

A young child with curly hair, eyes closed, and arms outstretched in a field under a blue sky.

# 7 Lessons on Growth Mindset, Mindfulness and Problem Solving for Elementary Students

Includes 4 worksheets

## **Lesson Plan—Developing a Growth Mindset**

ASCA National Standard Domain: Academic

A. Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge and skills contributing to effective learning in school and across the lifespan

B. Students will make decisions, set goals, and take necessary action to achieve goals.

### **Objectives: The student will be able to:**

- Define the words: growth mindset, fixed mindset
- Give examples of the difference between a growth mindset and a fixed mindset
- Re-frame the concept of mistakes or failure as learning and growing
- Re-frame the concept of mistakes or failure as a necessary step to winning
- Identify the advantages of a growth mindset

**Essential Question: What is a growth mindset? What is a fixed mindset? What are the advantages of a growth mindset? How are mistakes a necessary step to successful problem solving?**

### **Lesson:**

- Discuss: What does it mean to have a growth mindset? What does it mean to have a fixed mindset? Give an example of each. How do you develop a growth mindset? What are the advantages of a growth mindset? Might you have a growth mindset about one subject and a fixed mindset about another? What can we learn from failing at something? Can someone give an example of failing at something and then later succeeding? How did one event lead to the other? Use the Growth vs Fixed Mindset comparison sheet to contrast differences.
- Read: *Wyatt the Wonder Dog Learns about Mindset* by Lynne Watts or *The Most Magnificent Thing* by Ashley Spires or *Wilma Unlimited* by Kathleen Krull or *Odd Boy Out* by Don Brown.
  - Identify and discuss how the main character solved problems, handled failure and used a growth mindset to face challenges.

- **Activity:**

- Have students create a series of 4-6 pictures in comic strip style that shows them using a growth mindset to learn something new. Be sure to include mistakes they made along the way.
- Have students write a story contrasting a growth mindset with a fixed mindset. Students can read their stories to the class

**Materials:**

- *Wyatt the Wonder Dog Learns about Mindset* by Lynne Watts
- *The Most Magnificent Thing* by Ashley Spires
- *Wilma Unlimited* by Kathleen Krull
- *Odd Boy Out* by Don Brown
- Growth vs. Fixed Mindset Comparison sheet

Growth Mindset	Fixed Mindset
No matter what kind of person you are you can change substantially	We are each born a certain kind of person and not much can be done to actually change that
You can always change the basic things about the kind of person you are	You can do things differently but the important parts of who you are can't really be changed
Understands that important qualities can be cultivated	Leads to a desire to maintain an image (smart, gifted, talented, creative etc.)
Embraces challenges	Avoids challenges and change
Persists in the face of setbacks	Gets defensive and gives up easily when confronted with obstacles
Learns from criticism	Ignores useful negative feedback
Finds lessons and inspiration from the success of others	Feels threatened by the success of others
Confronts obstacles and sees them as a way to stretch and improve	Sees effort as fruitless or worse
Here to learn and sees others as resources to help them develop	Sees others as comparison/competition.
Priority is challenge, stretching, growing and learning	Believe they are here to perform and measure up.
Feels smart and successful when learn something new	Super sensitive about being wrong or making mistakes because their ability is always on the line. Feels smart and successful only when they perform perfectly
Believes that failure is painful but doesn't define who they are	Priority is success and validation. Believes that failure defines you as a loser and inferior.

*Lynne Watts*  
[DreamAchieverCoach.com](http://DreamAchieverCoach.com)

## **Lesson Plan—Setting Intention and Planning for Reflection**

### **ASCA National Standard: Academic Development**

**Standard A:** Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge and skills that contribute to effective learning in school and across the life span.

A: A1 Improve Academic Self-concept

A:A1.5 Identify attitudes and behaviors which lead to successful learning

### **ASCA National Standard: Personal/Social**

**Standard A:** Students will acquire the knowledge, attitudes and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others.

PS:A1 Acquire Self-knowledge

PS:A1.4 Understand change is a part of growth

### **Objectives: The student will be able to:**

- Understand that problems or challenges are a natural part of life
- Give examples of challenges they have experienced
- Identify ways that challenges can be beneficial
- Identify ways to anticipate and actively solve problems

**Essential Questions: What are some examples of challenges? How can you prepare for and cope with challenges?**

### **Lesson:**

- Discuss: What are some examples of challenges that students have experienced? How did they feel? What did they do to solve the problem? How did things turn out in the end? Did they learn anything from the experience? How can setting an intention influence the daily challenges that we face? How can we learn from reflecting back on challenges?
- Read
  - **Wyatt the Wonder Dog Learns about Mindset** by Lynne Watts
  - **Kate and the Beanstalk** by Mary Pope Osborne
  - **CinderEdna** by Ellen Jackson

- **Part-time Princess** by Deborah Underwood
- **Discuss:** How did the characters in the book cope with challenges? Who are you most like? Why? How do you want to handle change in the future? What is an intention that you can set to prepare for challenges in the future?
- **Activity:**
  - Have students use the sample letters and write letters of intention at the first of the school year and letters of reflection at designated times during the school year.
  - Have students write a short story about change. Write two endings to the story. One where the main character adapted to change and one where he/she resisted change. What was the outcome?

**Materials:**

- **Wyatt the Wonder Dog Learns about Winning** by Lynne Watts
- **Kate and the Beanstalk** by Mary Pope Osborne
- **CinderEdna** by Ellen Jackson
- **Part-time Princess** by Deborah Underwood

Dear (Student Name)

Today is the first day of (grade) and I am in (teacher's name class).

I am feeling:

I think that (grade) will be:

I will learn all about:

My friends are:

My goals for the year are:

I am worried about:

I am excited about:

If I were to give myself some advice about the year ahead, I would tell myself to:

Love,

Dear (Student Name)

Today is half way through \_\_\_ grade and I am in (teacher's name) class).

I am feeling:

So far \_\_\_ grade has been:

I have learned all about:

My friends are:

My goals for the year are:

The progress I have made on those goals is:

I am worried about:

I am excited about:

If I were to give myself some advice about the year ahead, I would tell myself to:

Love,



Dear (Student Name)

Today is the end of \_\_\_\_grade and I have been in teacher's name class.

I am feeling:

\_\_\_\_\_ grade has been:

I have learned all about:

My friends are:

My goals for the year were:

The progress I made on those goals was:

My plans for the future are:

I am excited about:

If I were to give myself some advice about the year ahead, I would tell myself to:

Love,

## **Lesson Plan—Problem solving**

ASCA National Standard Domain: Academic

A. Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge and skills contributing to effective learning in school and across the lifespan

B. Students will make decisions, set goals, and take necessary action to achieve goals.

### **Objectives: The student will be able to:**

- Define the words define problem solving
- Give examples of situations where they solved a problem and the steps they used
- Re-frame the concept of mistakes or failure as learning and growing
- Re-frame the concept of mistakes or failure as a necessary step to winning
- Identify practice and persistence as necessary traits of successful creativity and problem solving

**Essential Question: What is problem solving and why is it important? How are mistakes a necessary step to successful problem solving?**

### **Lesson:**

- Discuss these quotes from Thomas Edison, “I have not failed. I’ve just found 10,000 ways that won’t work.” or “Many of life’s failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up.”
- Discuss: What does it mean to problem solve? Is everyone a problem solver? What can we learn from failing at something? Can someone give an example of failing at something and then later succeeding? How did one event lead to the other?
- Read: *What do you do with a problem?* by Kobi Yamada or *The Most Magnificent Thing* by Ashley Spires
  - Identify and discuss how the main character solved problems, handled failure and used creativity to solve a problem.

- **Activity:**

- Have students create a series of 4-6 pictures in comic strip style that shows them using creative thinking to solve a problem. Be sure to include mistakes they made along the way.
- Have students write a story about an idea they had or a problem they solved. What they learned from it and how they handled mistakes. Students can read their stories to the class

**Materials:**

- *What do you do with a problem?* by Kobi Yamada
- *The Most Magnificent Thing* by Ashley Spires

## Lesson Plan—Creative thinking

ASCA National Standard Domain: Academic

A. Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge and skills contributing to effective learning in school and across the lifespan

B. Students will make decisions, set goals, and take necessary action to achieve goals.

### Objectives: The student will be able to:

- Define the words define creativity, creative thinking
- Give examples of situations where they were creative
- Identify practice and persistence as necessary traits of successful creativity

**Essential Question: What is creativity? How are mistakes a necessary step to successful creativity and problem solving?**

### Lesson:

- Discuss this quote from Scott Adams: Creativity is allowing yourself to make mistakes. Art is knowing which ones to keep. Or You can't use up creativity. The more you use, the more you have. Maya Angelou
- Discuss: What does it mean to be creative? How do we use creativity to problem solve? Is everyone creative? What can we learn from failing at something?
- Watch Caine's Arcade on Youtube: <http://cainesarcade.com/> Discuss how Caine was creative. Discuss how he handled failure. What was the problem that he solved?
- Read: *What do you do with an idea?* by Kobi Yamada
- Discuss what the main character learned about having a creative idea. What did he do with the idea at first? Why? What did he do with the idea at the end? What was the end result? What could the "idea" have been (use your imagination and be creative!)

### Activity:

- Draw or write about something you could create if like Caine you had a free summer and a few supplies that would easily be available. Share your creations with the class.

### Materials:

- *What do you do with an idea?* by Kobi Yamada
- Paper and markers

## Lesson Plan—Mindfulness

ASCA National Standard Domain: Academic

- A. Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge and skills contributing to effective learning in school and across the lifespan

ASCA National Standard Domain: Personal/Social

- A. Students will acquire knowledge, attitudes and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others.

### Objectives: The student will be able to:

- Define the word mindful
- Give examples of times during the day when a student can be mindful
- Identify ways that being mindful is helpful

**Essential Question:** What is mindfulness? What does mindfulness look like? When are some times that you have practiced mindfulness? Could you consider your classroom a team? Why or why not? What are some things that cause teams to fail? What are some examples of things that cause teams to be successful?

### Lesson:

Discuss: What is mindfulness? When are some times that you have practiced mindfulness? When are we not mindful? Why or why not? How is it helpful to practice mindfulness?

- List on the board: Mindfulness is: noticing sensations, paying attention to senses (sight, smell, sound, touch, feelings), positivity, calm, focus, paying attention to surroundings, being in the present
- List on board: benefits of being mindful: focus, calm, paying attention, improves learning, increases positive feelings
- Read [\*Mindful Monkey Happy Panda\*](#) by Lauren Alderfer, or read [\*Visiting Feelings\*](#) Lauren Rebenstein
- Identify and discuss how the characters in the book demonstrate mindfulness.
- Practice a Mindfulness Activity:
  - Find Your Breath-Take three slow mindful breathes. Pay attention to each breath from start to finish. Use a count of four to breathe in. Hold your breath for four counts. Breathe out for four counts. Hold again for four counts and repeat. This

is called box breathing. While you breathe think about where you can feel your breathe. In your nose, your chest or your belly? Notice if your chest/belly goes up and down. Do you hear your breathe? Imagine that your breath is a color. Breathe in one color and out another color. Now think about breathing in a positive word and breathing out a negative word.

- Sit for a minute and practice mindful listening-close your eyes and listen very carefully. What do you hear? Do you hear sounds in the classroom? Sounds outside the classroom. How many sounds do you hear? How does it feel to sit quietly?
- Eat a raisin or a piece of fruit mindfully-Really look at the fruit and notice the color, the size, the texture. Imagine what the fruit will taste like (sweet, sour, juicy). What does it feel like? What does it smell like? Put the fruit in your mouth and taste it. What does it taste like? Is there more than one flavor? What does it feel like to pay attention to our food like this?

#### **Materials:**

[Mindful Monkey Happy Panda](#) by Lauren Alderfer

[Visiting Feelings](#) Lauren Rebenstein

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## **Lesson Plan—Create a Classroom Mission Statement**

ASCA National Standard Domain: Academic

C. Students will understand the relationship of academics to the world of work and to life at home and in the community

ASCA National Standard Domain: Career

B. Students will employ strategies to achieve future career goals with success and satisfaction

C. Students will understand the relationship between personal qualities, education, training, and the world of work.

ASCA National Standard Domain: Personal/Social

A. Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge and skills contributing to effective learning in school and across the lifespan

B. Students will make decisions, set goals, and take necessary action to achieve goals.

### **Objectives: The student will be able to:**

Define the purpose of a mission statement and how to create one

Give examples of mission statements of a businesses

Recognize the mission statement of the school

**Essential Question:** What is a mission statement? How is one created? Why would a business have a mission statement? Why would a school have a mission statement? Could an individual have a mission statement? What is the purpose or advantage of having a mission statement? How are mission statements and goals alike? How are they different?

### **Lesson:**

Discuss what a mission statement is and why a school or business would have one. Give examples of mission statements of businesses. Review the mission statement of the school. Share how the mission statement for the school was created.

**Read:**

*Sam and Dave Dig a Hole* by Irma S and James H Black

Or read:

*Salt in His Shoes: Michael Jordan in Pursuit of a Dream* by Deloris Jordan

**Identify and discuss:** What is the mission of the main character(s) in the story? Did they accomplish it? Discuss how missions are ongoing goals that give individuals and businesses something to strive for. Discuss how having a mission helps with decision making, focus and goal achievement.

**Activity:**

Create a mission statement for the classroom:

Ask students to think about their favorite words that would describe what they think the class should be and what they really want the class to accomplish together.

Some important questions you might ask are: How should we treat each other? How is our class different and special? How can our class be the best we can be? What are your dreams for our class? What is your vision of a great class? Write the ideas on a whiteboard.

Next, have each student spend a few minutes writing/drawing what they think the mission of the class should be. They can include their favorite words or ideas from the previous discussion.

Have everyone share ideas and together develop a two or three sentence paragraph that everyone can agree on as the class mission statement.

Take that paragraph and identify two or at most three words that clearly describe the class mission. Here are some suggestions: Learn and Care. Encourage and Empower. Discover and Support

Ask students for ideas as to how the mission statement can be used in the classroom. Here are a few ideas:

Create a poster to hang on the wall



Have the mission statement taped on each desk as a reminder.

Begin each day by reciting the mission statement.

**Materials:**

*Sam and Dave Dig a Hole* by Irma S and James H Black

Or read:

*Salt in His Shoes: Michael Jordan in Pursuit of a Dream* by Deloris Jordan

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## **Lesson Plan—Discover Your One Word**

ASCA National Standard Domain: Academic

C. Students will understand the relationship of academics to the world of work and to life at home and in the community

ASCA National Standard Domain: Career

B. Students will employ strategies to achieve future career goals with success and satisfaction

C. Students will understand the relationship between personal qualities, education, training, and the world of work.

ASCA National Standard Domain: Personal/Social

A. Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge and skills contributing to effective learning in school and across the lifespan

B. Students will make decisions, set goals, and take necessary action to achieve goals.

### **Objectives: The student will be able to:**

Define the purpose of one word and how use it to provide focus in the upcoming year

Select one word for themselves and the reason they choose it

**Essential Question: What is One Word? How do you determine your personal word for the year? What is the purpose or advantage of identifying one word for the year? How will your word affect your goals that you set for the year? How will it affect your behavior?**

### **Lesson:**

- Discuss what a One Word is and the advantages of identifying One Word to guide and direct an individual through the year.
- Read a story and have students identify a word that the main character might choose as their word for the year.
  - *Wyatt the Wonder Dog Learns about Being Organized* by Lynne Watts
  - *A Special Thank You: Junior Discovers Integrity* by Dave Ramsey

- Give examples of words that might be chosen. Refer to Mike Ashcraft's website: <http://myoneword.org/> for ideas.
- Have students use the One Word Worksheet to determine their one word.
- Once each student has chosen their word for the year have them create a poster as a reminder of their word.
- Students may share their word with the class and posters may be displayed
- Optional: This exercise is particularly effective if teachers also select a word and share it.

**Materials:**

*Wyatt the Wonder Dog Learns about Being Organized* by Lynne Watts

*A Special Thank You: Junior Discovers Integrity* by Dave Ramsey

Poster Board and Markers

My One Word Worksheet

## My One Word Worksheet

Describe the person you want to become this year. Use any kind of words that come to mind: nouns, adverbs, adjectives, being words and doing words.

How will that person be displayed through my behaviors?

What is the new normal that I would like to create for my life?

Where do I see myself this time next year? What will be the same or different?

How do I want to stretch and expand myself in the upcoming year?

My One Word: