

About This Unit

Children who use a growth mindset—the belief that they can improve with practice and effort—do better in school, handle school transitions better, and are less likely to show aggression than children who believe that their abilities and personalities are fixed.^{1,2} Setting goals and making plans to improve based on a growth mindset are associated with increases in self-efficacy,^{3,4} positive personal relationships,^{5,6} increased empathy,⁵ and prosocial behavior.^{4,7,8} This unit teaches the importance of making mistakes while learning, the brain science behind learning, growth mindset strategies, and a goal-setting process that can be applied to group or personal goals. Refer to the Second Step Elementary digital program Review of Research for additional information.

Progression of Skills and Knowledge Across the Grades

From Kindergarten through Grade 2, Unit 1 lessons are designed to help students develop the skills needed to pay attention and avoid distractions. Students are also introduced to growth mindset language as a useful tool for encouraging themselves and others. Lessons highlight the importance of practice and effort—and the value of making mistakes—when it comes to learning something new.

Grade 3 introduces the brain science behind learning, practice, and planning. With this foundation, Grades 4 and 5 shift to focus on the goal-setting process. Students first work to develop a class goal and plan in Grade 4. In Grade 5, they set personal goals and create plans to achieve them. Growth mindset language and strategies for getting better at something are reinforced throughout Grades 3, 4, and 5 as students follow through on reaching their goals.

Kindergarten	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Naming or showing behaviors that help them pay attention (e.g., turning toward the speaker, listening, watching, staying quiet) • Suggesting kind words to encourage themselves when they make a mistake • Suggesting kind words to encourage others when they make a mistake • Naming “practice” and “keep trying” as ways to get better at something
Grade 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to pay attention while learning something new (e.g., turning toward the speaker, watching and listening carefully, not talking) • Behaving in ways help them manage distractions (e.g., changing places, taking deep breaths, reminding themselves to pay attention) • Practicing and trying again in order to improve a new skill • Using helpful thoughts to encourage themselves when they make a mistake

Grade 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying the benefit of making mistakes • Identifying strategies to use after making a mistake • Identifying helpful and unhelpful thoughts in a given context • Replacing unhelpful thoughts with helpful thoughts
Grade 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Naming a repeated action they can do to practice a skill • Identifying who they can learn from or other ways they can try to learn a skill • Explaining what happens in their brain when they practice a skill
Grade 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting a group goal that is specific, challenging, and doable • Making a plan to reach a group goal • Evaluating progress toward reaching a group goal • Identifying roadblocks that may be getting in the way of achieving a group goal • Making changes to overcome roadblocks • Responding to reflection questions
Grade 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting a personal goal that meets the given criteria • Making a plan to reach a goal • Evaluating progress towards reaching a goal and identifying roadblocks that may be getting in the way • Making changes to overcome roadblocks • Responding to reflection questions

Kindergarten Lessons at a Glance

The Unit 1 lessons in Kindergarten are designed to help students recognize the importance of paying attention and the role mistakes, practice, and continued effort play when learning new skills.

Normalizing the different paces and ways that individuals learn supports students’ developing sense of identity and appreciation of diversity. Within these lessons, find ways to positively reinforce the different ways kids pay attention and remind them that everyone learns at different speeds. The Prep & Extend documents give specific examples of when and how to do this.

The unit ends with Lesson 5, a performance task, where students demonstrate the skills and knowledge they learned throughout this unit. They practice paying attention and using kind words to encourage themselves and their classmates while learning a rhyme with accompanying movements. A performance task rubric is included as part of the lesson to help you determine if the class is meeting the goals of the unit. To learn more about the benefits of performance tasks and how to use them in Second Step programs, refer to **What Are Performance Tasks?** on SecondStep.org.

Kindergarten Lessons at a Glance, continued

By teaching students all components of each weekly lesson, in this order, they will acquire the knowledge and skills needed to meet the goals of this unit.

	Title	Objective	Key Concepts & Skills	Vocabulary	Resources
Lesson 1	We Watch. We Listen. We Think.	With adult support, students will be able to demonstrate they know ways to pay attention (watching and listening carefully, answering questions that show comprehension).	<p>Paying attention means watching, listening, and thinking carefully about something.</p> <p>Ways to show we are paying attention include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turning toward the speaker • Watching/looking • Listening/not talking • Thinking/being able to answer questions 	Pay attention (v.) to watch, listen, and think carefully about something	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prep & Extend • Lesson Plan • Presentation
Lesson 2	Why We Pay Attention	With adult support, students will be able to identify two important reasons to pay attention: to learn and to stay safe.	<p>Two important reasons for paying attention are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To learn • To stay safe 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prep & Extend • Lesson Plan • Presentation
Lesson 3	Mistakes Are Okay!	With adult support, students will be able to recognize mistakes are a part of learning by encouraging themselves and others when they make mistakes.	<p>Mistakes are a normal part of learning.</p> <p>Students will practice saying kind words to themselves and others to help them keep going when they make mistakes.</p>	Mistake (n.) when we try to do something and don't get it quite right	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prep & Extend • Lesson Plan • Presentation
Lesson 4	Practice Makes Better	With adult support, students will be able to name two ways they can get better at something: practice and keep trying.	Practice and effort can help us learn something new.	Practice (v.) do something over and over again until you get better at it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prep & Extend • Lesson Plan • Presentation
Lesson 5	Performance Task: Let's Practice and Learn!	With adult support, students will be able to demonstrate paying attention and using kind words to encourage themselves and others while learning something new together.	Students will practice paying attention and using growth mindset strategies to learn a rhyme with accompanying movements.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prep & Extend • Lesson Plan • Presentation

References

1. Yeager, D. S., & Dweck, C. S. (2012). Mindsets that promote resilience: When students believe that personal characteristics can be developed. *Educational Psychologist, 47*(4), 302-314. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2012.722805>
2. Yeager, D. S., Miu, A. S., Powers, J., & Dweck, C. S. (2013). Implicit theories of personality and attributions of hostile intent: A meta-analysis, an experiment, and a longitudinal intervention. *Child Development, 84*(5), 1651-1667. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12062>
3. Bong, M. (2009). Age-related differences in achievement goal differentiation. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 101*(4), 879-896. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0015945>
4. Hulleman, C. S., Schrager, S. M., Bodmann, S. M. & Harackiewicz, J. M. (2010). A meta-analytic review of achievement goal measures: Different labels for the same constructs or different constructs with similar labels? *Psychological Bulletin, 136*, 422-449. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0018947>
5. Poortvliet, P., & Darnon, C. (2010). Toward a more social understanding of achievement goals: The interpersonal effects of mastery and performance goals. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 19*(5), 324-328. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721410383246>
6. Rodkin, P. C., Ryan, A. M., Jamison, R., & Wilson, T. (2013). Social goals, social behavior, and social status in middle childhood. *Developmental Psychology, 49*(6), 1139-1150. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0029389>
7. Ohtani, K., & Okada, R. (2018). Relationship between classroom social goal structures, gender, and social outcomes in Japanese elementary school children. *School Psychology International, 39*(5), 435-453. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0143034318788120>
8. Yang, F., Frye, D., & Dubow, E. F. (2018). When preferences are in the way: Children's predictions of goal-directed behaviors. *Developmental Psychology, 54*(6), 1051-1062. <https://doi.org/10.1037/dev0000490>