



MindUP Booster Lesson

Lesson 3: Mindful Senses

Unit 2: Lessons 4 – 9

Grades 3 – 5

Length of Lesson: 30 minutes

Summary of Unit 2

- Lesson 4: Mindful Listening
- Lesson 5: Mindful Seeing
- Lesson 6: Mindful Smelling
- Lesson 7: Mindful Tasting
- Lesson 8: Mindful Movement I
- Lesson 9: Mindful Movement II
- **Objective of Unit 2:** By mindfully observing their senses, students will become adept at sharpening their attention and using sensory experiences to enhance memory, problem solving, relationships, creativity, and physical performance. Comparing and contrasting excited and calm states of the body helps students make important connections between physical sensations and stress levels.

Lesson Overview

1. Anchor Breathing – 3 min.
2. Mindful Movement – 5 min.
3. Anchor Breathing – 1 min.
4. Mindful Listening: Word Recall Activity – 4 min.
5. Mindful Feeling: Mystery Balloon Activity – 15 min.
6. (Optional) Mindful Seeing – 3 min.

Lesson Materials and Preparation

Materials:

- Paper (2 piece per student)
- Pencil (1 per student)
- List of 10 recall words
- White board markers
- Note card (1 per student)
- Chime
- 3 sets of 7 mystery balloons (each color has a different item inside)
- List of items in 7 mystery balloons (each balloon that is the same color has the same item inside)

Preparation:

- **Mindful Movement Activity:** students will need to stand and walk in place at/behind/near their desk, please ensure space is clear.
- **Mystery Balloon Activity:** plan to divide students into groups of 5 (*can ask teacher if class has preexisting groups*).



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Did You Know? (Grades 3 – 5)

Mindful Awareness (Senses)

- Mindful activities help train the prefrontal cortex to pay attention, absorb details, and think clearly. Having a calm state of mind can increase attentiveness, engagement, competence, and achievement, which are only possible when a learner's brain is in a receptive state, allowing for calm and mindful response.
- **Mindful Listening:** helps us choose which sounds to focus our attention on and helps us to be thoughtful in the way we hear and respond to the words of others. Assists with following directions, resolving conflicts with discussion, building friendships, listening critically to news and media.
- **Mindful Seeing:** our ability to visually distinguish details assists in developing descriptive vocabulary and enables us to better observe ourselves, others, and our surroundings to more fully enjoy and learn from them.
- **Mindful Smelling:** using our sense of smell to be more aware of our environment allows us to acutely observe our world and sharpen our memory. Practicing focused awareness with the sense of smell, continues to broaden our ability to observe and enjoy our experiences without jumping too quickly to judgement.
- **Mindful Tasting:** slowing down to savor our food and notice flavor, texture, and temperature allows us to taste food mindfully. Mindful tasting helps students identify discrete taste sensations, build descriptive skills, and approach food with a healthy outlook.

Mindful Awareness (Movement)

- Students learn simple self-regulation skills by controlling their breathing and heart rate. Developing an understanding of the brain-body relationships helps students become better able to identify the signals their body is sending and to manage their emotions and behaviors in response.
- **Mindful Movement:** being alert to the sensations of the body, whether we are active or at rest, is a fundamental step in increasing mindful awareness. Our body gives us signals we can easily recognize to help us monitor physical and mental states such as exertion and stress.
- **Builds self-regulation:** by participating in balancing activities students deepen their brain-body connection and work to control their physical and emotional responses to remain steady.
- **Strengthens decision making skills:** working on physical balance is shown to have positive effects on our brain's health by reinforcing higher-order thinking skills and emotional control.



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INTRODUCTION & ANCHOR BREATHING (3 min.)

SAY

Hi everyone. My name is _____ and welcome to another MindUP lesson. First, we will start with a mindful breathing exercise where we choose a breathing anchor. If you remember from the first lesson, an anchor is something that you choose to focus on in here and now to help us ignore distractions and turn on our mindful bodies.

SAY

The goal is for you to find a breathing anchor by noticing where you feel your breath most easily – beneath your nose, in your chest, or inside your stomach. When we pay attention to the feeling of breathing where we notice it most, it helps us to relax and focus on the present moment. We are going to start with a body scan – “Feel your eyelids close (or look down at the floor), feel your shoulders relax, feel your hands touching your knees, feel your legs touching the chair.”

Notice what it feels like to breathe in and out right now. Let’s take 2 breaths together. Place one finger under your nose and feel your breath going in and out (**model placing your finger under your nose**). Focus on the feeling of your breath on your finger. Let’s take 2 more breaths like that.

Place your hand on your chest, above your heart (**model placing your hand above your heart**). Focus on your hand moving when you breathe. Let’s take 3 breaths together here.

Now place your hand on your stomach (**model placing your hand on your stomach**) and feel the movement of your breathing there. Focus on the rise and fall of your stomach. Let’s take 3 more breaths together.

You can place your hands back on your knees and breathe naturally. Notice where you felt the movement of your breath the most. Silently decide if it was just beneath your nose, in your chest, or your stomach. If you need to check again to see where it’s easiest to feel your breathing right now, go ahead. **Pause and wait for everyone to settle before you continue.**

The place you have identified where you feel your breath the most, will be your breathing anchor. That’s the place I’ll be talking about when I use the word “anchor”. We’re going to use this anchor for the rest of the activity.

Keeping our eyes closed let’s take 2 breaths. Notice what it feels like to breathe in and out right now. For the next 3 breaths, focus your attention on your breathing anchor, whether that is beneath your nose, in your chest, or your stomach.

See if you can keep your body relaxed and focus your attention on your anchor at the same time for 3 more breaths. This is how we rest in the feeling of the movement of our breath. Let’s open our eyes.

You can return to your breathing anchor anytime during the day to take a mindful moment and turn on your mindful bodies. Now let’s practice our mindful senses by doing some fun activities.



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MINDFUL MOVEMENT ACTIVITY (5 min.)

ACTIVITY OBJECTIVE: Perform actions mindfully to become aware of the mind-body connection.

PREPARATION:

- 1 piece of paper and writing utensil per student
- Students will need to stand and walk in place at/behind/near their desk, please ensure space is clear.

SAY

Now that we are aware of the sensations in our bodies while we are resting, let's see what our bodies feel like in motion. We write our names very often and we do it without much thought. Let's slow down writing our names **so much that we notice every movement, every touch of the pencil on our fingers, and the weight and touch of the pencil on the page.** Let's start by picking up the pencil and feeling the weight in our fingers. Think about how heavy or light the pencil feels. I'm going to ask you to very mindfully write your name **the slowest you have ever written your name.** Before we start, let's all take a deep breath together. You may start. While you are writing your name, **if you notice you are moving fast, take a breath to slow down or focus on your breathing anchor.**

- How did it feel to write extremely slow? Did anyone struggle to write slowly? Why was that?
- Did anyone pay more attention to the shapes of letters in your name?
- Did anyone notice their handwriting looked different than normal?
- Did anyone use their breathing anchor to remain present while writing?

Now that we took time to be aware of our smaller body movements, let's explore being mindful in our larger movements. To begin, we will stand-up in super slow-motion when I say, "Stand". **Before you stand you may notice your muscles and body getting ready. Your body is an amazing machine with muscles, bones, tendons, and a nervous system that sends messages to all these parts of the body. As we slowly stand up, see if you can be aware of every tilt, every bend, and every muscle contracting and relaxing.** Now, slowly stand.

- What was it like to stand up so slowly? What did you notice in your movements?
- Did anyone have a hard time waiting to stand?
- Was anyone distracted by the idea of standing up that they couldn't focus on what I was saying?

Let's take a deep breath together. We're going to try to pay attention to the way our bodies feel by walking in place. We will do this by slowly lifting one foot at a time. **Let's begin by lifting one foot as we breathe in and letting the foot fall as we breathe out. Standing in place, notice how your body feels as you breathe in and out, lifting and dropping your feet. Continue lifting one foot and then the other, feeling the ground beneath each foot.** Let's do that about 5 times. Please bring your body back to standing still. **Thank you, you may take a seat.**

- What was that like, was it hard? Why? How can being more aware of our movements help?
- What are some ways that you can use mindful movements in your everyday life?

Great ideas. **Next time you are walking around school, try to focus on every small movement like your feet touching the ground. This can help us be more aware of our bodies and the movements that we make.**



MindUP Booster Lesson

ANCHOR BREATHING (1 min.)

SAY

Let's take a moment to go back to our breathing anchor to calm our bodies after all that excitement. Your anchor was either beneath your nose, in your chest, or stomach. Take a moment to find your breathing anchor again. **See if you can keep your body relaxed and focus your attention on your anchor at the same time.**

Notice what it feels like to breathe in and out right now. Let's try this for 3 breaths together. Great job, now I think we are back to our mindful bodies.

Who can share with us where they found their breathing anchor – near the nose, in the chest, or in the stomach? **Pause, allow for a few students to share.**

MINDFUL LISTENING: WORD RECALL ACTIVITY (4 min.)

ACTIVITY OBJECTIVE: Concentrate on a specific sound to heighten sensory awareness and use mindful listening to practice memorization. The students will recall the words individually.

PREPARATION:

- 1 piece of paper and pencil
- Chime
- List of recall words

SAY

Let's practice mindful listening. I will read you a list of words and ask you to remember as many of them as you can. When I ring the chime, you will have 30 seconds to write down as many words as you can remember. Please do not write anything down until you hear the chime. When you hear the chime a second time, please put your pencils down and stop writing.

Let's turn on our mindful bodies by **sitting with our backs straight and closing our eyes**. Listen carefully to the words that I say. **(Slowly read the following list of words 1 – 2x)**. When you hear the chime, you may begin writing down the words you remember. **(Ring the chime. Wait 30 seconds, and then ring the chime again to end the activity)**. Thank you, everyone please put your pencils down.

Now, I will reread the list of words. Put a check mark next to every word that you remembered correctly. **(Reread the list of words)**. Count the number of words that you remembered correctly.

- Who wants to share how many words they remembered? *Wow! Great memory everyone.*
- Was it hard to remember the words? Why is it important to focus on listening carefully?
- When is a time that we can practice or use mindful listening in our everyday lives?

Listening carefully and focusing when others are talking helps us remember things more easily. For example, if we pay careful attention to our teacher in class, we will have an easier time remembering what we learned.



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MINDFUL FEELING: MYSTERY BALLOON ACTIVITY (15 min.)

ACTIVITY OBJECTIVE: Students will use their sense of touch to identify objects and increase their mindful observation skills to identify to new features of common items.

PREPARATION:

- 1-2 sets of 7 mystery balloons (*set up in front of the class; determine if you want 1-2 stations*)
- List of items in 7 mystery balloons (*each balloon with the same color has the same item inside*)
- 1 note card and pencil per student.
- Whiteboard markers (*Optional: use the whiteboard to write down student guesses*)
- Divide students into groups of 5 (*can ask teacher if class has preexisting groups*)
- Have the students that are waiting for their turn or are done guessing practice anchor breathing

SAY

I will pass out one note card. Please do not draw or write on them until we begin the activity (***Pass out the note cards***). These mystery balloons each have a mystery object inside. We will use our sense of touch to guess what is in each balloon. You will get an opportunity to come to the front of the room and **touch each balloon with your eyes closed and using only one hand**. You will silently guess what you think is inside then go back to your seat and write down what you think is inside. When I call your group, you will quietly come to the front of the classroom to line up to take turns exploring each balloon for 30 seconds. **Remember to be gentle with the balloon, we do not want to rip them.**

Pay attention to how the object feels. **Is it hard or soft? Big or small? Are there any specific features that stand out to you? Does it make sound when you move it?** Quietly go back to your seat and write on your note card what you think each object is or how it felt. Please flip over your note card after you write down your guesses and do not say your guess aloud because we want everyone to guess for themselves. While you are waiting for your turn or done guessing please **practice your anchor breathing (have a co-docent/teacher provide support to students as needed for anchor breathing)**.

Group 1, please come up and form a line behind one set of balloons. One at a time, feel each balloon for no more than 30 seconds **with your eyes closed and using only one hand**. Pay attention to how the object feels and think about what might be inside. Okay, Group 1 please return to your seats and quietly write down your guesses. Group 2, you can come up now. *Repeat for all groups.*

- Who wants to describe what they felt inside the balloons without saying what they think the object is? *Optional: write down descriptive words on the whiteboard.*
- Does anyone want to guess what was inside the Red balloon? Blue balloon? Yellow balloon? Green balloon? Purple balloon? Orange balloon? Pink balloon? (***Option: if students are having a hard time guessing you can give them prompts or share the list and ask them to guess which item might be in each color balloon.***)

Great guesses! I will share the items in each balloon and raise your hand if you guessed correctly (***Read the list of items in the balloons***). Great job! When we can't see objects, we have to pay more attention to our other senses to know what we are experiencing. This helps improve our mindful awareness and concentration.



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(OPTIONAL ACTIVITY) MINDFUL SEEING ACTIVITY (3 min.)

ACTIVITY OBJECTIVE: Students will cultivate attention skills, become aware of distractions, and learn to return attention to a single-pointed awareness again and again.

PREPARATION:

- Students will use posters, letters, or pictures around the classroom to focus their eyes and attention.
- You will have students bring their attention to a single spot such as a ball or a dot on the wall.
- Please try to minimize distractions during this activity.

SAY:

During the mystery balloon activity, we used senses other than sight to identify objects. Now, we will build our attention muscles by using our mindful eyes. Look around the room and find a small image or object to focus on. Make sure it's not another person or something that is moving.

Now that you have your spot, focus your eyes and keep them glued to that spot for **a whole minute**. If you find yourself distracted, take a deep breath or focus on your anchor breathing and then refocus your attention to the spot. **Acknowledging when we are distracted is part of being mindful and we can practice refocusing our attention in this activity. (Time a minute and tell them when they can stop).**

Well done. What did you notice about trying to pay attention to your one spot? *Allow a few students to answer.*

- Did your eyes get distracted?
- What was it that distracted you?
- Was it hard to focus again after being distracted?
- How did you refocus?
- Did anyone use their anchor breathing to help them stay focused?

When we want to focus on something, it is easy to become distracted. We can use mindfulness to notice when we get distracted and bring our attention back to the focus point.

- What are some examples of times you get distracted? *Allow a few students to answer.*

Great! The more you practice refocusing when you get distracted, the easier it becomes. Practice mindfully refocusing your attention when you are doing homework, eating dinner, and talking to your friends and family.

WRAP UP & CLEAN UP

SAY:

Those activities were fun! **Who wants to share something that they learned today?**

Today we were able to practice moving, listening, feeling **[and seeing- optional activity]** mindfully. You sharpened your senses, and this can help you with memory, problem solving, and concentration. Try paying more attention to your surroundings and your senses. Thank you for having us in your classroom today! See you next time!



MindUP Booster Lesson

List of Recall Words

1. Summer
2. Car
3. Beach
4. House
5. Pet
6. Fruit
7. Clock
8. Winter
9. Sleep
10. Book

List of items in Mystery Balloons

1. **White Balloon:** Popcorn Kernels
2. **Red Balloon:** Dried Rice Grains
3. **Yellow Balloon:** Salt
4. **Blue Balloon:** Marbles
5. **Black Balloon:** Cotton Balls
6. **Multi-colored Balloon:** Shredded Paper
7. **Pink Balloon:** Plastic Wrap

References for this lesson:

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