

CULTIVATING HAPPINESS

VARSIITY // BRANDS

BELIEVE IN YOU

EPISODE ONE / SEASON THREE

FRANKLIN TOWNE

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING GUIDE

CREATED IN COLLABORATION WITH



— AND —

OPENPhysEd.org

EPISODE ONE

SEASON 3

TEACHER NOTES

Inside the Resources

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING COMPETENCY OUTCOMES

➤ **Social Awareness (Empowerment)**

- Students will be able to identify and use family, school, and community resources and supports in the pursuit of defined personal and collective community goals.

➤ **Relationship Skills (Empowerment)**

- Students will be able to apply constructive language to encourage themselves and others in the active pursuit of personal and collective goals.

WHAT'S INSIDE?

- **Episode Video:** Join Kevin as he works with inspirational leaders from around the United States. This guide focuses on Season 3: Episode 1 (Franklin Towne).
- **Community Circle Building Guide:** Community circles are proactive environments that help students build community, relationships, and communication skills for supporting, encouraging, and cooperating with their classmates, teachers, and adult mentors.
- **Letter Writing Guide:** For thousands of years, letter writing has been an important way to build and maintain relationships between people. We can use letter writing exercises in social and emotional learning to practice relationship skills, communication skills, and empathy.
- **Peer Interview Guide:** The process of conducting and then writing about an interview can be an effective way to teach students important communication skills — specifically listening skills. The best interviews are guided by active listening, because it can lead to meaningful but previously unscripted follow-up questions. An interview can also build social awareness because it provides the person being interviewed with a platform to express their experiences and points of view.
- **Academic Language Cards:** Critical vocabulary from this Believe In You episode.

COMMUNITY CIRCLES



Implementation Tips

GUIDELINES FOR CIRCLE LEADERS

- **Sit in a circle.** This may seem obvious, but it's an important part of the process. If you're facilitating the discussion online via video call, there's little you can do to form an actual circle. Instead, have all students turn their cameras on so that everyone's nonverbal communication can be a part of the overall conversation.
- **Set norms or agreements** regarding how the group will communicate (listening and speaking). If possible, create and display visual reminders. Norms and agreements should be focused on respect for self and others, trust, and inclusion.
- **Use a talking piece.** This is an object that students will hold when it's their time to talk. This object can also be placed on the floor near the speaker's feet if there are concerns about sharing an object through touch.
- **Choose a formal leader.** This can be an adult or student. It's often effective to start with an adult facilitator and then progress to student leaders.
- **Use prepared discussion questions.** The first question should set the tone with a specific topic, and then a follow-up question should provide a reflection or connection to another important concept.
- **Close the discussion with everyone sharing.** A great way to do this is with everyone sharing "their weather." Students feeling happy and enthusiastic may say, "My weather is clear and sunny." Students feeling uncertain may say, "My weather is cloudy with a chance of thunderstorms." This provides students an opportunity to express their feelings without exposing personal details that they're not ready to share. Although this may be somewhat awkward when first implemented, it gets easier and provides a window into student emotions so that others can rally to help.



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COMMUNITY

Circle Building Guide

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Community circles are social environments that work to empower those who join the circle to support one another through active listening and courageous dialogue. Seek and provide support within this community of peers and mentors.

Watch Season 3: Episode 1 (Franklin Towne) and then use the questions below to help facilitate purposeful discussion in your community circle.

Community Circle Discussion Questions

- **Focus Question 1a:** Kevin tells us to “get the water out of the boat for the new school year.” What does that mean to you?
 - **Follow-Up Question 1b:** What are you most optimistic about for the upcoming school year?
- **Focus Question 2a:** Kevin challenges us to “respect the potential greatness” of our classmates. How can you recognize the potential greatness in others?
 - **Follow-Up Question 2b:** How can you recognize the potential greatness in yourself?
- **Focus Question 3a:** Franklin Towne’s mentoring program helps all students feel less isolated and alone. What can we do as a circle community to help each other feel less isolated and alone?
 - **Follow-Up Question 3b:** How can we cultivate happiness and belonging within our entire school community?

LETTER WRITING



Implementation Tips

GUIDELINES FOR LETTER WRITING EXERCISES

- **Empathize with the reader.** Before students begin writing, instruct them to visualize and imagine the intended reader. Who are they? How are they feeling? What is the best way to communicate with that person?
- **Define the purpose of the letter.** Is this a letter of encouragement? Is the writer trying to persuade the reader in some way? Instruct students to define and formally write the purpose of the letter in 1 or 2 sentences before beginning to draft the letter itself.
- **Consider the reader's reaction to the letter.** Instruct students to consider the various ways that a reader might react to the letter.
 - First, what if they react positively to the purpose of the letter? What is it that the writer is asking them to do in response? Write to create a desired action, even if it is a simple one. For example, a thank-you note is a letter meant to create a feeling of appreciation transferred from the writer to the reader. The desired action is simple but important — I'm grateful for you, please feel appreciated by me.
 - Next, consider the possibility that the reader does not react positively and has a response that doesn't match the purpose of the letter. What can the writer expect the reader to do in response, and how can the student learn from that response? For example, a letter written to a community leader asking for a policy change may not be enough to get the policy in question actually changed. The desired action in this instance could be an explanation of why the policy cannot be changed. Asking the reader to respond with specific reasons and facts may help the writer work to improve an argument or possibly reconsider and revise a viewpoint or approach on the issue.



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WRITING YOU

Letter Writing Guide

CULTIVATING RELATIONSHIP



For thousands of years, letter writing has been an important way to build and maintain relationships. We can use letter writing exercises to practice relationship skills, communication skills, and empathy.

Watch Season 3: Episode 1 (Franklin Towne) and then use the exercises below to help draft a letter focused on cultivating a relationship.

Letter Writing Guide

- **The reader.** Write this letter to a younger version of yourself. Imagine yourself, only 2 years younger. How did you feel 2 years ago? What were you nervous about? What made you feel optimistic? Write down 3 to 5 specific things that you can remember. This will allow you to empathize with your younger self.
- **The purpose.** This is a letter of encouragement and optimism. It is a letter aimed at offering support. Imagine that you could now be a mentor to a younger you. What 2 encouraging things would you have wanted to hear?
- **The desired action.** How do you want the reader to feel after reading this letter? And what specific action do you want them to take? Before writing the letter, list the names of the emotions and a short sentence describing the desired action.
- **Now, write the letter.** Type your letter, turn it in, and save it in a safe place for future reference. Two years from now, it will be interesting to reflect on both younger versions of yourself (as the author and the reader).
- **Use this letter.** This exercise will help you find encouraging words to use with younger students who need you to support and mentor them. It's important to note that mentorship is often informal and not clearly labeled. Formal mentorship programs are great. However, you can take action today to help someone who is nervous and can use the advice of an older peer.

PEER INTERVIEWS



Implementation Tips

GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS

- **Define the purpose of the interview.** Is this an open-ended interview meant to learn more about a person? Or is it a focused interview meant to gather a unique perspective on a specific subject or event? Write the purpose of the interview in 1 or 2 sentences before you begin drafting the interview questions.
- **Prepare targeted leading questions** with a follow-up question for each one. All questions should be crafted to get at the purpose of the interview. It's important to remember that follow-up questions can and should change to bring out interesting and alternative perspectives that come naturally from the interview process. Avoid yes/no types of questions and be prepared to rephrase a question if needed.
- **Listen and document what you hear**, not what you want to hear. An interview is meant to gather a diverse set of experiences and perspectives. Allow the interviewee to express themselves without casting a filter on what's being shared.
- **Start questions with open-ended pronouns:** who, what, where, when, why, and how. These types of questions help you avoid yes/no questions.
- **Allow some awkward silence.** If asked the right questions, the interviewee will need time to think about a meaningful response. Allow time for thinking and don't rush the process.
- **Stay in the moment.** Listen as the interviewee responds to your questions, document what you hear, and then ask follow-up questions. The best follow-up questions are influenced by the stories that are being shared. Don't allow your mind to wander to the next question. Be in the moment and listen carefully to what's being said.



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LISTEN/LEARN Peer Interview Guide

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The process of conducting and writing about an interview can be an effective way to teach students important communication skills — specifically listening skills. The best interviews are guided by the use of active listening, because it can lead to meaningful but previously unscripted follow-up questions. An interview can build social awareness because it provides the person being interviewed with a platform to express their experiences and points of view.

Watch Season 3: Episode 1 (Franklin Towne) and then use the guide below to create and conduct an interview with a classmate, friend, or family member. Take notes, then write a 1-page summary of your interview.

Interview Guide

- **The purpose of this interview:** Learn more about how students (or teachers) have helped to cultivate happiness in your school community. What makes them feel happy about your school? Who helped them find happiness at school? What are the biggest challenges and barriers to happiness, and how do they think those challenges can be overcome?
- Write 3 questions, each with 1 related follow-up question. Start your first question with who, your second question with when, and your third question with how.
- Use the following question starter to write your final question: “*What is 1 piece of advice that you would like to give students who...*”

CULTIVATE

(verb)

To apply effort for
the development
of a quality, skill, or
sentiment.

The students at Franklin Towne
worked hard to *cultivate* happiness
and a feeling of community for all
of their classmates.

HAPPINESS

(noun)

The state of feeling joyful, content, and grateful.

We can help others find *happiness* by cultivating a feeling of community and belonging.

MENTOR

(noun)

An experienced
and trusted
adviser.

My *mentor* is a part of our school's drama club. She introduced me to other members who made me feel accepted and appreciated.