



MindUP Booster Lesson

Unit 1: Lessons 1 – 3

Lesson 2: Mindful Movement

Grades 3 – 5

Length of Lesson: 30 minutes

Summary of MindUP Unit 1

- Lesson 1: How Our Brains Work
- Lesson 2: Mindful Awareness
- Lesson 3: Focused Awareness: The Core Practice
- **Objective of Unit 1:** By learning how their brains respond to stress and by practicing strategies for quieting their minds, students become better at self-regulating, increase their capacity for absorbing information, and improve their relationship skills.

Lesson Materials

- Chime (in the classroom)
- One finger trap (per student and facilitator)

Did You Know? (Grades 3 – 5)

Neuroscience Fun Facts from Lesson 1 & 2:

- There are three parts of the brain that help us respond to stress and they are all a part of the limbic system. They are the amygdala, hippocampus, and prefrontal cortex.
- The **limbic [lim-bik] system** controls your emotions and motivations from deep inside the brain and sends information to the prefrontal cortex.
- 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.
- 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 command center and is responsible for making decisions, focusing our attention, allowing us to learn to read, write, analyze, predict, comprehend, and interpret.
- When you practice or have a repeated experience you strengthen and create nerve cell (neuron) connections – this is called, **neuroplasticity [noo r-oh-pla-stis-i-tee]**.

Core Practice Fun Facts from Lesson 2:

- The **Core Practice** puts you in control of your mental and physical energy.
- Using the **Core Practice** can help you manage and regulate your emotions and take mindful action.
- The **Core Practice helps calm the amygdala** when we are experiencing stress or anxiety.



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INTRODUCTION & CORE PRACTICE WARM UP (5 min.)

SAY

Hi everyone. My name is _____ and welcome to another MindUP booster lesson. We are here to review some of the material you learned in your MindUP lessons with your teacher and practice ways to be mindfully aware of our bodies and our thoughts.

Before we start, who remembers from the last lesson what mindfulness mean? *Look for answers like, "mindfulness is paying attention to what is going on right now", "being present", "knowing how you feel right not", "paying attention on purpose".* Great job! Mindfulness is about knowing what we are feeling, thinking, and what is happening in and around us.

First, we will start with a mindful breathing exercise. You might remember this when you learned the Core Practice in MindUP with your teacher.

PREPARATION:

- All students should be sitting either at their desk in a chair or on the floor.
- Have the chime available to use.

DO

- Ask the students to sit quietly at their desks and place their hands on their bellies.

SAY

- We are going to turn on our "mindful bodies." Remember "mindful bodies" are still and relaxed. Let's start this by sitting quietly in our chairs and placing our hands on our bellies.
- When I ring this chime, I would like you to close your eyes and take several slow, deep breaths in through your nose and then slowly let the breath out through your mouth.
- During this time, focus on your breath and feel it rise and fall in your belly.
- After 30 seconds I will ring the chime again and I want you keep your eyes closed until you do not hear the chime anymore. Once you no longer hear the chime, you can open your eyes.

DO

- Ring the chime and practice mindful breathing with the students for 30 seconds by taking slow breaths.
- At the end of the 30 seconds, ring the chime again to end the exercise.

SAY

- Please slowly open your eyes when you no longer hear the chime.
- How did it feel to control your breathing? *Pause, and allow a few students to share their answers.*
- What did you notice? *Pause, and allow a few students to share their answers.*
- Did your mind wander? How did you keep your mind focused on breathing? *Pause, and allow a few students to share their answers.*
- Focusing on our breathing can be a great **brain break** and it can take less than one minute to help our minds relax and focus. This can help us calm our body by slowing our heart rate and sharpening our focus.
- Thank you all for sharing your experiences. Now that we have turned on our mindful bodies, we can start to review what you all learned in the first few MindUP lessons with your teacher.



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FINGER TRAP AWARENESS ACTIVITY (5 min.)

PREPARATION:

- All students should be sitting either at their desk in a chair or on the floor.
- One finger trap per student and facilitator.

SAY

- We are going to do an activity that helps us practice letting go of distracting thoughts and focus on being present. We are going to use finger traps to practice – when we pass them out please leave on your desk.

DO

- Pass out 1 finger trap per student. Place them on their desks.

Using the Finger Trap (2 min.)

SAY

- Place your index fingers in the two ends of the cylinder and pull your fingers apart, like this, and try to pull your fingers out (*model this for the students - the cylinders narrow, and fingers get trapped*).
- Now stop pulling, relax, and take a deep breath (*model this for the students*).
- What do you think is the best way to release your fingers from the trap? *Pause, allow students to answer.*
- Now move your fingers back toward each other, this should make the finger trap feel looser and release your fingers (*model this for the students - the tension will ease*).
- When we pull our fingers apart in the trap, our fingers get stuck – but when we relax and stop pulling, our fingers are set free.

Connecting to Mindfulness (3 min.)

SAY

- Can anyone tell me how getting your fingers stuck in the trap is similar to getting caught up in thoughts, emotions, and stress? *Pause, allow a few students to answer.*
- Thoughts are often heavy, and sticky, and they hang around – demanding that we pay attention to them.
- When we are aware of those thoughts, our thought process can become more relaxed, and we can start to see what is happening within and around us more clearly.
- When we realize we are stuck running or chasing our thoughts, we have an opportunity to step back and reflect on what trapped us and we can decide to focus on it or let it go.
- The more we panicked and got frustrated, the more our fingers got stuck. When we relaxed and took a deep breath we were able to release our fingers.
- It is the same with our distracting thoughts and feelings – when we focus on them we are not focusing on the present and our amygdala can be stressed out.
- But if we are aware of those distractions and allow ourselves to take a step back we can decide if we want to focus on that distraction or let it go, which helps us calm our amygdala down.

DO

- Collect all the finger traps from the students.

SAY

- Now that we have talked about how we can let go of distracting thoughts and try to focus on being present, let's practice mindful movement to focus on the present moment.



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MINDFUL MIRRORING ACTIVITY (10 – 15 min.)

PREPARATION:

- Plan to pair up students with a partner next to them.
- If there is room in the classroom, have students stand up next to their partner during activity.
- If students need to remain seated during activity, adjust the physical movements to accommodate.

Introduction to activity (3 min.)

SAY

- We are going to do an activity that helps us work on our concentration skills, mindful seeing, and mindful movement.
- This activity is called, “Mindful Mirroring”, because the goal is going to be to mirror the movements of your partner so well that it will be hard to tell who the leader is.
- We will assign the leader (*starts the movements*) and the mirror (*copies the leader*) and eventually you will take turns being the leader.
- We are going to assign you a partner (*if there is an odd number of students please pair the student up with a parent volunteer or teacher*) for this activity.
- Before you begin I want to go over the rules:
 - The leader will start the movements (from the waist up only). It is the leaders job to pick movements that their partner can mirror well. The leader does not trick their partner.
 - The mirror copies the leader’s movements. The goal is to mirror each other perfectly.
 - You cannot talk during this activity which means you really have to focus on each other’s movements and facial expressions. It works best if you have good eye contact.
 - All movements must be appropriate and respectful of classroom rules and expectations.
 - You must keep your hands to yourself; all movements must remain within your personal space.

Model Activity (2 min.)

SAY

- We are going to model it for you first before you start.

DO

- Parent volunteers stand 3 feet apart facing each other (in a location all students can see).
- 1 volunteer is the leader and will start the movements (from the waist up only) and 1 is the mirror and is copying all movements.

Possible movements:

- Raise your left/right hand above your head
- Lift both hands and wave “hello” or place both arms out in front of you parallel to the floor
- Place both hands on your head (or one at a time)
- Make a circle with your arms above your head/in front of you
- Stretch both arms out to the side (or one at a time)
- Place both hands on your hips (or one at a time)
- Touch your shoulders (or one at a time)
- Cover your ears with your hands (or one at a time)



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Student Practice 1 (3 – 5 min.)

DO

- Tell students who their partner is and tell them to turn towards one another (either in their chairs or standing).
- Identify which student is a leader and a mirror (*option – can go by rows and state, “all students in this row are mirrors and all students in the row next to them are leaders”*).
- Tell students when to begin and remind them not to speak during the activity.
- Circulate around the room to make sure all students are moving safely and provide positive reinforcement.

Student Practice 2 (3 – 5 min.)

SAY

- Great job! Now we are going to switch roles for the next round. If you were the leader, you are now the mirror. If you were the mirror, you are now the leader.
- Remember the rules (*review if needed*).
- If students are standing for this activity you can offer to have them incorporate their legs during this round.

DO

- Once everyone is settled allow them to start again.
- Circulate around the room to make sure all students are moving safely and provide positive reinforcement.
- After about 1 -1.5 minutes prompt the students to switch roles without speaking.

Reflection on mindful movement (2 – 3 min.)

- Raise your hand if you were the leader first. Who can tell me what that was like the first time? *Pause, allow a few students to answer.* Great, thank you for sharing!
- Raise your hand if you were the mirror first. What was that like for you? *Pause, allow a few students to answer.* Awesome, thank you.
- Who was able to switch roles without talking during the second round? What was that like? *Pause, allow a few students to answer.* Thank you!
- What made this activity hard? What made it easy? Did you learn anything that helped you in the second round? *Pause, allow a few students to answer.*
- What were you focusing on during this activity? Was it your partners eyes or hands? Where you distracted by any thoughts during this activity? *Pause, allow a few students to answer.*



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WRAP UP (5 min.)

SAY

- When we are able to focus on the present moment, like the movement of another person, we are practicing mindfulness. When we were distracted, and we acknowledged it and decided to focus on the activity instead, we were practicing mindfulness.
- Focusing on the here and now, despite distractions in the room or in our minds, helps us make clear decisions. By practicing these skills, we are reinforcing those neural connections in our brain and puts us in control of our mental and physical energy.
- Before we leave today, who can share with us a good time to use the Core Practice during the school day? *Pause, allow for a few students to share.*
- Who can share a way they can let go of distractions instead of chasing our thoughts when we are trying to focus on the present moment? *Pause, allow for a few students to share. The answer is mindfulness.*
- Thank you all for having us today and practicing with us ways we can focus on the present.

References for this lesson:

- Greenland, Susan Kaiser, and Annaka Harris. *Mindful Games: Sharing Mindfulness and Meditation with Children, Teens, and Families*. Shambhala, 2016.
- *The MindUP Curriculum. Brain-Focused Strategies for Learning-and Living*. Scholastic, 2011.



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