

# Inclusion Acrostic

This lesson teaches students that in order to be inclusive, they have to value and understand its importance. Through a short video and large group discussion, students will help identify the qualities of inclusion that are important to them as a class. They will work on an acrostic poem that outlines these values and qualities to help remind them each day of their mission for inclusion.

## Inclusiveness Sub-Concept(s)

Kindness

## Lesson Timeframe

30-40 minutes

## Required Materials

- ❑ White board or smartboard, or large sticky notes, depending on how you want students to work on the acrostic. Ultimately you will need poster-making materials for the final acrostic display.
- ❑ Smartboard to project the video.
- ❑ Inspirational video: <https://www.passiton.com/inspiration-al-stories-tv-spots/153-sarah-greichen>
- ❑ Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools website and resources: <https://www.generationunified.org/unified-classroom/>

## Standards Map

This lesson aligns with CASEL Competencies, National Health Education Standards, and Common Core State Standards. Please refer to the [Standards Map](#) for more information.



DESIGNATED BY CASEL  
AS A RECOMMENDED PROGRAM  
FOR SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING.

See last page for details.

## Lesson Objective

Students will:

- Recognize the value of including everyone, regardless of ability.
- Develop a mission statement through an acrostic poem around the qualities they value about inclusion.

## Teacher Connection/Self-Care

Even as an adult, it can be difficult being the “new kid on the block”. Every new job, every move, every time your children transition to a new school; all of these result in a new set of people to meet! One of the most challenging aspects of these new beginnings is finding entry points into already formed social circles. As you introduce this valuable lesson to your students, take time to reflect on how you feel when this is required of you. If you are more of an introvert, putting yourself out there on day one may feel impossible. Start slowly and identify one person a week to approach. It is definitely easier to look for small groups of 2-3 people rather than approaching a larger group. On the opposite end, extroverts can come across as too overbearing, chatty, or even loud. Try to get involved in productive ways through committees, meetings, or other activities that focus your nervous energy. Whether you are an introvert, extrovert, or somewhere in between, asking permission in new social situations can be unnerving, but practice makes perfect, so get out there!

## Tips for Diverse Learners

- If there is a student on the autism spectrum in class, consider how to use the video and present the foundation of the lesson; while the lesson is not rooted in autism or in any other unique ability classification, it is part of the lesson set-up.
- Determine ahead of time if the whole class will be able to effectively work on the acrostic or if it should be done in smaller groups. Perhaps each group taking one letter of the acrostic and coming up with a variety of options that the whole class can vote on.



## Share

3-5 minutes

*Let's review what we discussed in our last Inclusiveness lesson. In that lesson we talked about what it meant to be on a team and then we played a team-based game. Can someone share what it means to be on a team?*

Invite student response.

*Good! Only when everyone is doing his or her job and working together can a team be successful.*

*This ties nicely into today's lesson because we need to work together as a classroom to complete our activity.*



## Inspire

7-10 minutes

### **With Video:**

*In this unit, we have also talked about not only looking for differences in things and people but, more importantly, looking for the ways that we are the same. One way that humans are the same, even if they look different or have different abilities, is our need to be loved, heard, appreciated, and included. Everyone wants to have purpose in life. We are going to watch a short video about a girl whose twin brother has autism. She realized that he struggled to make friends and she wanted to help him and others who were regularly not included.*

Watch Video (1 minute)

<https://www.passiton.com/inspirational-stories-tv-spots/153-sarah-greichen>

*Ok - did you all hear what Sara said about her brother when he is included? What happens to Jacob when he is included?*

Answer: He feels like he can succeed in life and that he has a purpose.

*Isn't this how we all feel when we are included? On the other hand, how do we feel when we are excluded or left out?*

Invite student response.

### **Without Video:**

*In this unit, we have also talked about not only looking for differences in things and people but, more importantly, looking for the ways that we are the same. One way that humans are the same, even if they look different or have different abilities, is our need to be loved, heard, appreciated, and included. Everyone wants to have purpose in life.*

*Let me tell you a story. There is a girl named Sara who attends college now at Colorado State University. She has a twin brother who has autism. When they were in high school together, one day when their mom picked them up from school, her brother got in the car and started crying. He told his mom that he*

*had no friends. "Why don't I have any friends?" he asked. Sara said her heart broke for her brother; she had not realized that he struggled to make friends and she wanted to help him and others who were regularly not included.*

*Have any of you not been included in something? We all have, right? How does it feel when we are not included?*

Invite student response.

*Even something small like being invited to play a game at recess or to sit down and eat lunch together can completely change a person's day. The key is to be inclusive all of the time, though, not just occasionally. People want others to genuinely care about them.*



## Empower

15-20 minutes

*So, Sara, the girl I just told you about, actually did something to be authentically or truly inclusive and, more specifically, to help her brother, Jacob. She created a non-profit organization (that she originally started as part of a Girl Scout project) in Littleton, Colorado. She eventually merged with the Special Olympics organization and helps people nationally. Schools and communities form inclusive clubs called Unified Clubs where everyone is welcomed and valued.*

You can visit the national website here to find resources on inclusion with your students: <https://www.generationunified.org/unified-classroom/>

*The goal of the organization is to make sure that everyone is included and is an active part of the community, no matter their ability. This is their mission statement: Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools (UCS) promotes social inclusion and inclusive mindsets. From pre-k to university, young people with and without intellectual disabilities make meaningful and lasting connections. That is a pretty cool mission statement!*

*Let's talk a little bit about what a mission statement is. Does anyone have any idea what a mission statement is?*

*A mission statement is a formal statement or sentence that sums up the values of a company, organization, or individual. It is a sentence that says what you think is worthwhile, what you support, and what you stand for. Most organizations have a mission statement. Did you know that our school has a mission statement? Read and/or display the mission statement of your school on the smartboard.*

*I would like us to write a mission statement for our classroom that is specific to inclusion. If we value inclusion - if we make it our mission as 5th graders to include others - then everything else we've been talking about - respect, caring, kindness - will follow. It is hard to be inclusive if you aren't also respectful, caring, and kind.*

*We are going to make our mission statement a little different, though. We are going to use the word INCLUSION as an acrostic to help us brainstorm ways to make our classroom and relationships inclusive. An acrostic is where you take the letters in a word and use them as the first letter in another word.*

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You can demonstrate this on the board or project acrostic examples on the smartboard:



You can do this in many ways: on the board, on the smartboard, in a large group, in small groups. The aim is to create one acrostic for the whole class and for everyone to contribute, but how you arrive at the acrostic is up to you. Ensure you are having discussions about the ideas that students are generating and connect them back to caring and respect.



## Reflect

5 minutes

When the acrostic is finished, review it with students. Have everyone read it out loud together and then sign it (if you have a paper version to hang in the room). When this is done, display it in a visible place in the room; perhaps close to the door so students are reminded of it as they exit.

Remember our mission as 5th graders. We are older students now and younger students look up to us as examples. How we treat and include others will show everyone how we value people and what we believe in. They will know our mission by how we include others. And when we include others, especially those who might normally be excluded for some reason, we help them feel like they can succeed and that they have a purpose.



## Extension Ideas

- Send a copy of the mission statement home with students or email it to parents; let parents know that this is the mission and invite them to regularly ask their students how they are fulfilling their mission.
- Send an acrostic poem template home for parents/kids to create a family mission statement. This acrostic could be for INCLUSION or could be for any of the kindness concepts (or, simply, KINDNESS).
- Explore the Score a Friend organization and see if this is a club your school would be interested in starting or sponsoring.



DESIGNATED BY CASEL  
AS A RECOMMENDED  
PROGRAM FOR SOCIAL  
AND EMOTIONAL  
LEARNING.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has been reviewing evidence-based SEL programs since 2003. Kindness in the Classroom® meets CASEL's SElect Program and is included in the [CASEL Guide to Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs](#).

Kindness in the Classroom® met or exceeded all of CASEL's criteria for high-quality SEL programming. Kindness in the Classroom® received CASEL's highest designation for high-quality SEL programming.

<https://casel.org/guide/kindness-in-the-classroom/>



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