

TEACHER'S GUIDE TO LEARNING ACTIVITIES: GRADES 3–4

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Americans All®

A National Education Program

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Activity 1: A New Home

Objectives

Activity Goal

To introduce the concept of self-esteem and its relationship to happiness and successful adjustment in new settings.

Appreciation Objective

Students will increase their understanding about self-esteem and its relationship to happiness.

Basic Information Objective

Students will increase their understanding of their own and others' needs for validation and esteem-building opportunities in new settings.

Critical- and Creative-Thinking Objective

Students will work in small groups to compare and contrast behaviors that impact self-esteem. They will analyze related situations and draw conclusions about the importance of, and requirements for, high self-esteem.

Preparation

Materials: Contemporary photographs from magazines and/or newspapers showing children's happy faces; photographs from the Americans All® collection (numbers 109, 113, 129, 235, 261, 273, 280, 289, 332, 359, 404 and 440); an overhead projector; a transparency of TA 1: Self-Esteem; a teacher copy of TA 4: Narratives for Photographs; and a chalkboard or flip chart and markers.

Conducting the Activity

Introduce the activity by showing the photographs of children's happy faces, then show the photographs from the Americans All® collection. These have been selected because the faces indicate that the people are happy or comfortable.

Explain to the students that these are images from many, many years ago. They depict faces and images of people and families that came to and/or moved through the United States. The newcomers all had to adjust to unfamiliar circumstances. Then, invite the students to guess or speculate about why these people appear to be happy or comfortable. Record their responses on the chalkboard or flip chart.



Their answers may include:

- because they are having their pictures taken;
- because they are proud of what they are doing;
- because they are with someone who cares about them; and
- because they are celebrating.

Show the pictures a second time and read the narrative for each photograph from TA 4: Narratives for Photographs. Follow this with a brief large-group discussion. Ask the students what they think people in a new land or new community, or even in a new school or classroom, need to have to help them feel good about themselves or to be happy. Record their responses on the chalkboard or flip chart.

Now, divide the class into pairs. Ask the students to share a brief story with their partner about a time when they were in a strange or new setting and felt safe, comfortable or happy. Ask them to describe what happened and how people treated them. Allow five minutes for each team member to share a story.

Next, lead another large-group discussion with the entire class. Ask for three or four volunteers to share their partners' stories and name two things that helped them feel comfortable or happy in new settings. Students should ask for their partners' permission before sharing the stories. Use this discussion to introduce the concept of self-esteem.

Tell the class that when we feel good about ourselves, and are relaxed and trusting, our self-esteem is usually high. Display the transparency of TA 1: Self-Esteem, covering the definition with a sheet of paper. Ask the students if they have ever heard of this word or concept. Have them guess or offer definitions. Remember not to censor any responses. Give some positive feedback for every answer. Encourage the students to take the risk of participating. After two or three minutes remove the cover from the definition. Ask the class to repeat in unison the definition of self-esteem, or simply copy the definition.

Belief in ourselves, or self-respect, based on:

- our ability to trust our own minds to make decisions that are in our own best interests;
- our ability to know and trust our own bodies to do what we expect;
- our ability to know and trust our own feelings; and
- our expectations that our relationships with family, friends and our world are positive and helpful.

Continue with this brief lecture.

Self-esteem is not static. It is dynamic. It changes from day to day. Usually, when we are happy or self-confident, our self-esteem is high; when we are sad or unhappy,



Interdisciplinary Follow-Up Activities

our self-esteem may be low. Many, many things can influence our self-esteem, but these changes or reactions are temporary.

Ask the students for examples of what might influence how we feel about ourselves. Give the students time to think before they answer.

- ▶ Have the students cut out pictures from magazines that reflect moments of happiness or high self-esteem. Ask them to make up or write stories about the pictures.
 - ▶ Have the students role-play situations in which newcomers are treated in ways that make them feel safe, happy and confident.
 - ▶ Have the students use photographs as references for creating or drawing their own pictures of scenes in which people move to new settings.
 - ▶ Ask the students to select sections from literature, books or stories that describe moments when characters experience high or low self-esteem.
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Related Literature

For literature related to this learning activity see Literature Selections (page 157), books numbered 10, 19, 20, 41, 54, 83, 90, 110, 122, 130, 139 and 154.

For post-reading activities, TA 27 through TA 34 (pages 112–119) may be used at the teacher’s discretion.

