

IDENTIFYING STRENGTHS



AGENDA

- Starter
- Jeopardy
- Strengths Interview
- Take It Outside
- Conclusion
- Student Assessment

Objectives

Students will recognize that every individual has personal strengths.

Students will identify some of their strengths.

Materials Needed

- One copy of the “Jeopardy” activity sheet for each student (Part I)
- Five index cards for each student (Part I)
- Two clickers, or similar noisemakers (Part I)
- One copy of the “Strengths Interview” activity sheet for each student (Part II)

Starter (3 minutes)

Remind students of the previous lesson on respect—for oneself and for others. Point out that what we respect about ourselves and others emanates from our strengths. Brainstorm the strengths of a few respected public figures or celebrities students are familiar with. Encourage students to go beyond external qualities; for example, in addition to being famous for their work in movies, many popular actors and actresses are also dedicated philanthropists.

Write the following questions on the board: “Do we all have personal strengths? If so, what are they?” Explain to students that they will be able to answer these questions by the end of this session.

Part I Jeopardy (25 minutes)

Purpose: Students discover that they all have personal strengths.

1. Students prepare for the activity.

Distribute a copy of the “Jeopardy” activity sheet and five index cards to each student. Point out to students that there are five categories across the top of the activity sheet—Sports & Fitness, Arts & Music, Friends & Family, School Subjects, and Just for Fun—and that each category has boxes beneath it labeled 10, 20, 30, 40, and 50.

Ask students to write the titles of the categories on the backs of their index cards. Then ask them to write their names and a strength they possess in each category on the other side of the cards.

When the class has finished, choose five volunteers, one to be in charge of each category. Explain that these five volunteers will generate the statements and verify the “question-phrased” answers, as per the TV game show Jeopardy! Have each volunteer collect the cards for their category and sort them by the strengths that students have listed. Have the volunteers put the cards with the strengths that apply to the greatest number of students on top of the pile and the strengths that apply to the least number of students on the bottom of the pile. Explain that the greater the number of students who possess a strength, the lower the point value of the question. (For example, if 15 students wrote that they are good at math, that card is on top of the pile and the question is worth only 10 points, since the majority of students provided that answer.)

2. Students participate in the activity.

Divide the class into two teams and provide each team with a clicker. Choose one team to go first and have the first student from that team pick the category for the first question. For example, if the student chooses “School Subjects for 10,” have the School Subjects student make a statement relating to a strength that others have described on their cards (e.g., “this person is good at math”). The team that clicks in first must name a student who is good at math (e.g., “Who is Hector?”). If the team is right, it gets 10 points. If the team is wrong, then the other team gets a chance to answer and earn 10 points. Once the question has been answered correctly, all students who are good at math must stand to identify themselves. Players then pass the clicker to the next member of the team to play out the next question.

Ask students to cross out a box once its point value has been played. Continue until the entire game board has been played. The winning team is the one with the most points.

3. Students draw conclusions from this exercise.

Summarize the activity by noting that the game board has 25 different squares on it. Point out that everyone is good at something, so everyone should have been able to identify with at least one or two of the categories.

Ask students to discuss their reactions to discovering the strengths they share with their classmates. Then, talk about the strengths that make each person unique within the group.

Part II Strengths Interview (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students identify five of their personal strengths.

1. Students learn that people have strengths in different areas.

Ask students if they felt that it was difficult to list strengths for every category. Take a poll to see how many students left one or more index cards blank. Point out that nobody shines in every area. We all have our own personal strengths and interests.

2. Students interview partners to identify their strengths.

Distribute one copy of the “Strengths Interview” activity sheet to each student. Divide the class into pairs and provide these directions for students:

- Take turns interviewing one another.
- Your task is to find out five of your partner's strengths.
- No matter how much your partner tries to convince you that they don't have any more strengths, you must keep asking until you've written down five.
- If your partner says that they have no strengths, ask specific questions about their interests. A person's interests often prompt the pursuit of related activities. For example, someone who loves music might learn how to play the guitar or the saxophone. Over time, they may discover a musical talent or a level of expertise that makes this a strength.

Allow five minutes for each interview.

3. Students discuss the activity.

Elicit students' comments on the experience of interviewing their peers. Ask questions such as the following:

- Were you surprised to find that you had a lot in common?
- Did you learn anything new while you were interviewing your partner?

Part III Take It Outside (5 minutes)

Purpose: Students discuss the importance of identifying their strengths.

1. Students discuss why knowing their strengths can be useful.

Ask students why they think it might be important to know their strengths. (Students might reply: because it helps us keep our self-respect, because it helps us to make decisions.)

Ask students how they can continue to use these strengths in their everyday lives. Point out that they don't need to stop with the five they listed in Part II. They should take time to think about other strengths they possess and how they might use them.

2. Students apply what they've learned.

Encourage students to write down their strengths on paper and post them on their bedroom wall, mirror, or locker door as a reminder. Explain that reminding ourselves of our special qualities will help us to persevere when we're experiencing challenges.

Conclusion *(2 minutes)*

Have students respond to the questions posed in the starter. Elicit from students the following **key points** that were taught in this lesson:

- Everyone has strengths.
- Some of our strengths are shared by others. Some are unique.
- It's important for each of us to know our strengths and use them every day.

Student Assessment

1. List three of your personal strengths.
2. Explain how one of your strengths helps you in your daily life.

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Using Quotations

“Our strengths are our tools.”

Have students write a paragraph or draw a picture that shows how they use their strengths every day.

Addressing Multiple Learning Styles

Have students create or bring in an object that represents their strengths.

Invite students to share how the object represents their strengths.

Writing in Your Journal

Have students write about the strengths they possess and times when they have used these strengths.

Discuss with students the importance of being able to identify and focus on their own strengths.

Using Technology

Show students a video about someone with many strengths.

After viewing the video, ask students to create a list of the person’s strengths.

Homework

Have students write an autobiography that focuses on their strengths.

Ask students to share their autobiographies with the class.

Additional Resources

Have students review biographical information for well-known people.

Ask students to find and share strengths that may be surprising or not well-known (for instance, an athlete who is skilled at painting).

JEOPARDY

Sports & Fitness	Art & Music	Friends & Family	School Subjects	Just for Fun
10	10	10	10	10
20	20	20	20	20
30	30	30	30	30
40	40	40	40	40
50	50	50	50	50

Notes:

STRENGTHS INTERVIEW

Five of _____'s Strengths
Name of interviewee

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Interviewed by _____
Name

