



# MindUP Booster Lesson

## Lesson A: Mindful Observation

Grades TK – 1

**Length of Lesson:** 20 – 30 minutes

**Objective of Lesson 1:** Students define mindfulness and practice anchor activities to help them remain in the present moment and deal with challenges during the day.

### Summary of Unit 1 – Lessons delivered by teacher

**Objective of Unit 1:** Students gain self-regulation skills and the capacity to absorb information by learning about the brain and calming strategies.

- **Lesson 1** – Students learn about the three parts of their brains that help them think and respond to stress.
- **Lesson 2** – Students compare two types of behavior: mindful (reflective and purposeful) and unmindful (reflexive and unaware) and identify the parts of the brain responsible for controlling each type.
- **Lesson 3** – This lesson introduces daily strategies for calming down and paying attention. Students begin to learn ways to help their brains work more mindfully.

### Lesson Overview

1. Exploring Mindful Awareness: 3 – 5 min.
2. Mindful Owl: 5 – 7 min.
3. Sheep Skin: 5 min.
4. Focused Arrow: 5 – 7 min.
5. Wrap Up – 2 min.

### Lesson Materials and Preparation

#### Materials:

- Little Renegades card: Mindful Owl & Sheep Skin
- Option 1: Ask the teacher to borrow cards
- Option 2: Use the visual aid provided in supply bin

**Preparation:** Determine sitting/standing location for each activity – on carpet or at desk.

#### For Parent Review: Facts from MindUP lessons 1 – 3

- 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 reaction 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.



## MindUP Booster Lesson

### EXPLORING MINDFUL AWARENESS (3 – 5 min.)

Hello everyone, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and today is our first MindUP booster lesson for this year! Let's start the lesson by talking about what being mindful means. **Does anyone have ideas of how we can be mindful or what mindfulness means?**

Wow! Those are great answers and some great suggestions on how to be mindful. **Mindfulness is about exploring/knowing what is happening inside and around you. Mindfulness helps us by training our attention to what is happening right now.** These are skills that help us in school, in friendships and managing our feelings.

For today's lesson we will do a few activities to help us **develop our mindfulness muscles** so we can use these skills easier when we need them. **Does anyone have any ideas how using our mindfulness skills can help us in school/home?** I love all your answers! **Mindfulness can help us in many ways and include** - calming ourselves down, pausing and taking mindful action, focusing in school and being aware of our feelings and what is going on around us. Just like any muscle, the more we practice our mindfulness muscles, the stronger they get!

### MINDFUL OWL (5 – 7 min.)

**ACTIVITY OBJECTIVE:** Students practice intentional breathing to help them anchor themselves to the present moment and deal with challenges during the day.

**PREPARATION:** Determine if you want the students standing on the carpet or behind their desks.

We will begin with **mindful breathing**. We will pretend we are **quiet and mindful owls!** Before we begin, we will need to make sure we are all standing in our own personal space. **I am going to ask everyone stand up on the carpet/behind their desks and push in their chair.** Please make sure you have your own **personal space** – which means your hands and arms are not touching your neighbor.

Now that we are standing, we need to move a little because we will be moving our arms out to the sides during this activity. **I am going to ask that you step farther away from your neighbor either to the side or take a step back** – your teacher and I will go around the room to help. **Take time to complete this step.** Great – we all look ready to go! **I am going to stand in the front of the room and do these movements with you.**

Let's **stand like an owl with our arms resting at our sides like big wings. Breathe in and raise your big wings up to a giant "T" position. Exhale and drop your wings back** down to your sides. Next, **inhale and bring your wings up to your ears, exhale and bring them back to your sides.** Let's repeat these moves 3 more times. You are all great mindful owls – you can return to your seat.

#### Who can share with me:

- What does it feel like when you breathe in? Breathe out?
- What did you think about when we were being mindful owls?
- Did it help to move our arms at the same time as breathing?

**When we focus on intentional breathing it helps us keep our minds on the present moment and handle any frustrating feelings or problems in a calm way.** If you are having a rough moment you can go back to being a mindful owl and take a few breaths to calm down.



## MindUP Booster Lesson

### SHEEP SKIN (5 min.)

**ACTIVITY OBJECTIVE:** Students tune into their sense of touch to practice mindful senses and awareness.

**PREPARATION:** Determine if you want the students standing on the carpet or behind their desks.

Now that we have calmed down our bodies with a breathing exercise it is time to tune into one of our five senses.

**Who can help me list the five senses?** Yes, you are right – sight, sound, taste, smell, touch. We are going to practice checking in with these senses in a mindful way today. We will focus on sight and touch today.

We will **remain sitting** for this activity (on the carpet or in their seats) so let's get comfortable first. Sit with your back straight and your hands resting in your lap. Let's start by **paying attention to the clothes we are wearing**.

**Quietly raise your hand if you are wearing:** a shirt, shorts, pants, tennis shoes, sandals, boots, socks, a jacket, etc. Now focus on your skin and **quietly think about how the clothes you are wearing feel on your skin** – are they soft? Scratchy? Warm? Cold/Cooler?

**Wiggle your toes** and think about how your shoe/sandal/boot/sock feels on your toes – Soft? Itchy? Warm? Cold?

**Let's pay attention to what we else might be touching our skin** – the chair/carpet/desk. What does that feel like?

You did a great job tuning into your sense of touch.

**Who can share with me:**

- What did you feel on your skin?
- Did it feel soft? Scratchy? Warm? Cold?
- Does anyone feel different in their clothes/skin now that focused on our sense of touch?

**Focusing on our sense of touch can help us during the day if we are getting distracted and need to find a way to pay attention again.** You can play this game with yourself anytime during the day when you need to help yourself pay attention again.



## MindUP Booster Lesson

### FOCUSED ARROW (5 – 7 min.)

**ACTIVITY OBJECTIVE:** Students practice focused attention and gaining a greater appreciation for things that surround them in their daily lives.

**PREPARATION:** Determine if you want the students sitting on the carpet or at their desks.

To end today's lesson, we will do a mindful observation activity that brings us to the present moment and helps us practice focusing our attention. **Who can tell me when having focused attention can help?** Those are great ideas! **Using our focused attention can help when following directions, learning in school, listening to our parents and playing with our friends.**

**Let's start by having everyone sitting** criss-cross applesauce on the carpet/in their seats. Make sure you have personal space between you and your neighbor – that means your arms and legs are in their own space. **Let's take three deep breaths in together – slowly breathe in through your nose and slowly breathe out.** Do that two more times on your own. *Pause and allow for students to complete breathing exercise.*

Wonderful! Now I am going to ask everyone to **silently look around the room** and pay attention to what is hanging on the walls – poster, letters, colors, signs, pictures. Now let's **look at what is on the tables and bookshelves** – books, pencils, papers, markers. Take one last scan around the room – anything you didn't see before? I will give you **30 seconds to quietly pick one thing** in the room to focus on during this activity – it cannot be a person. **Once you have picked the item to focus on place your hand on your head, so I know when everyone is done.**

You may **remove your hand from your head** and rest your hands in your lap. Starting now - I am going to give you **one minute to focus all your attention on that item you picked and look at it as if it was the FIRST time you ever saw it.**

*Pause and allow for silence for a few seconds, then continue with some of the prompts below:*

As you **quietly focus on this object think silently in your head** about what it looks like –color, shape, how big/small it is. Is it round or square? Is it bent or straight? Is it soft or hard? What do you use it for?

**Give a 15 – second warning.** I saw so many focused eyes, I am so excited to hear about your mindful observation!

**Who can share with me** – What item did they pick? What did they notice about it? Anything new they never noticed before? Was it hard to stay focused? How did you focus again if you got distracted?

### WRAP UP (2 min.)

Thank you for practicing mindful observation with me today. Remember you can use these skills anytime you need to refocus when you feel distracted or frustrated.

### REFERENCES

- Renegades, L. Little Renegades. Mindfulness for Kids. Retrieved from <https://littlerenegades.com/>
- The Hawn Foundation. (2011). *In The MindUP Curriculum: Brain-Focused Strategies for Learning and Living* (pp. 24 – 49). New York, NY: Scholastic.