

Lesson Name:

A Gratitude Practice

Student Objectives:

- Student will be able to identify things in his/her life to add to their gratitude journal.
- Student will have created a time/prompt to fill out a gratitude journal daily.

Educator Preparation:

- Be familiar with the following lesson.
- Be prepared to share examples of your gratitudes.
- Have either the Gratitude Prompts printed out for students, or a journal/notebook for them to keep their gratitudes.

Introduction:

Hey, again! It's Miss Emery! I am so excited to show you today how you can put your attitude of gratitude into a daily practice! When we do this, we increase your happiness levels and change your brain!

Instruction:

Here's what you are going to need today: a writing utensil and something to write on. I think it would be best to find a journal or a notebook or a binder that you can keep loose-leaf paper in.

Allow students a chance to go grab these things. Let them have choice over what they use. If needed, you can print the Gratitude Prompts, but it is very beneficial to give the student ownership over their “journal.”

Today, I am going to teach you all about my favorite gratitude practice that I do daily. It's called a gratitude journal. I know some of you may have just sighed really loudly or rolled your eyes, but hear me out! This practice, and maybe this sounds cliché, but really, truly, honestly has completely changed my outlook on life.

I first heard about gratitude journals from Mrs. Strobel, and I definitely thought, “Really? You're telling me to be happier all I have to do is journal?!” I was definitely a skeptic, too. But, trust me on this, this journal has exponentially helped me implement my attitude of gratitude into every aspect of my life.

In the next part of the video, Miss Emery is sharing her own personal gratitude journal. If you have a journal of your own, you should use yours! If you have not started this gratitude practice yet, still show the students the journal that you picked and tell them that you are also dedicated to your attitude of gratitude. Regardless, tell the students why you picked the journal you did and share your thoughts.

Here's the deal, guys, if I'm going to sit on this video and talk the talk, you better believe I'm gonna walk the walk! Just to prove to you that I really believe in this practice, I am going to be sharing my own, personal gratitude journal with you. I normally do not let anyone see my gratitude journal. I keep lots of things in this journal that are personal, like my affirmations (which you will learn about too!), my devotions and prayers, my to-do lists. It's not something that I really put online usually, but for you, I'm going to let you in just a little bit so you know just how real this is.

I picked this journal for really one reason. I saw it on the shelf, and thought, I just have to have it! Here it is... it came with a cat sticker! If you know anything about me, it's that I **love** cats. It makes me so happy to see my cat sticker everyday. So, before we jump into what to put into our journals, let's go over the best practices for how and when to make it happen.

Step number one, find a journal that makes you excited to write in it everyday. Maybe pause the video now and go grab a different one than the one you already have. If you've only got a notebook or a binder, no worries!! Grab some pretty markers and decorate it!

Pause and allow students to grab a different journal or decorate it if they would like.

Speaking of pretty markers, you may want to grab some of those too. That's my favorite part about gratitude journals—you get to make it your own! It's a time for you to be creative. Of course, writing in just a plain pencil or pen will get the job done, but I love to add a little bit of Miss Emery flair everyday.

Pause and allow students to gather supplies if needed.

Now that you're ready to use your journal, let's talk about when you will use your journal. This needs to become a habit, and in order to make it a habit, it needs to become part of your routine so you may need to prompt yourself. I keep my journal on my kitchen table, and every morning while I have my breakfast, I fill out my gratitude journal. It has become just a part of me. My brain knows at this point breakfast equals gratitude. But, it doesn't have to be the same for you. You can do this whenever it works for you. Maybe keep it on your bedside table so you can do it very first thing when you wake up or right before you go to bed. Maybe set an alarm on your phone to remind you to do it at a certain time of day. Maybe take it to school to do during lunch or study hall to give you a healthy brain break! You decide what's best for you.

What I want you to do next is at the top of the very first page of your journal, write the following prompt: "I am dedicated to filling out my journal..." Here's an example: "I am dedicated to filling out my journal at 7 PM every night. I have set an alarm to remind me." or "I am dedicated to filling out my journal as soon as I wake up every morning. I have placed it on my nightstand to remind me." Make sure that you have this reminder! It has to be a consistent habit for it to work.

The last and final step is write it down. No really, use your journal and write it on paper. It makes all the difference. Of course it's great to have positive thoughts, but it is so important to make sure that you are writing them out so you can see your accumulated gratitude increase day to day!

Interaction:

Okay, here we go. Let's write our first set of gratitude. These can be anything, big or small, but I want them to be detailed and relevant to you! Here are some examples:

In the video, Miss Emery flips through her journal to read some of the things that she wrote in her journal. This would be a great time to share YOUR gratitude if you have them.

- Sunshine and being able to workout outside
- Conversation with my friend Hannah about her new gym
- A healthy and happy family
- Being productive and having time to help others
- Of course, my cats!

I list five gratitudes every morning, but don't feel like you have to. Sometimes it is hard to think of things to write down when you are first starting this practice. So, I have come up with some categories to help you think. Make it a goal to write down at least three a day.

In the video, Miss Emery opens her journal and does this activity along with the students. Feel free to come up with your own, but it would be beneficial to give an example for your students as you go along.

Here's what you should write first: The date! After that, write the words "I am thankful." Write them out. I like to put emphasis on the word thankful! If you are using the printed gratitude prompts, notice I have left a blank for the word thankful. This is the most important word, so I want you to write it.

Here are those categories I was talking about: think of one person, one place, and one thing that you are thankful for each day. First, let's be people. Today I am thankful for... all of you! Seriously, I don't know your names or where you're from, but I am so thankful that you have made a promise to yourself to start a gratitude practice! You will be happier and making the world a better place. We need more people like you. Who are you grateful for?

Allow students to fill in who they are grateful for.

Next is the place. Now this can be a specific place if you want it to be, like your house or your favorite vacation spot, but I sometimes think of it as more of an environmental category. Something going on in the world around me. Today, I am thankful for the cardinals that have been flying around my house. They are so pretty! It's so nice to see a bright red bird coming out of such a gloomy winter. What are you thankful for?

Allow students to fill in what place they are thankful for.

Finally, we have the category thing. This can be anything, big or small! Today I am thankful for my colorful pens. They allow me to be creative and really get my feelings out onto paper. They encourage me to write in my journal every day. What are you thankful for?

Allow students to fill in what thing they are thankful for.

Closure:

And it's as easy as that! Today, we learned how to make gratitude a habit, which will help us increase our daily happiness levels! Be sure to keep track of all of the things that you are grateful for over the next few days!

Activity:

Make it a point over the next few days to make sure your students have written down their gratitudes. Ask them what they have included. In your daily lives, maybe mention things that would be good to add to a gratitude journal. Example: "Wow! Dad is cooking my favorite dinner and it smells delicious!" Is that something that you would want to write down in your gratitude journal?

Over time, your student will be able to think of three things to be grateful for pretty quickly and easily. Challenge them to level up to writing five a day or 10 a day.