

WORKING IN TEAMS



AGENDA

- Starter
- Team Sentences
- What's Important to Whom?
- Let's Make a Deal
- Conclusion
- Student Assessment

Objectives

Students will identify the benefits and challenges of working in teams.

Students will identify the traits, people, and future aspirations that they value and those that are valued by others.

Students will synthesize guidelines for the class's work and interactions.

Materials Needed

- Three note cards, each with a topic written on it (Part I)
- Poster board and colored markers (Part III)

Starter (3 minutes)

Ask students to express a preference for something. For example, ask for a show of hands in response to a simple question, such as “Who would rather have a cat than a dog for a pet?” or “Who would rather learn to play the guitar than learn to play a sport?”

Call on a student whose hand is raised and ask a follow-up question, such as “Why would you rather have a cat?” or “Why would you prefer to learn to play the guitar?” Give the student who responds your full attention. If others interrupt, ask that they give the student time to finish speaking.

Say, “This class is about each one of you and the things that are important to you. In this class, each one of you counts.” Ask students whether they think the things that are important to them should be considered important to others. Encourage volunteers to explain their answers. Tell students that in this class, what they value is what’s most important.

Tell students that today they will begin to consider what’s important to them. Using that information, they will also work together to establish some guidelines for the class.

Part I Team Sentences (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students work in teams to create sentences and begin considering the traits, people, and goals that they value most.

1. Students form small groups and listen to directions.

Divide the class into three teams. Tell students that they are going to play a game. Then, read the following directions out loud:

- Each team will be given a topic and five minutes to write a sentence about it on the board. Each team must work together to write their sentence.
- As a team, you must complete the sentence without talking to one another.
- Only one person from each team can be at the board at a time. The first person will write one word, and then go to the back of the line. The next person will add the next word, and so on.
- You must form a complete sentence. A fragment or a grammatically incorrect sentence will not count. If a team writes an incomplete or grammatically incorrect sentence, that team must start over.
- The sentence must end with a period or an exclamation point. When the sentence is complete, the team should cheer.

2. Students work in teams to create sentences.

Have each team line up facing the board. Remind students that each team must work in complete silence. Give the first person in each team a piece of chalk and a notecard with one of the following topics written on it:

- My Role Model
- A Good Friend Is Someone Who
- Happiness Is
- After This School Year Is Over
- As a Freshman in High School

Suggest that students use the topics to start their sentences.

3. Students reflect on the activity.

When students have finished, invite members of each team to describe what was difficult about creating the sentences. Invite members of teams that completed sentences to describe what helped them succeed. Then, ask all students what they would do differently if they were to play this game again.

Part II What's Important to Whom? (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students identify some traits, people, and goals that are important to them and learn about what is important to others.

1. Students identify personal preferences, plans, and values.

Refer to the sentences that each team created in Part I. Say, "I'll bet not everyone in the first group has the same role model." Invite each member of the first group to explain whom they would have written about if they had been working on their own. Ask a volunteer from another group to write the responses on the board.

Proceed in a similar manner with the topics covered in each sentence, eliciting responses from the members of each group. Essentially, ask students to discuss what they value in a friend, what their idea of happiness is, what they will do at the end of the school year, and what they have considered about their freshman year in high school.

2. Students acknowledge differences in their preferences, plans, and values.

Ask students to consider their classmates' various responses and to note similarities and differences between the responses. Summarize by stating how these responses show that people have different goals and value different things. Comment that this makes sense, since we are all different people.

Say, "Different things are important to different people. This class will help you identify what's important to you, your personal goals, and ways you can reach those goals."

3. Students consider the importance of working together.

Make the observation that although each student has individual preferences and values different things, they worked as a team to complete their sentences.

Emphasize the importance of learning to accept one another in order to work together. Say, "It will always be necessary to work with others in life. People may be different from you—they may like different things, come from different places, and have different goals. But as you have seen, people with differences can work together. This course will also help you learn how to work successfully with others."

Remind students that this will happen only if they choose to participate and apply what they learn. State again that the choice to learn is always up to each of them.

Part III Let's Make a Deal (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students mutually create and agree upon a contract that establishes some class guidelines.

1. Students learn about the need to create guidelines.

Explain that in order to make sure that everyone is given the same chance to succeed in this class, everyone—including you, the teacher—needs to consider and decide on some guidelines that the class will follow.

Say, "Let's make a deal. I'm willing to do some things that will help us work well together, and I'd like you to agree to do some things, too. Here's what I promise to do. Tell me what you think."

2. Students listen to the teacher's commitments.

Make a list of things that you, as the teacher, promise to do. If you wrote observations about classroom behavior during previous class sessions, refer to them as you develop your list. Your list might be similar to the following:

- I'll be on time.
- I'll listen respectfully to what each person has to say.
- I'll treat everyone with courtesy.
- I'll never put anyone down.
- I'll make my best effort to be prepared for each class.

Invite a volunteer to write your commitments on the board.

3. Students negotiate and agree to terms.

Once you have written your own list, have students brainstorm a list of commitments that they will need to follow in order for the class to work well together. Write their responses on the board. Students may copy items from your list.

Invite students to discuss each statement. Explain that in making a deal, all parties must agree to the terms. Ask questions such as the following to prompt discussion and thinking:

- Can everyone agree to this?
- Does everyone agree that this is important to us?
- Is there anything else we should add?

Guide the class to discuss and formulate a final list of guidelines containing no more than 10 items. If students are having difficulty reaching a consensus, invite explanations from those who seem to maintain the minority opinion. Then, take a quick "yea" or "nay" vote to resolve the issue. Remind students that everyone is welcome to express an opinion, but not everyone has to agree with it.

Have volunteers use the markers to transfer the final list to poster board. Then, invite each student to sign the list. Afterward, post the list prominently in the room. Refer to specific items on the list as necessary, and remind students of their agreement to these guidelines.

Conclusion (2 minutes)

Ask students to recall what this class is about. Ask them how recognizing differences in traits, goals, and values can be a benefit when working in teams. Elicit from students the following **key points** that were taught in this lesson:

- Each student in this class has goals, and each student values certain traits and certain people.
- In order to work well together, it's important to acknowledge and accept that everyone values different things and has different ideas.
- We have made an agreement to follow a list of guidelines that we think will help us work well together. We need to help each other follow these guidelines.

Student Assessment

1. Why is it important to learn to work with others in a group?
2. List three things you can do to successfully work with others in a group.
3. List three reasons why we set rules or guidelines in the classroom.

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Using Quotations

“The way a team plays as a whole determines its success. You may have the greatest bunch of individual stars in the world, but if they don’t play together, the [team] won’t be worth a dime.”

Have students write a paragraph explaining how this statement supports the need for rules and cooperation.

Addressing Multiple Learning Styles

Divide the class into small groups. Have each group come up with five everyday scenes that can be acted out by two or three people (e.g., buying a movie ticket, getting help on a homework assignment). Have students act out the scenarios while the rest of the class guesses what is happening. Talk about what makes an improv successful (e.g., assigning roles quickly, listening, cooperation). Discuss how these skills can make this class a success.

Writing in Your Journal

Have students write about an incident in which a lack of cooperation spoiled a plan. Have them include a second paragraph explaining what they might do differently next time. Have students pair off and pose the problems they faced to their partners. Have them brainstorm solutions, and then reverse roles.

Using Technology

Have students use the internet to locate examples of community service projects (e.g., volunteer organizations, Nickelodeon’s The Big Help, walk-a-thons for various causes). Have students choose one project of interest and list five ways cooperation would be needed in order to complete the project. Have them share their results in small groups.

Homework

Have students list the rules for simple playground or card games. Divide the class into small groups. Have students try playing the games according to the rules given, revising directions if necessary. Is it easier to play the game when everyone knows the rules?

Additional Resources

Show students a film that portrays the power of teamwork (e.g., *Toy Story 4*, *The Mighty Ducks*, *Cool Runnings*). Have students discuss the role that collaboration played in the film. Have them brainstorm what might have happened if the team in the film did not work together.