



MindUP Booster Lesson

Lesson A: Mindful Observation

Grades 2 – 3

Length of Lesson: 20 – 30 minutes

Objective of Lesson 1: Students define mindfulness and practice anchor activities to help them remain in the present moment and deal with challenges during the day.

Summary of Unit 1 – Lessons delivered by teacher

Objective of Unit 1: Students gain self-regulation skills and the capacity to absorb information by learning about the brain and calming strategies.

- **Lesson 1** – Students learn about the three parts of their brains that help them think and respond to stress.
- **Lesson 2** – Students compare two types of behavior: mindful (reflective and purposeful) and unmindful (reflexive and unaware) and identify the parts of the brain responsible for controlling each type.
- **Lesson 3** – This lesson introduces daily strategies for calming down and paying attention. Students begin to learn ways to help their brains work more mindfully.

Lesson Overview

1. Counting Breaths: 5 min.
2. Mindful Observation: 10 – 15 min.
3. Butterfly Body Scan: 5 min.

Lesson Materials and Preparation

Materials:

- 1 plate (per student)
- 1 scoop/bag of beans and macaroni
- Chime

Preparation: Students need to be at desk for second activity.

For Parent Review: Facts from MindUP lessons 1 – 3

- The **amygdala** [*uh-mig-duh-luh*] is the part of the limbic system that is the brain’s “security guard” and protects us from threats. It detects things that are scary or dangerous in our environment.
- The **hippocampus** [*hip-uh-kam-puh s*] is also part of the limbic system and lives right behind your ears (point behind your ears) and is the storage vault of memory and learning.
- The **prefrontal cortex** [*pree-fruhn-tl kawr-teks*] is our brain’s wise leader and the learning, thinking and reasoning center of the brain. It regulates the stress response by making things seem less scary.
- **Unmindful behavior:** a reaction happens before the mind thinks about it such as reacting to a “false alarm” of danger.
- **Mindful behavior:** a reaction that happens after our mind thinks about it and we consciously process the input allowing the prefrontal cortex time to analyze, interpret and prioritize information – this allows us to pick the best course of action.
- **Focused breathing:** helps calm the body by slowing heart rate, lowering blood pressure and sharpening focus. Supports strong functioning of the higher brain, lessens anxiety by overriding the “fight, flight, or freeze” response from the amygdala, and helps students become more self-managed and mindful.



MindUP Booster Lesson

COUNTING BREATHS (5 min.)

ACTIVITY OBJECTIVE: Students practice intentional breathing to help them anchor themselves to the present moment and deal with challenges during the day.

PREPARATION: Determine if you want the students sitting on the carpet or at their desks.

Hello everyone, my name is _____ and today is our first MindUP booster lesson for this year! Let's start the lesson by defining mindfulness and ways we can be mindful. **Does anyone have ideas of how we can be mindful or what mindfulness means?**

Wow! Those are great answers and some great suggestions on how to be mindful. **Mindfulness is about exploring/knowing what is happening inside and around you. Mindfulness helps us by training our attention to what is happening right now.** These are skills that help us in school, in friendships and managing our feelings.

For today's lesson we will do a few activities to help us **develop our mindfulness muscles** so we can use these skills easier when we need them. **Does anyone have any ideas how using our mindfulness skills can help us in school/home?** I love all your answers! **Mindfulness can help us in many ways and include** - calming ourselves down, pausing and taking mindful action, focusing in school and being aware of our feelings and what is going on around us. Just like any muscle, the more we practice our mindfulness muscles, the stronger they get!

Let's start with a **breathing exercise that will help us develop our concentration** skills and get us ready for the next activity. I am going to ask everyone to sit with their **back straight, body relaxed, and resting your hands** gently on your knees or lap. **We will count our breaths together**, you can watch me and follow along.

Breathe in naturally and silently and **say one in your mind**. As you breathe out, relax your forehead. **Raise one finger and wait for everyone to breathe in and out.**

Let's do that again. Breathe in naturally and **silently say two in your mind**. As you breathe out relax your neck and shoulders. **Raise two fingers.**

Now breathe in, and silently **say three in your mind**. As you breathe out, relax your stomach. **Raise three fingers.**

Let's try it again, but this **time I'm not going to talk. Sync your breath to my hand motions**, counting silently in your mind on your own. Don't forget to relax your body as you breathe out. **Slowly raise one, two and three fingers to match your own breathing pattern.**

Great job! **Did anyone's mind get quiet when you were counting breaths? Allow for 1 – 2 students to answer.** You can use this breathing exercise anytime you need to refocus and take a mindful moment.



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MINDFUL OBSERVATION (10 – 15 min.)

ACTIVITY OBJECTIVE: Students practice mindful observation by using their sense of touch to remain focused on the sensations in their hands and fingers.

PREPARATION:

- Students at their desks and ask for assistance (docent, teacher) to pass out and collect supplies.
- 1 plate (per student – return to supply bin to re-use)
- 1 scoop/bag of beans and macaroni (return to supply bin mixed up again)
- Chime

This activity is a **mindful observation activity** where you will get to sort out different items on your plate using only your sense of touch. **I am going to pass out a plate with items on the plate** – when the plate is put in front of you please place your hands in your lap. **Pass out plate with beans and macaroni mixed on the plate.**

Now that everyone has their plates, keeping your hands resting in your lap, let’s relax our bodies and focus on the items on our plate. **What do you see? Allow 1 – 2 students to answer.**

Great answers! Now **close your eyes (if uncomfortable they can gaze into their lap)**, keep your hands in your lap, and **feel your breathing**. When I ring the chime, keeping your eyes closed you can start carefully and slowly sorting the beans and macaroni into two piles on your plate. The goal is to **keep your eyes closed the entire time while moving the beans to one side of the plate and macaroni to the other.**

This is not a race, it **should be done slowly and quietly**. The point of the game is to **feel the beans and the macaroni very carefully with your fingers and notice how they feel** while you move them around the plate.

Ring Chime. Pause and allow for silence before giving more prompts.

Focus on what the items feel like and what your breathing feels like. **Circulate room to pick up items and help/redirect as needed.**

Ring Chime to end activity. When you are finished you can place your hands in your lap and open your eyes. Quietly look at your plate.

Who can share with me:

- What was it like to sort the beans and macaroni with your eyes closed?
- How do you feel now?
- Do you feel different than before you started sorting?

We often rely on our sense of sight to help us complete tasks. **When we take away our sense of sight, we can also learn a lot about things through our other senses, like our sense of touch.**

I will come around and start collecting the supplies before we finish today’s lesson. **Ask for help of teacher/additional docent to collect plates (return to supply bin) and macaroni and beans (mixed back up and returned to supply bin).**



MindUP Booster Lesson

BUTTERFLY BODY SCAN (5 min.)

ACTIVITY OBJECTIVE: Students practice mindfulness by moving their attention from one part of the body to another in a guided exercise.

PREPARATION: Students remain seated at their desks or can be moved to the carpet.

We will end our lesson with a **body scan**. Remain seated and get comfortable in your seat. Close your eyes if comfortable or gaze down at your desk or lap. **Breathe naturally, noticing how it feels to breathe in and out.**

Now imagine a butterfly that's as light as a feather. It can be any color you like. Take a moment and picture the butterfly in your mind.

Imagine your butterfly is hovering nearby. We're going to pretend that the magic butterfly rests on different parts of our body, and when it lands, that part of our body feels relaxed and pleasant.

Let's start with our foreheads. Image your forehead relaxes when the butterfly rests on it.

Imagine the butterfly moves from your forehead to one of your shoulders. Your shoulder relaxed while the butterfly rests on it. Now the butterfly moves to your other should – allow your shoulder to relax.

Imagine the butterfly moves to your right knee and your right leg relaxes. Now imagine he butterfly moves to your left thigh and your left leg relaxes from your hip to your ankle.

Imagine the butterfly flies to your left foot and all your toes relax. Now the butterfly has landed on your right foot and your entire foot relaxes.

Relax your whole body and rest, feeling your breathing. When you are ready slowly open your eyes and reach your hands to the sky. Take a breath in and lower your arms to your lap as your breath out.

Thank you for practicing mindful observation with me today. Remember you can use these skills anytime you need to refocus when you feel distracted or frustrated.

REFERENCES

- Greenland, S. K., & Harris, A. (2016). *Mindful games: sharing mindfulness and meditation with children, teens, and families*. Boulder: Shambhala.
- The Hawn Foundation. (2011). *In The MindUP Curriculum: Brain-Focused Strategies for Learning and Living* (pp. 24 – 49). New York, NY: Scholastic.