



MindUP Booster Lesson

Lesson A: Mindful Observation

Grades 4 - 5

Lesson A: Mindful Observation is the first tutorial in a series of MindUP programming for the 2019-2020 academic year. Based in neuroscience, MindUP teaches the skills and knowledge children need to manage stress, regulate emotions and face challenges with optimism, resilience and compassion. In this lesson, students will learn ways to help their brains work more mindfully by learning the difference between mindful (reflective and purposeful) and unmindful (reflexive and unaware) behavior. In addition, they will be introduced to strategies for calming down, developing concentration skills and focused attention.

Length of Lesson: Approx. 20 minutes total

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

Lesson Overview:

Part 1: Mindful Observation (Approx. 10 minutes)

1. Exploring Mindful Awareness
2. Mind Jar Activity
3. Mindful Breathing Exercise

Part 2: Mindful Observation (Approx. 10 minutes)

1. Sorting Activity

Lesson Materials:

- Student handout
- Writing Utensil (pencil, crayons, markers)
- Mind “Glitter” Jar
 - link to make your own mind jar: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1t1GlaevCMs>
- 1 plate
- 1 scoop of beans*
- 1 scoop of macaroni*

*Can replace with craft items (e.g., beads, pom poms) or dry foods (e.g., popcorn kernels, cereal) that can be used for sorting

Preparation: Have child in a space with a flat surface that is calm and quiet.

For Parent Review:

- 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 response 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.

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.