

LESSON 4

Communicating Effectively Unit Grade 7 • Ages 12-14

TIME FRAME

Preparation: 15 minutes
Instruction: 30 minutes

MATERIALS

RAK Journals

Paper to write letter

[Kindness Concept Posters](#): Gratitude, Respect

LEARNING STANDARDS

Common Core: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.2: Colorado: Reading, Writing and Communicating S.3, GLE.2, EO.b

SEL - Self-awareness, Social Awareness, Self-management, Relationship skills

[Learning standards key](#)

Showing Gratitude

Students will explore the benefits of expressing gratitude through e-mail or letter writing.

Lesson Background for Teachers

This lesson builds on previous lessons in this unit.

Key Terms for Students

Consider writing key terms on the board before class to introduce vocabulary and increase understanding.

GRATITUDE Being thankful for and appreciating what you have and those around you.

RESPECT Treating people, places, and things with kindness.

TIPS FOR DIVERSE LEARNERS

Students might benefit from:

- Discussing as a class what or who they are grateful for either before or after writing in their RAK journals; having a word bank to reference to write the letter will help emergent writers.
- Seeing a model of a proper way to write a letter. Consider projecting the letter using the document camera and reviewing as a class; another option would be to provide copies of the letter for students to review as necessary.

Resources

Gratitude Website: <http://www.gratefulness.org>

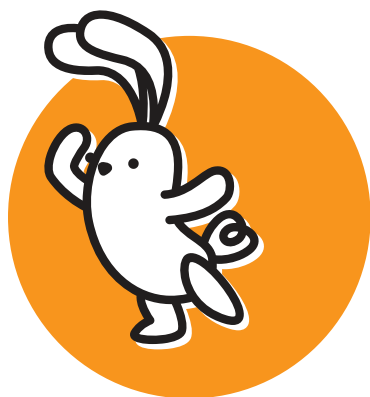
Greater Good Science Center: www.greatergood.berkeley.edu

RAK lessons teach kindness skills through a step-by-step framework of **Inspire, Empower, Act** and **Share**.

However, each lesson starts with the **Share** step to reinforce learning from previous lessons.



The RAK paradigm is the framework for teaching and building kindness skills.



Share (3 mins)

Share a time with your partner when someone said “thank you” to you in an e-mail, on social media, in a letter, or card. How did that make you feel.

Inspire

Gratitude Experiment Video (7 mins)

*We can communicate positive messages verbally or in writing. We communicate in writing everyday – through text messaging, facebook messages, and e-mails. Communicating positive messages in writing makes people feel good for a long time because, unlike speaking, they can reread the positive messages whenever they want. “Thank you” is a positive message of gratitude that lifts people up, shows **respect**, and makes them feel appreciated. Generally, expressing your **gratitude** has been proven to increase your own happiness. We are going to watch a video about ways to show **gratitude**. Then, we will express our gratitude by writing a thank you note.*

Show: The Gratitude Experiment by watchwellcast (4 min 43 sec)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U5IZBjWDR_c

Empower

Active Listening Role-Plays (13 minutes or more as needed)

*I want you to spend some time writing in your RAK journals about what you are **grateful** for and who you are **grateful** to. You can use the method explained in the video if you'd like and write 3 columns for people, places and things.*

Now we are going to write a letter to someone to whom we are grateful.

- Think of someone you are **grateful** to
- Write a letter, it does not need to be formal
- Tell them what they did, how they make you feel or how they affect your life
- Try to be as specific as possible

Wrap Up (5 mins)

To gauge understanding of the material, choose from either the evaluation or reflection questions as discussion, writing or journal prompts. Consider providing additional time for deeper evaluation and reflection as needed.

Evaluation Questions

- Why is it nice to communicate **gratitude** in writing?
- What are some ways we can communicate our **gratitude** in writing?
- How does showing **gratitude** affect you?

Reflection Questions

- Was it easy or difficult for you to write about something you were **grateful** for? Why?
- How do you think a thank you note shows **respect** for others?
- How do you think it would feel if you wrote a thank you note every week?

Summary

Expressing positive thoughts, such as gratitude, in writing can make people happy for a long time. Gratitude is a way to show respect to others, but also shifts our own focus onto the good things we have in our lives, which creates more happiness for ourselves and others! What a kind thing to do.



Act (2 mins)

Kindness Minute

We have a lot to be thankful for in nature. It gives us the oxygen we breathe, the soil to grow our food and the water we drink. As a class take a moment to look around the classroom and see how many things you can name that come from the earth to be thankful for. (Examples: paper and furniture from the trees, the grass outside the classroom, water in the sink, etc.)

Kindness in Action

We learned that showing gratitude can increase our happiness, but expressing that gratitude to others has been shown to almost double the results! Read your letter to the person you wrote it to. See how you feel.

