



Character plays a crucial role in shaping well-rounded, academically proficient, and morally and ethically sound students. It is important for schools/classrooms to create a positive environment conducive to learning, forming relationships, communicating effectively, being sensitive to others' needs, and getting along with others.

Character education at the secondary level makes a meaningful impact on students' lives and helps:

- promote positive behaviors and social skills among students, which can result in a more positive and inclusive school environment.
- students develop personal qualities like the Six Pillars of Character® (trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship) that are critical for their future academic and professional success.
- students develop a strong sense of ethics and moral reasoning, preparing them to make responsible decisions as they navigate life.

About Keys for Character

These instructional resources for secondary school students are based on the Model Standards of the Josephson Institute and focus on the following skills.

1. Intellectuals Skills
2. Social and Emotional Skills
3. Moral character (The Six Pillars of Character)

The Keys for Character lessons teach key building blocks to shape character and positively impact personal and social interactions. These important skills can last far beyond the classroom.

Frequently Asked Questions

How can a teacher use these lessons?

The four lessons in this series provide classroom instructional strategies to engage students in character development while giving students opportunities to put the skills into practice. While the study of character is prominent in this series, the instructional strategies use a literacy lens to support your students' literacy skills.

In "Cultivating Positive Attitudes and Behaviors," the four lessons cover the following themes:

1. Committing to character
2. Positivity
3. Good citizenship
4. Resilience

Each session is designed to last approximately 120 minutes and can easily be broken into shorter segments to use in a homeroom, advisory period, academic class, or leadership program. Many of the extension activities contain directions for embedding the strategy utilizing journaling, experiential activities, and vicarious experiences of stories told or viewed. The time for the extension experiences can range from 15 to 50 minutes each.

What is included for teachers to use with each lesson?

Each lesson includes a Facilitator Guide and Student Workbook. All resources are delivered digitally. The student workbook is designed so students can easily follow along with the lesson and complete the activities. The workbooks can be printed or used electronically as a fillable PDF.



What instructional practices are used to teach the lessons?

Throughout each lesson, you will see four research-based instructional practices:

1. Self-Study (self-reflection on character)
2. Other Study (studying other people and decisions to evaluate character)
3. Practice and Simulation (engaging in real-life scenarios to explore and practice good character)
4. Support and Challenge (intentionally creating safe environments for students to explore their character and learn from mistakes)

Excellence with Integrity Tools™ included in this resource provide a replicable, research-based distillation of the knowledge we want students to learn.

What are the key elements for each of the lessons?

The lessons contain four main parts with the same elements. Different activities support the lesson's Model Standards and themes.

Getting Started

Each section introduces a Model Standard and gets students thinking about the character skills they see daily. It includes a self-reflection and progress-monitoring tool for students to reflect on their character and observe how it changes over time.

Reading Comprehension

Each lesson features a commentary from Michael Josephson, founder of CHARACTER COUNTS! Students will apply their reading, writing, and vocabulary skills while reflecting on the commentaries.

Real-World Application

Students will apply what they have learned about character to their lives and consider what good character looks like in their day-to-day activities.

Extension Opportunities

This section gives extra activities for students to explore their character, including journal prompts, videos, and experiential activities.