

# DEVELOPING A POSITIVE ATTITUDE

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## AGENDA

- Starter
- Positive's a Plus!
- Let's Be Positive
- See It, Think It
- Conclusion
- Student Assessment

### Objectives

Students will define "positive attitude."

Students will identify principles of positive thinking and behavior.

Students will practice developing a positive attitude.

### Materials Needed

- Art materials for each group of four students, including poster paper, old newspapers, old magazines, markers, crayons, scissors, and glue (Part I)
- One copy of the "Visualization Techniques" activity sheet for each student (Part II)
- One copy of the "Affirmation Statement Techniques" activity sheet for each student (Part II)

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**Starter (3 minutes)**

Tell the class to imagine two runners, both of equal ability. As they get ready to begin a race, one is thinking, “I’ll never win. I feel so sluggish. I can’t believe I’m even in this race. This girl next to me looks so much faster; I bet she’s going to run right past me.” The other runner is thinking, “I feel great—light and fast! This is going to be the best race I’ve ever run. I’m strong, and I’ve been practicing for weeks. I can’t wait to get started.”

Ask students which runner will perform better. Have them defend their answers. Elicit from students other examples of how attitude can affect performance. Lead students to see the connection between attitude and performance.

Tell students that today they are going to learn about the power of positive thinking and how having a positive attitude can help them achieve their goals.

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**Part I Positive’s a Plus! (20 minutes)**

Purpose: Students define “positive attitude.”

**1. Students define “attitude.”**

Ask students to suggest definitions for the word “attitude.”

Lead students to understand that “attitude” refers to their outlook on life—a way of thinking about themselves, others, and the world.

**2. Students discuss positive attitude.**

Divide students into groups of four. Instruct the groups to answer the following questions:

- Describe a positive attitude.
- How do you create a positive attitude?
- How does it feel to have a positive attitude?

Allow the groups about five minutes to discuss their responses.

**3. Students create visual representations of positive attitude.**

After five minutes have passed, have groups use the art materials to create visual representations of positive attitude. Encourage students to try to represent their answers to the above questions.

Allow students about 10 minutes to create their posters.

#### 4. Students learn how a positive attitude can help them achieve their goals.

Have groups share their posters. After the discussion is completed, elicit from students these points to add to the class definition of “positive attitude”:

- Having a positive attitude means being strong and motivated.
- It means focusing on strengths and confidently moving forward.

Refer to the starter and ask students to suggest reasons why having a positive attitude might lead to goal achievement. Write student responses on the board. Direct students to understand that thinking positively affects our behavior—when we have a positive attitude, we act in a way that reflects that attitude. Lead students to recognize that people who have a positive attitude “bounce back” more quickly from setbacks.

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### Part II Let's Be Positive (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students learn principles of positive thinking and behavior.

#### 1. Students recognize how positive behavior can benefit them.

Explain to students that when people behave positively, their brains create chemicals called endorphins, which enhance performance. Endorphins can increase physical energy, increase mental alertness, reduce anxiety, and improve problem solving skills.

#### 2. Students learn how to develop positive behavior.

Ask students to predict how they might develop positive behavior. Write responses on the board.

Offer these steps:

- Positive behavior can be developed by forming positive habits.
- Think of yourself as successful and have positive expectations for everything you do.
- Remind yourself of your past successes.
- Never dwell on past failures, but learn from and avoid repeating them.
- Surround yourself with positive people and ideas.
- Keep trying until you achieve the results you want. You only fail when you quit trying.

Ask students to share examples of experiences in which having a positive expectation produced positive results. Then, ask them to share times when they experienced negative results because of negative expectations.

Students may want to discuss times when they had negative expectations (such as a time when they thought they would do poorly on a test) and were pleasantly surprised. Suggest to students that they should consider how well they might have done if they had a positive attitude.

### **3. Students understand the technique of visualization.**

Explain to students that there are many techniques that promote a positive attitude. One of these techniques is called visualization.

Ask students if they know what visualization is. Ask them to suggest meanings of the word “visualization” based on their knowledge of the root word and the suffixes.

After students have offered definitions, explain that visualization is the technique of purposefully creating a mental picture of a successful performance. Visualization improves performance because the positive picture stimulates the brain to trigger corresponding positive responses that support the mental image.

Continue by explaining that this is the technique used by many athletes to enhance their abilities on the field or court, by entertainers to ensure their best performances, and by successful professionals to achieve their goals.

Distribute the “Visualization Techniques” activity sheet to each student and discuss each step.

Tell students that they will have an opportunity to practice visualizing after they learn another technique.

### **4. Students understand the technique of affirmation.**

Ask students if they have ever heard of the technique of affirmation, which is another way of creating a positive attitude. Ask students to suggest meanings of the word “affirmation” based on their knowledge of the root word and the suffix.

Point out to students that visualization is creating a “mental movie” in which they are the stars. Affirmations are like mental commercials that encourage them to buy into positive images of themselves. Affirmative statements are positive self-reminders that help us strengthen our efforts and achieve our goals.

Distribute the “Affirmation Statement Techniques” activity sheet to each student and discuss each step.

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## **Part III See It, Think It (10 minutes)**

Purpose: Students practice developing a positive attitude.

### **1. Students brainstorm areas of their lives in which having a positive attitude could help them.**

Tell students that they are now going to consider the areas of their lives in which having a positive attitude might help them. Have students brainstorm situations or activities that might benefit from their having a more positive attitude or using the techniques discussed. Write student responses on the board.

## 2. Students consider situations in their own lives in which attitude plays a role.

Have students think of a current, specific situation in their own lives in which they might have a negative attitude. If students cannot think of anything current, have them consider something that might happen in the future, such as a major test, presentation, or job interview.

Tell students to write about the situation at the top of a piece of paper. Allow them about two minutes to describe their current attitude toward the situation. Then, have students describe the positive attitude they would like to have. Give students about eight minutes to answer the following questions:

- How could visualization help you? Describe a visualization that might be useful.
- What affirmations might be useful?
- How might your behavior change as a result of changing your attitude?

Tell students to keep what they wrote so they can reflect on it when their attitude might be keeping them from their goals.

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## Conclusion (2 minutes)

Close this session by asking students to define “visualization” and “affirmation.” Elicit from students the following **key points** that were taught in this lesson:

- A positive attitude can lead to positive behavior.
- Positive expectations, behaviors, and habits bring positive results.
- Visualization and affirmation are techniques that you can use to promote a positive attitude and help you achieve your goals.

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## Student Assessment

1. Describe someone with a negative attitude and someone with a positive attitude (no names are necessary). Which one do you think will be more successful in life? Why?
2. List three benefits of demonstrating a positive attitude.
3. List three things someone can do to work toward having a positive attitude.

## LESSON EXTENSIONS

### Using Quotations

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“The greater part of our happiness or misery depends on our disposition and not on our circumstances.”

—Martha Washington

Discuss this quote with students. Have students reflect on a recent experience in which thinking about the meaning of this quote would have helped them. Have students discuss how this quote may be helpful to them in the future.

### Addressing Multiple Learning Styles

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Have each student write their name on a sheet of paper. Instruct students to exchange papers. Ask them to write one positive comment about the student listed on each paper they receive. Continue this process until each student has commented on every other student’s paper.

Once students have finished, collect and edit the lists. Then, give them back to their owners. Have students write about their reactions to their lists.

### Writing in Your Journal

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Have students revisit the list they wrote during Lesson 2’s journal-writing extension.

Ask, “Were you able to accomplish everything on your list? How do you feel about it?” Have them make another list for tomorrow.

## Using Technology

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Have students share their feelings about friends who consistently post negative status messages on social networking sites. Explain that negative attitudes can be infectious.

Have students search the internet for different ways to develop a positive attitude. Have them share their findings with the rest of the class.

## Homework

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Have students interview a business owner about their business, how they got into it, what it takes to run this kind of business, and what they like about it. They should also ask how having a positive attitude helps the owner with their business's challenges.

Have students present their findings to the class.

## Additional Resources

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Have students read the positive affirmations at [www.happierhuman.com/positive-affirmations-teens/](http://www.happierhuman.com/positive-affirmations-teens/). Ask them to choose an affirmation from the list and use it every day for one week. At the end of the week, discuss with your students how using positive affirmations made them feel.

# VISUALIZATION TECHNIQUES

1. Relax. Close your eyes, breathe deeply, and clear your mind.
2. Mentally paint a picture or make a video in your mind that shows you succeeding at a goal. For example, if your goal is to give a great speech in front of a large audience, see yourself doing just that—poised, speaking clearly, and impressing the audience.
3. Make your mental image detailed and visualize success. Do not allow negative visions such as fear, failure, or nervousness to enter the picture. See yourself as already successfully achieving your goal.
4. Add specific words, actions, and your senses to your visualization. Practice what you want to do or say in your visualization. Mentally rehearsing strengthens your real performance.
5. Keep your visualization in your mind. Be ready to recall it whenever you choose. Repeat your visualization as often as you can before the actual event.



# AFFIRMATION STATEMENT TECHNIQUES

1. Make the statements personal. Use your name, “I,” or “you.”
2. Keep the statements short. You want to remember them. Long statements are harder to remember.
3. Use positive language. If you want to control your nervousness, say, “I am calm and confident. I am well prepared for this test.” Don’t say, “I will not be nervous about my math test.”
4. State your affirmations as facts, as if they are happening, even if you have not achieved them yet. For example, say, “I will graduate from high school with a 3.2 GPA.”
5. Repeat your affirmations at least once a day. Repetition stimulates your brain to help you reach your goals.
6. In your mind, say your affirmations often. Also, write down your affirmations and place them where you can see them often. Just like advertisements on television or the internet, the more you see or hear an affirmation, the more you believe it.

Here are some examples of affirmations:

- I have the talent to be cast as the lead in the play.
- I will be offered this job because I am prepared for the interview.
- My brother and I will get along well for the rest of the summer.