

Responsibility

This week students learn about the sources of our responsibilities and how to navigate those responsibilities. Students can also practice identifying the responsibilities in various situations, work on categorizing the responsibilities they currently have, and think about what their favorite responsibility is.

Begin the unit with the whole class lesson and then aim to complete at least two of the mini lessons with your students throughout the week. Each mini lesson is designed to present elements of the main lesson in new and engaging ways.

Main Lesson

Whole Class Lesson

30 minutes



Sources of Responsibility

In this lesson, students evaluate where our responsibilities come from. The Center for Civic Education has identified eight responsibility categories, which, when you understand them, makes it easy to see how we have many different responsibilities and that those responsibilities will shift over time. (See page 3 for lesson details.)

Mini Lessons

For Small Groups

15 minutes



What are the Responsibilities?

Break the class into three groups and assign each one to a scenario on the “What are the Responsibilities” handout (see below) and have them answer the questions. When the groups are done working (7-8 minutes) have them discuss their scenario and responses with the large group.

For Partners

15 minutes



What Kinds of Responsibilities Do We Have?

With your partner, list out at least three responsibilities you have at home, at school, and in the community. Then, label them with the category that responsibility falls into. At the end of the activity, compare which categories have the greatest number of responsibilities and identify how you can use self-discipline to increase the likelihood that you will fulfill all your responsibilities.

The categories are: promises, assignments, appointments, occupation, laws, custom, citizenship, and moral principles.

For Individuals

15 minutes



My Favorite Responsibilities

In your journal, write about your favorite responsibilities. Often we think of responsibilities as chores that we have to do that we don't enjoy or something that someone else makes us do against our will, and so it might seem like we shouldn't enjoy our responsibilities. But, really, being responsible and having responsibilities can be fun! Which responsibilities do you have that you enjoy the most?

Technology-Focused
15 minutes



Using Tech to Be More Responsible

Discuss: How can we use technology to be more responsible? Try to brainstorm at least one way to use technology to increase responsibility in each of the 8 categories identified in the opening lesson.

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Lesson Timeframe

30 minutes

Required Materials

- ☐ Whiteboard or Smart board for taking notes as a class

Standards Map

This lesson aligns with CASEL Competencies, National Health Education Standards, International Society for Technology in Education Standards, when applicable, and Common Core State Standards. Please refer to the [Standards Map](#) for more information.

Lesson Objective

Students will:

- Understand the various sources of responsibility.
- Categorize different responsibilities.

Teacher Connection/Self-Care

Sometimes it helps to think about our responsibilities through a variety of lenses: rights vs. responsibilities, personal and professional boundaries, and sources of responsibility. Each one gives us a new perspective about what is a responsibility and what is not. For example, you have a right to a safe, positive work environment. As such, you are responsible for contributing to that safe, positive environment. What is your school's staff culture like? What are teacher relationships like? What is the tenor of the staff break room? Are teachers and administrators on the same page? What responsibilities do you have as part of that community to ensure a safe, positive working environment? What about your personal and professional boundaries at work? If you have students who have personal struggles and, consequently, bring their aggression, sadness, or frustrations to your room, what is your responsibility? Your responsibility is to teach those kids and ensure a classroom environment conducive to learning for all students. It is not your responsibility to "fix" their home situation or personally assess and address their mental or emotional health issues. Set a personal and professional boundary by not taking their issues personally and seek other school professionals or public services to help your students in the way they need to be helped. What about knowing where your responsibilities come from? Do you know why you do what you do? Have you created responsibilities for yourself or were they given to you by someone else? Knowing the source of your responsibilities can help you prioritize them and be more efficient. Take some time today to evaluate your rights and responsibilities, to set some boundaries you need to set, and to understand why you do what you do.



Share

5-7 minutes

Last week we talked mostly about self-discipline and how that connects to responsibility. How many people worked on your self-discipline goal last week? Does anyone want to share what they did? (Invite student responses.)



Inspire

3-5 minutes

This week we are going to look at the different sources of responsibility. Sometimes, especially when you are young, it might feel like you have responsibilities simply because adults enjoy telling you what to do. Right? Does it ever feel like you have responsibilities but you aren't really sure why?

It turns out, we all have a number of responsibilities and we have them for a number of reasons. In fact, we sometimes have responsibilities that we might not even realize are responsibilities. What are some responsibilities that you have? This could be at home, at school, in the community? (Let students "popcorn" their responses, speaking them out at random and letting their answers build off of one another.)

Good! See, we have a number of responsibilities, but where do those responsibilities come from?



Empower

15 minutes

According to The Center for Civic Education, there are eight sources of responsibility meaning, eight things that call for us to be responsible for something. These are promises, assignments, appointments, occupation, laws, custom, citizenship, and moral principles.

As you say these (or before the class starts), write these eight categories on the board in eight vertical columns.

Examine these sources. Let's define or provide examples for what types of responsibilities might fall into each category.

Have students brainstorm what each category means/examples. Here are some examples to guide you, adapted from the [Center for Civic Education](#):

- 1. Promise:** When you verbally or contractually agree to do something. For example, promising to pick someone up for school, agreeing to pay someone back if you borrow money, or not telling a secret that you promised you would keep.
- 2. Assignments:** When you are given a task to complete. For example, school homework and daily chores at home that have been "assigned" to you.
- 3. Appointments:** When you have agreed to a schedule, to show up for a meeting, or have been given a task within a group, you have been "appointed" to a certain position. For example, going to the doctor, attending a school meeting, or being the student council president if appointed to do so.

4. **Occupation:** When you have agreed to do a job for pay. For example, if you work for the local newspaper delivering papers, you have a responsibility to show up, get the papers, and complete the delivery. Or, if you are babysitting, you must fulfill the responsibilities associated with that job, such as showing up on time, taking care of the kids, keeping the house clean and safe, and following the rules left by the parents.
5. **Laws:** These are the rules that all citizens of a state or country must follow. Everyone has the responsibility to follow the laws set by the governing bodies. No one is above the law. For example, following the laws of the road while driving, following the laws related to school attendance, and adhering to the laws established to keep the peace.
6. **Customs:** These are the “unwritten” rules that those part of the shared custom have a responsibility to follow because they have evolved as expected norms overtime. For example, waiting patiently in line, bringing a gift to a birthday party, giving an elderly person your seat on a crowded bus, being on time for appointments, etc.
7. **Citizenship:** These are the responsibilities we have just because we live in a certain community, state, or country. For example, as U.S. citizens, we have a responsibility to vote and participate in the democratic process.
8. **Morals/Principles:** These are the understood rules related to “right and wrong,” which can be sometimes hard to define. In general, each community has a shared understanding of right and wrong. For example, everyone should be treated with respect, everyone should have equal opportunity for success, and everyone should treat others they way they want to be treated.

So, when you think back to the responsibilities we listed at the beginning of class, where do you think most of your responsibilities come from?
Invite student response.

As you get older, how do you think your sources of responsibility will change?
Invite student responses.



Reflect

5-7 minutes

As you go through this week, think about what you are responsible for and why. What is its source? Also think about what might happen to someone else if you don't fulfill your responsibility. It turns out that most of us share a number of responsibilities and it takes all of us to fulfill them. Some are unique just to us (I, for example, have the responsibility to come to school each day to teach all of you), but many responsibilities we all need to do together. This can help us have the self-discipline we need to complete our responsibilities, knowing that we share them with others and that others are counting on us to do our part.

What Are The Responsibilities?

Scenario 1:

Cale is in the library and is studying for the geography quiz that he has next hour when Devon and Maya join him at the table. Devon promptly gets out his quiz from last period. It is the same geography quiz that Kale is studying for. Maya is in Cale's section and has the quiz next hour, too. She starts looking over Devon's quiz and answers and making notes in her notebook. Cale knows she is cheating and feels uncomfortable. Devon asks Cale if he wants to see the quiz, too.

Scenario 2:

Danny told Finn that he would go to his birthday party on Friday, but then he got an invitation to go to a slumber party with Noah, who he is better friends with. Noah has a lot of cool things at his house and his mom always lets them stay up late, watch movies, and drink soda. He would really rather go to Noah's house than to Finn's house.

Scenario 3:

Maria gets a ride from her aunt every morning. She is supposed to meet her aunt at 7:30 am at the end of the driveway so she can get in quickly and they can keep moving. It's a 20-minute drive to school and her aunt needs to get to work by 8:00 am. There is no time to waste! Last night Maria was up late studying and watching YouTube videos. She is exhausted when her alarm goes off in the morning and she feels like hitting snooze.

For each of the above scenarios, answer the following questions:

- Who has responsibilities in the situation?
- What are those responsibilities?
- To whom are the responsibilities owed?
- Where did the responsibilities come from?
- What might happen if the person or persons fulfilled the responsibilities? What if the person failed to fulfill them?