



THE VALUE OF MINDFULNESS

KEY STANDARDS

CASEL Competencies: Self-awareness (1.a,b,e), Self-management (2.a,b,c).
Common Core Standards: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY, W.4.2, 4.4, SL.4.1, L.4.1, 4.2, 4.3; W.5.2, 5.4, SL.5.1, L.5.1, 5.2, 5.3.



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will...

- Understand the meaning of mindfulness.
- Discover how practicing mindfulness can help when they are feeling anxious or stressed.
- Learn different mindfulness techniques they can use.

VOCABULARY

MINDFULNESS: Being intentionally aware of your feelings and your senses; the ability to step back and check in with yourself about what you are experiencing and how it is making you feel.

THE LESSON

1. Ask students to think about times they may have felt anxious or worried. Don't have students comment about this aloud. Simply give them a moment to think of such instances.
2. Tell students that it is normal for people to feel anxious and worried at times. Nearly everyone experiences these feelings! Explain that "mindfulness" is when we pay attention to what's happening inside us (like our thoughts and feelings) and outside us (like what's around us), without quickly judging or getting stressed. In other words, it's being aware in a calm way. Share these simplified definitions with students:

MINDFULNESS: Being intentionally aware of your feelings and your senses; the ability to step back and check in with yourself about what you are experiencing and how it is making you feel.

THE LESSON, continued

3. Screen the video. Then, discuss the key points:
 - The world we live in is full of so many things that demand our attention, that are stressful or even exciting! That's why it's important to let ourselves relax now and then.
 - Mindfulness—the ability to be fully present, to be calmly aware of yourself, your body, your surroundings, and to take it all in peacefully—is an ability we all possess. It is more readily available to us with practice!
 - Mindfulness exercises, like focusing on our breathing, can help us relax and not feel so overwhelmed by everything around us.
4. Next, have your students practice the mindfulness exercise in the video. Start by asking them to get into a comfortable position. Sitting on the floor with their legs crossed works well. Next, ask students to close their eyes. Then, lead them through this breathing exercise: *Breathe in for a count of four seconds, hold for four seconds, breathe out for four seconds.* Have them do this as you keep count. Repeat at least three times.

ACTIVITY

Students will reflect on the mindfulness activity you just conducted. Be sure they take some time with this writing assignment. There is an (optional) second mindfulness activity included too. If you don't have time to do it this Activity in class, use it for homework or, save it for next class.

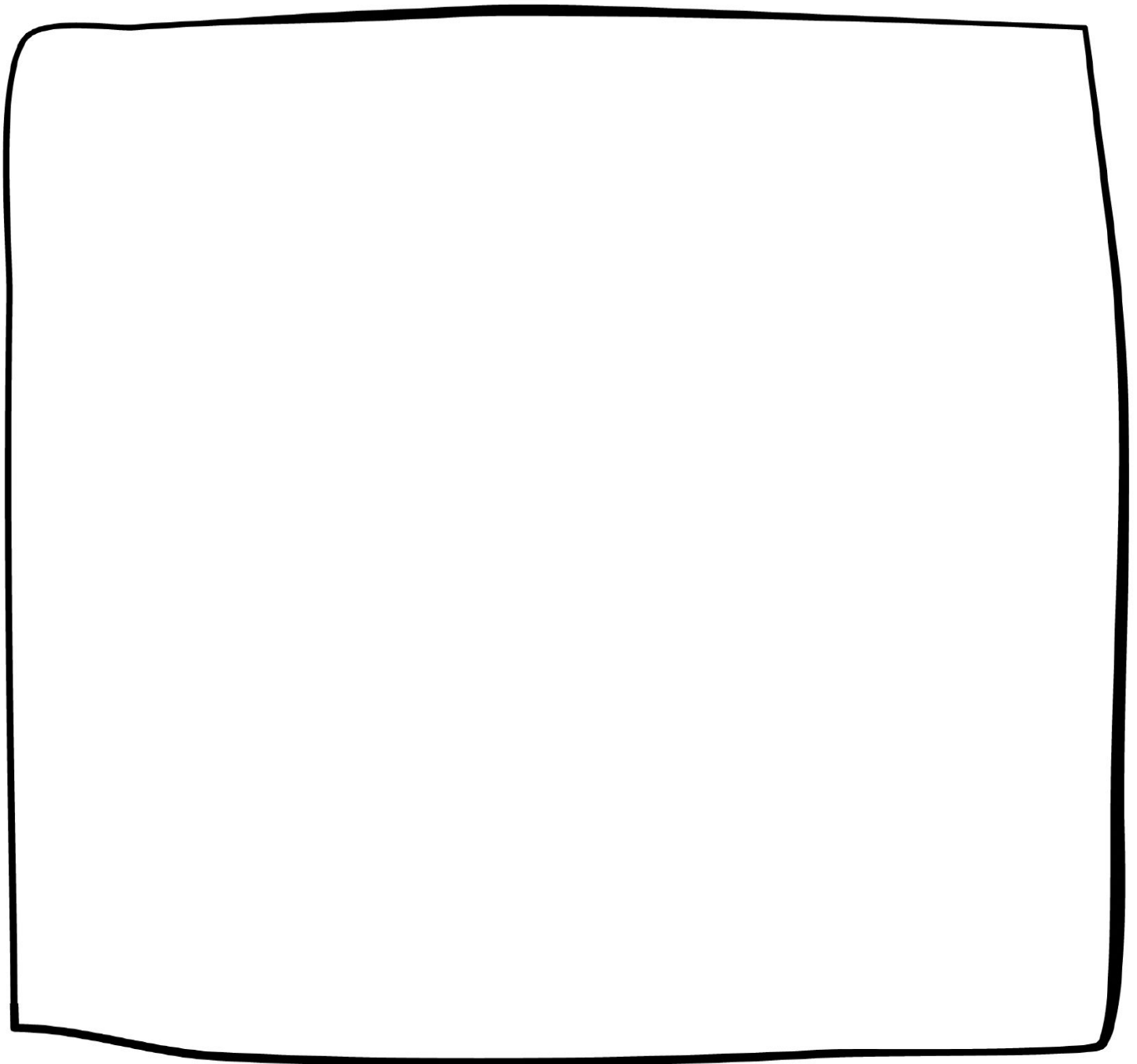
GOAL

Students understand the value of mindfulness and will learn mindfulness strategies that they can implement in their own lives when they begin to feel anxious or overwhelmed.

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Optional Additional Activity:

Another mindfulness exercise that can help when you are feeling stressed or anxious is drawing. Anyone can draw! All you need is a piece of paper (like this one) and anything to draw with (pencil, crayon, pen, etc.). Think of a place that makes you feel peaceful and happy and draw it. As you draw, pay close attention to the colors, shapes, strokes you use. Stay focused on your work until your drawing is completed.



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Describe how the drawing exercise made you feel:

As you focused on your drawing, did you forget about other things in your life? Explain:
