Apology Builder, Weekly Reflection
- **Teacher facilitation guide** — what to do when students go quiet, when someone derails, after the lesson
- **Pairs with the free *Common Sense Quest* game** — interactive scenarios that reinforce the lesson
- **Pairs with the *Common Sense* book series** — use the textbook as your curriculum spine

Suggested pacing

- **1 lesson per week** — 8 weeks of SEL curriculum, paired with the Common Sense Quest game between lessons
- **Or 1 lesson per day for 8 days** — intensive SEL unit, great for advisory or short blocks
- **Or pick & choose** — pull the lesson that matches a moment ("we need to talk about apologies today")

CASEL framework alignment

All 8 lessons map to the 5 CASEL competencies — Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills, and Responsible Decision-Making. Each lesson lists its primary alignment in the header.

— Ferrai White

LESSON 1 · 30 MIN · SELF-AWARENESS · RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING

Honesty.

When the truth is hard

OBJECTIVE

Students will identify when telling the truth is hard, name what makes it hard, and practice telling the truth in a low-stakes scenario.

5 MIN · WARM-UP

Show of hands: "Has anyone ever told a small lie because the truth felt scary?" (Don't make anyone explain.) Then ask: "What was the lie protecting?"

10 MIN · 3 SCENARIOS

1. You break your friend's favorite mug while they're in the other room. They blame the dog. What do you say?
2. A teacher asks who wrote on the desk. You did it, but no one saw. What do you do?
3. Your parent asks if you finished your homework. You finished half. What do you say?

10 MIN · DISCUSSION

- Why is it sometimes harder to tell the truth than to lie?
- What's the difference between a "white lie" (to spare feelings) and a lie that hurts someone?
- How does it feel to be lied to? How does it feel to lie?
- Who in your life makes it easy to tell the truth? Why?

5 MIN · EXIT TICKET

Write or draw one time this week you chose honesty even when it was hard. (No names if you don't want.)

LESSON 2 · 30 MIN · SELF-MANAGEMENT · SELF-AWARENESS

Patience.

The pause between feeling and acting

OBJECTIVE

Students will recognize the gap between feeling an urge and acting on it, and practice one strategy for pausing.

5 MIN · WARM-UP

Try this together: "Breathe in for 4 counts, hold for 7, breathe out for 8." Do it three times. Notice how long 4 seconds actually feels.

10 MIN · 3 SCENARIOS

1. You're waiting in line and the line is barely moving. Your friend ahead is loudly complaining. You feel yourself getting annoyed. What do you do with that feeling?
2. Your sibling is using the device you wanted, even though it's "your turn" by the schedule. They say "one more level." What do you do?
3. You're working on a hard math problem and you keep getting it wrong. You feel like throwing your pencil. What do you try first?

10 MIN · DISCUSSION

- What's the difference between waiting and being patient?
- When does waiting feel okay? When does it feel bad?
- What does your body do when you're running out of patience? (heart, hands, breathing?)
- Is patience something you're born with, or something you can practice?

5 MIN · EXIT TICKET

Pick one situation this week where you usually lose patience. Plan one thing you'll do differently next time.

LESSON 3 · 30 MIN · RELATIONSHIP SKILLS · SOCIAL AWARENESS

Apology.

What a real "sorry" sounds like

OBJECTIVE

Students will distinguish between a fake apology and a real one, and learn the 3 parts of a meaningful apology.

5 MIN · WARM-UP

Compare these two: "Sorry you got mad" vs. "I'm sorry I broke your pencil. I'll bring you a new one tomorrow. I'll be more careful." Which feels different? Why?

10 MIN · 3 SCENARIOS

1. You knocked over your friend's art project by accident. They're upset. What's a real apology?
2. You said something mean about your sibling in front of friends. They overheard. What's a real apology?
3. You forgot to invite a classmate to your birthday party. They found out. What's a real apology?

10 MIN · DISCUSSION

- What's the difference between "sorry" and "I'm sorry"?
- Why is "Sorry, BUT..." not really an apology?
- Can you apologize and still not be forgiven? Is that okay?
- What does a real apology have in it? (3 parts: name what you did + name the impact + offer to make it right)

5 MIN · EXIT TICKET

Write a real 3-part apology to someone (real or imaginary). You don't have to send it — just practice the shape.

LESSON 4 · 30 MIN · RELATIONSHIP SKILLS · SELF-AWARENESS

Boundaries.

Saying "no" with kindness

OBJECTIVE

Students will identify situations where saying "no" matters, and practice three ways to say it kindly but clearly.

5 MIN · WARM-UP

A boundary is just a line. "I will" / "I won't" — that's it. Ask: "What's a boundary you set with yourself? (bedtime, screen time, candy?)"

10 MIN · 3 SCENARIOS

1. A friend asks to copy your homework. You don't want to. How do you say no?
2. A classmate wants to share a secret about another classmate. You don't want to know. What do you say?
3. A family member wants to hug you and you're not in the mood. What do you say?

10 MIN · DISCUSSION

- Why is saying "no" sometimes harder than saying "yes"?
- Is it possible to say "no" without being mean?
- What's the difference between a boundary and a rule?
- Have you ever wished you said "no" but said "yes" anyway? What stopped you?

5 MIN · EXIT TICKET

Write down three ways to say "no" kindly. Try one this week. ("No, thanks." / "I'm not comfortable with that." / "I have to pass on this one.")

LESSON 5 · 30 MIN · SELF-AWARENESS · RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING

Mistakes.

How to actually learn from them

OBJECTIVE

Students will reframe mistakes as data points, practice the "what / so what / now what" reflection cycle.

5 MIN · WARM-UP

Show of hands: "Who has never made a mistake?" (Nobody.) "Who has learned more from a mistake than from a success?" (Many.)

10 MIN · 3 SCENARIOS

1. You forgot your homework. AGAIN. What's the lesson — and how do you not repeat it?
2. You hurt a friend's feelings without meaning to. What do you do with that?
3. You bombed a test you studied for. What does that tell you (and what doesn't it tell you)?

10 MIN · DISCUSSION

- Is "I made a mistake" the same as "I AM a mistake"?
- What's the difference between a mistake and a bad choice?
- How do you tell when you've actually learned from a mistake (vs. just felt bad about it)?
- Who in your life handles their own mistakes well? What do you notice?

5 MIN · EXIT TICKET

"What / So what / Now what." Pick a recent mistake. Answer each: What happened? Why did it matter? What will you do differently?

LESSON 6 · 30 MIN · SOCIAL AWARENESS · RELATIONSHIP SKILLS · RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING

Speaking Up.

When to use your voice, even when it's scary

OBJECTIVE

Students will identify situations that call for speaking up, practice naming the cost of silence, and rehearse 3 ways to speak up.

5 MIN · WARM-UP

Ask: "When was the last time you wished you had spoken up but didn't?" (Anonymous index cards work.)

10 MIN · 3 SCENARIOS

1. You see a classmate being teased. You aren't friends with them, but the teasing isn't okay. What do you do?
2. A teacher made a mistake grading your work in your favor. What do you say?
3. An adult is telling a story and getting a fact wrong. Do you correct them? When and how?

10 MIN · DISCUSSION

- What does silence sometimes mean to the person being treated badly?
- What stops you from speaking up? (fear, not knowing what to say, not wanting to make it worse?)
- What's the difference between speaking up and tattling?
- Whose voice in your life has spoken up for YOU?

5 MIN · EXIT TICKET

Name one situation where speaking up feels too scary. Write what you wish you could say. (Just for you. Practice.)

LESSON 7 · 30 MIN · RELATIONSHIP SKILLS · SOCIAL AWARENESS

Listening.

The kind that actually hears

OBJECTIVE

Students will distinguish between hearing and listening, and practice three skills of real listening (eye contact, repeating back, not interrupting).

5 MIN · WARM-UP

Pair up. Partner A talks for 60 seconds about anything. Partner B is told to look around the room, check their watch, hum quietly. Then swap roles, with Partner B really listening. Notice the difference.

10 MIN · 3 SCENARIOS

1. Your friend is telling you about a bad day. You want to share that your day was also bad. When and how?
2. Your sibling is upset about something you think is small. What does real listening look like here?
3. Your parent is telling you about something at work and you don't care. What do you owe them as a listener?

10 MIN · DISCUSSION

- What's the difference between hearing and listening?
- Why do we sometimes pretend to listen?
- When someone is hurt, do they always want advice? What else might they want?
- How does it FEEL when someone really listens to you?

5 MIN · EXIT TICKET

Try this with one person this week: Listen for 2 full minutes without interrupting or planning what you'll say. Repeat back one thing they said. Notice their reaction.

LESSON 8 · 30 MIN · SELF-MANAGEMENT · SELF-AWARENESS

Resilience.

How to bounce, not break

OBJECTIVE

Students will name what bouncing back actually looks like, identify what helps them recover, and build a personal resilience kit.

5 MIN · WARM-UP

Drop a tennis ball and a glass marble from the same height. Both fall. One bounces. Resilience isn't about avoiding the fall — it's about being the kind of person who bounces.

10 MIN · 3 SCENARIOS

1. You didn't make the team. Or the role. Or the group. You're crushed. What's your next 24 hours?
2. You had a fight with your best friend. It's been three days. What do you do?
3. You moved schools and don't know anyone. How do you not let this define your year?

10 MIN · DISCUSSION

- What does "bouncing back" actually look like? (Hint: not "pretending it didn't happen.")
- Who or what helps YOU recover? (a person, a place, an activity, food, music?)
- Is being resilient the same as being tough? What's the difference?
- Can resilience be learned? Or are some people just born with it?

5 MIN · EXIT TICKET

Build your "Resilience Kit." List 5 things that help you bounce back: 1 person you can talk to, 1 place that calms you, 1 song that lifts you, 1 food that comforts you, 1 thought you can return to.

STUDENT WORKSHEET · REUSABLE

Scenario Journal

For any scenario discussed in class. Pause, think, then write.

THE SCENARIO

PAUSE — WHAT AM I FEELING?

THINK — WHAT ARE MY CHOICES?

CHOOSE — WHAT WILL I DO?

STUDENT WORKSHEET · REUSABLE

Self-Rating Ladder

How am I really doing with this skill right now? Honest only — no one else will see.

THE SKILL

☐ 10 — I do this all the time, no problem

☐ 9

☐ 8

☐ 7

☐ 6

☐ 5

☐ 4

☐ 3

☐ 2

☐ 1 — This is really hard for me

Circle your honest answer. What's one thing that would help you move up one rung?

STUDENT WORKSHEET · REUSABLE

Apology Builder

A real apology has 3 parts. Build one here. (You don't have to deliver it. Just shape it.)

PART 1 · NAME WHAT YOU DID

Be specific. Not "I was being a jerk." Try "I called you a name in front of others."

PART 2 · NAME THE IMPACT

What was the cost to them? "I embarrassed you" / "I broke your trust" / "You missed your turn."

PART 3 · OFFER TO MAKE IT RIGHT

A specific repair, not just "I'll do better." "I'll bring you a new one Monday." "I'll sit with you at lunch."

STUDENT WORKSHEET · REUSABLE

Weekly Reflection

End of the week. Look back. Look forward.

WHAT WENT WELL

WHAT WAS HARD

A MOMENT I HANDLED WELL

A MOMENT I'D REDO

SOMEONE I OWE A THANK-YOU

SOMEONE I OWE A SORRY

ONE THING TO PRACTICE NEXT WEEK

ONE THING I'M PROUD OF

FACILITATION GUIDE

Make these lessons land.

SEL lessons only work when students feel safe enough to talk honestly. These are the practices that build that safety.

Set the room first

- **Sit in a circle if possible.** The shape signals "this is not a lecture."
- **Phone parking lot.** Devices in a box for the 30 minutes.
- **Confidentiality contract.** "What's said here, stays here. What's learned here, leaves here."

When students go quiet

- **Wait longer than feels comfortable.** 10 silent seconds feels like an hour but breaks the awkwardness.
- **Move to pair-share.** "Turn to a neighbor and talk for 60 seconds." Lower stakes, more talking.
- **Write first, share second.** Hand out the scenario journal worksheet. Writing primes talking.
- **Share your own.** Model vulnerability first. "Here's how I handle this..."

When someone derails

- **Don't shut them down.** "That's interesting. Can we hold that for the end and come back to the scenario?"
- **Watch for activation.** If a topic is hitting too close for a student, check in privately afterward.
- **Have an exit option.** "If anyone needs to step out for water, just go." Students need to know they can leave.

After the lesson

- **Read the exit tickets that night.** Don't grade them. Just read them. They tell you who's where.
- **Follow up privately** with students whose exit ticket suggests they need it.
- **Reference the lesson all week.** "Remember Pause, Think, Choose? That moment in the hall right there."

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Pair this bundle with: the *Common Sense* textbook and *Questions & Scenarios* workbook for full curriculum spine, plus the free *Common Sense Quest* interactive game for between-lesson practice.

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