



GRATITUDE ACTIVITY FOR TWEENS & TEENS

Lesson 4 **Thank You for Believing in Me**

Students learn how to think gratefully.

Time Required

1 class period

Grade Level

6th – 12th grade

Materials

- [Lesson 4 PowerPoint slideshow](#)
- Computer and monitor or projector to show video
- *Thank You, Mr. Falker* by Patricia Polacco
- Handout: Narrative Essay
- Handout “HW Gratitude Letter” for each student

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Understand how benefactors are significant in our lives by learning to think gratefully through the three perceptions that make up gratitude: personal value of benefits, cost to benefactors, and prosocial intentions of benefactors

SEL Competencies

- Social Awareness
 - Recognizing one’s needs
- Self-Management
 - Advocating for oneself and one’s needs
- Relationship Skills
 - Offering and seeking help

**Getting Ready
For This Activity**

Educators:

Think of someone who saw your potential and helped you achieve it. What was the cost to this person for helping you and what did he or she intend for you? How did you benefit from this person’s help? How did it make you feel?



Lesson 4

Thank You for Believing in Me

How To Do It

Slide 1 Introduce the Lesson

Gratitude Activity
Lesson 4

Thank You For Believing in Me

How to think and receive gratefully.

- Introduce the lesson.
 - *Today the focus is on learning to think gratefully. But first, let's review...*

Slide 2 Benefit Appraisals

Gratitude Activity
Lesson 4

Benefit Appraisals

Costs: Time, money, energy, etc. that it takes for one person to help another

Benefits: The advantages that someone receives when another person helps him or her

Intentions: The helper's goal

- Review benefit appraisals from lesson 2 with students.
 - *Benefit appraisals refer to the process of evaluating what it means when someone helps another person.*



Lesson 4

Thank You for Believing in Me

Slide 2

Benefit Appraisals (cont'd)


- *When someone helps another person, it usually costs him or her something—time, effort, or money.*
- *In addition, the person's help actually benefits the other person, which means that he or she understands what that person needs and decides that it is worthwhile to help out.*
- *Finally, the fact that a person helps another means that he or she cares enough to want to make that other person do or feel better. For example, if your friend helps you study for a big test, then he or she is probably sacrificing his or her own time to help you do better because he or she cares about you.*
- *Recognizing all of these elements can help you feel more grateful.*

Slide 3

Thank You, Mr. Falker

Gratitude Activity
Lesson 4

Let's Read And Get Autobiographical!



- Before reading *Thank You, Mr. Falker*, ask students:
 - *Why is it better to face up to challenges and ask people for help rather than avoid challenges?*
 - *How can we reframe struggle to keep trying?*
 - *How can we appreciate our mentors or benefactors?*



Lesson 4

Thank You for Believing in Me

Slide 3 Thank You, Mr. Falker (cont'd)

- Read the story *Thank You, Mr. Falker* to the whole class. Wait to read the last two paragraphs to the students until after the following discussion.
- After reading the story, discuss with students:
 - *What did the main character NEED? What difficulty or hardships did she face?*
 - *As reading got harder for Trisha, what did she do instead? Why?*
 - *Who influenced her and how? (Mr. Falker, family, kinder friends)*
 - *Trisha learned to read and write, but what else happened to her? How did she feel? (joyous, proud) How did her life change? (no more teasing/bullying)*
 - *What was the VALUE OF BENEFIT? (she was no longer teased/ bullied or alone/ashamed, able to succeed past a major struggle)*
 - *What was the COST TO THE BENEFACTOR? (Mr. Falker's time and effort)*
 - *What was the BENEFACTOR'S INTENTION? (He saw her strengths of courage and cunning, believed in her, and wanted to help her.)*
- Now mention that there is a secret ending. Read the last two paragraphs and discuss further:
 - *What did the girl DO with her new skill? How did it affect her later in her life?*
 - *How did she turn the gift Mr. Falker gave her into an act of gratitude?*
 - *How do you think Mr. Falker felt when he learned about her life?*



Lesson 4

Thank You for Believing in Me

Slide 4 Your Helpers

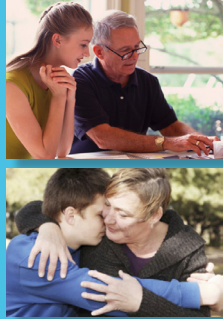
Gratitude Activity
Lesson 4

Your Helpers: "Thank You, _____"

Think about the people who support you.

- How do they help you?
- What do they give up to help you?
- How is their help valuable or beneficial for you?
- Why do they help you?

Pick a significant benefactor in your life and write a thank you letter to him or her. Be sure that you give it to this person as a thank you!



- Give a personal example of a time when someone helped you.
- Break students into small groups to discuss:
 - *Have you ever had a need like the girl in the story? What is a struggle or hardship you've faced? Have you ever not asked for help when you needed it? Why?*
 - *Have you ever overcome a big challenge thanks to someone's help? Explain.*
 - *What did it COST the person who helped you? (Time? Effort?)*
 - *Why did the person INTEND (want) to help you? What talents did he or she see in you?*
 - *How did the person notice? How did he or she help or encourage you? How did it change you? Why did it matter? (VALUE) How did this event make you feel?*



Lesson 4

Thank You for Believing in Me

Slide 4

Your Helpers (cont'd)



- Have students watch this video: [Science Behind Gratitude Expression](#)
- Introduce the autobiographical part of the homework assignment: writing and delivering a special, personalized GRATITUDE LETTER for a significant person in their lives.
 - *Some relationships are special. They're not all equal. Expressing thanks is like a gift we can give to these special people in our lives.*
- Be sure to have students include the three aspects of grateful thinking in the letter: value of the benefit, cost to the benefactor, and intention of the benefactor. Students should use this Gratitude Letter Template to help them write it.
 - *After writing the letter, students should add images or symbols that represent their own top character strengths and that inspire them. Students could also choose to draw a short comic strip in their letter to represent the special role the significant person plays in their life.*
 - *This thank you letter will be a special gift for students to give to their benefactors.*



Lesson 4

Thank You for Believing in Me

Reflection After The Activity

Ask students to reflect on how it felt to write and then personally deliver a thank you letter to someone who benefitted them.

Gratitude Letter

Instructions

Choose an adult (preferably a mentor) who you are really grateful for and write him or her a letter to express your gratitude. Remember to be honest and specific. The more effort you put into writing your letter, the more your message will mean to the other person.

You can use the letter template below and fill in the blank spaces, or write the entire letter in your own words. You can include anything you want, but be sure to describe:

- The ways this person helped you
- How this person's help benefitted you and made your life better
- The time or effort it cost that person to help you
- Why this person chose to help you
- How you feel about this person

After you write your letter, give it to the other person. You could deliver your letter in person, read it to him or her over the phone, or send it through email—it's up to you! But remember, this activity works best if you read the letter in person. We know it may feel a bit awkward, but it's more likely to make you and the other person feel good!

Gratitude Letter Template

Dear Person's name,

Thank you so much for (describe the kinds of things this person has done to help you). This has really helped me (describe how this person's actions have benefitted you or what he or she inspires you to do). I also really appreciate how you (describe other things that this person does to help you or make your life better). I realize that (describe what it costs this person to help you in these ways). Your actions show me that (say why you think this person wanted to help you) and (what promise you think this person sees in you). I (describe how you feel about this person). Thanks to you I want to (say what this person motivates you to do).

Gratefully,

Your name

