

'The Pursuit of Happiness'

Overview:

Lesson One: Introduction to the Unit – What Makes Me Happy.

Lesson Two: 'Augustus and his Smile' by Catherine Rayner.

Lesson Three: 'Keeping Up with Cheetah' by Lindsay Camp and Jill Newton.

Lesson Four: 'Sports Day in the Jungle' by Jill Newton.

Goal:

Empower children to realize happiness by providing the awareness and skills necessary to build confidence, self-esteem, and personal character, while concurrently enhancing their literacy skills.

Background Information:

Throughout history, philosophers, theologians, and even economists have sought to define the elusive state of happiness. Indeed, during the 1990s, researchers at the University of Pennsylvania first proposed an entire branch of modern psychology – positive psychology – to its study. Over time, it has been increasingly understood that, more than a mere transient positive mood, happiness is a state of well-being which encompasses living a good life, replete with meaning and satisfaction. International research has consistently illustrated that individuals perceive happiness as their pinnacle aspiration, transcending wealth and admission to an afterlife.

The factors which influence the happiness of an individual are broad and multifaceted, encompassing genetics, life circumstances, relationships, and financial security. Furthermore, research indicates that individuals can manage their own happiness to a great extent through engagements such as maintaining relationships, finding purpose, and maintaining goals. Such endeavors are concurrently vital to the happiness of children, as are establishing self-esteem, expressing feelings, regulating emotions, and developing perseverance. The cultivation of such attributes mirrors the growing prominence of social and emotional learning (commonly referred to as SEL) in contemporary education.

Sources and Further Reading:

[Psychology Today - Happiness](#)

[What is Positive Education?](#)

[Effects of Positive Education](#)

[International Effects of Positive Education](#)

[Social and Emotional Learning \(SEL\)](#)

'The Pursuit of Happiness'

Lesson One:

Introduction to the Unit – What Makes Me Happy

Grade Level: Kindergarten – 3rd Grade

(At the facilitator's discretion, the activities in this lesson can be adapted to the needs of the group being taught.)

Time Frame: 30-40 Minute Session

Goal: Through activities connected to the themes of the prospective texts, students will be enabled to become aware of the sources of happiness in their lives.

Objectives:

Knowledge: Identify sources of happiness in each of their lives.

Recognize similarities and differences with their classmates concerning sources of happiness.

Skills: Reflect upon their personal experiences of happiness and the sentiments which they evoked.

Attitudes: Appreciate the significance and value of happiness in their lives.

Empathize with and respect the varying priorities of their classmates concerning personal sources of happiness.

Essential Questions:

- What does happiness mean to you?
- What are the sources of happiness in your life?
- How are your sources of happiness unique to those of your classmates?

Materials & Resources:

- Interactive whiteboard projection of dance activity.
- Talking object (e.g. ball) to signify whose turn it is to speak.
- ‘What Makes Me Happy’ handout.
- Children’s art supplies (pencils, crayons, etc.).

Linkage and Integration Across Subject Areas:

Language Arts:

- Vocabulary (happiness, fleeting, meaningful, unique, individual).

Visual Art:

- Drawing and coloring the ‘What Makes Me Happy’ handout.

Dance / Movement:

- ‘Happy’ by Pharrell Williams dance activity.

Social Studies (Psychology):

- Understanding happiness as an emotional experience.

Vocabulary to be Developed in Lesson:

- Happiness
- Fleeting
- Meaningful

- Unique
- Individual

Procedure:

Engagement:

1. Begin the lesson by encouraging students to stand at their seats in order to participate in a dance activity based upon the song, 'Happy,' by Pharrell Williams. Access to the activity can be found at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J2BrcQdawBM>.

Prior Knowledge:

2. After the dance activity, encourage the students to sit on the floor for a circle time discussion. Students pass around a ball in order to signify whose turn it is to speak.
 - Following the dance activity, ask students how they feel and elicit the response of 'happiness.'
 - Direct this conversation to a discussion of the meaning of happiness. Prompt students with questions such as:
 - What is happiness?
 - What makes us happy?
 - When are we happy?

Input:

3. Leading on from this circle time discussion, the teacher invites two outgoing students to come stand in the middle of the circle. The teacher then leads a contrast activity between the experience of fleeting happiness and deep, meaningful happiness. See a potential example of this contrast below:
 - This is ___ (student name different to anyone in the class). Last Saturday, she/he went to the fun fair with her/his soccer team. She/he doesn't really like soccer, but her/his mom/dad says that she/he must play. ___ (name) finds it hard to make

friends on her/his team, but she/he was really excited when she/he won a teddy bear at the Whack-A-Mole stand.

- This is ___ (student name different to anyone in the class). Last Saturday, she/he didn't go to the funfair like ___ (name of previous student). Instead, she/he visited her/his friend's house for the afternoon. They played games like tag and hopscotch outside together. That evening, she/he had a delicious dinner with her/his family and, afterwards, watched a movie on the couch together. That night, she/he thought about how lucky she/he was.

Development:

4. Encourage the students to return to their seats and distribute the 'What Makes Me Happy' handout (Appendix A). Tell students to write their names at the top of the page and, when finished, place their pencils on the table. For each of the four drawing activities on the handout, read the prompt to the students, facilitate a brief discussion of the idea, and allow time for its completion. Remind students not to progress to the subsequent activity until told to do so. A projection of a six-minute countdown timer on the interactive whiteboard may be helpful in ensuring that students remain on task and complete each activity in an appropriate amount of time. As the students engage in the drawing activities, circulate around the classroom, engaging in formative assessment by observing and assisting when necessary.

Assessment:

5. Assign each student a partner with whom they will peer-assess each other's work. Encourage each pair to find a space in the classroom to swap and review their completed handouts. Explain the 'Two Stars and a Wish' peer-assessment strategy to the class. Orally model the strategy with the completed work of one student. Encourage the students to orally implement the strategy in their pairs. Again, circulate around the classroom, engaging in formative assessment by observing and assisting when necessary. Provide some pairs with the opportunity to share their peer-assessments with the class.

Closure:

6. Recap the students' learning on meaningful happiness, again distinguishing it from a fleeting emotion. Remind students of their discussions and inputs, offering opportunities for further elaboration and questioning. Conclude by introducing the forthcoming literature to students in an engaging and exciting manner. Connect the themes of the prospective stories to their learnings on happiness:
 - 'Augustus and his Smile' – finding happiness through our actions.
<https://www.languageizard.com/Augustus-and-His-Smile-Bilingual-Children-s-Book-p/aug.htm>
 - 'Keeping Up with Cheetah' – finding happiness through social relationships.
<https://www.languageizard.com/Keeping-Up-with-Cheetah-Bilingual-Book-p/cheet.htm>
 - 'Sports Day in the Jungle' – finding happiness through comfort with ourselves.
<https://www.languageizard.com/Sports-Day-in-the-Jungle-Bilingual-Book-p/sport.htm>

Assessment:

- **Observation:** students' participation in discussions and engagement with worksheet.
- **Questioning:** a range of lower-order and higher-order questioning during discussions and engagement with activities.
- **Peer-Assessment:** the 'Two Stars and a Wish' strategy in pairs, based upon completed worksheets.
- **'What Makes Me Happy' worksheet:** completed worksheets serve as a physical record of students' understandings / engagement.

Accommodation / Differentiation:

- **Differential Process:** Further explanation may be required for some students in order to ensure their understanding of meaningful happiness. Additional prompting may be

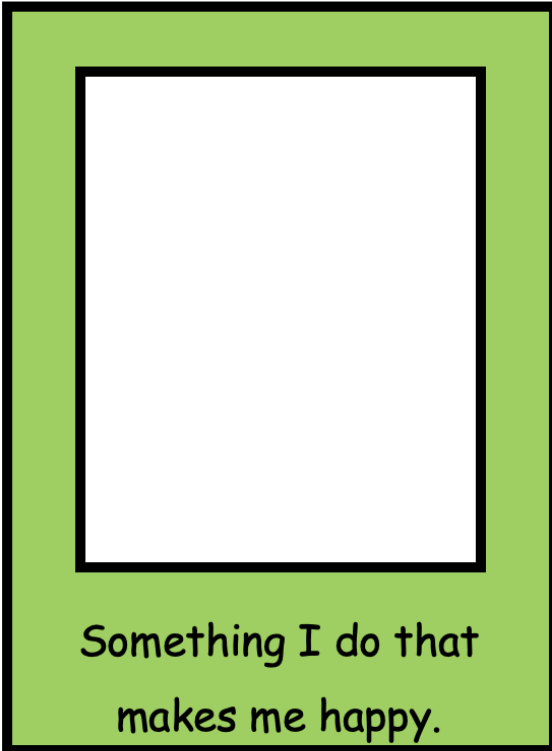
required for some students to think of sources of happiness in their lives to add to their 'What Makes Me Happy' worksheet.

- **Differential Product / Response:** More-able students may be encouraged to write under their illustrations of sources of happiness in their lives.

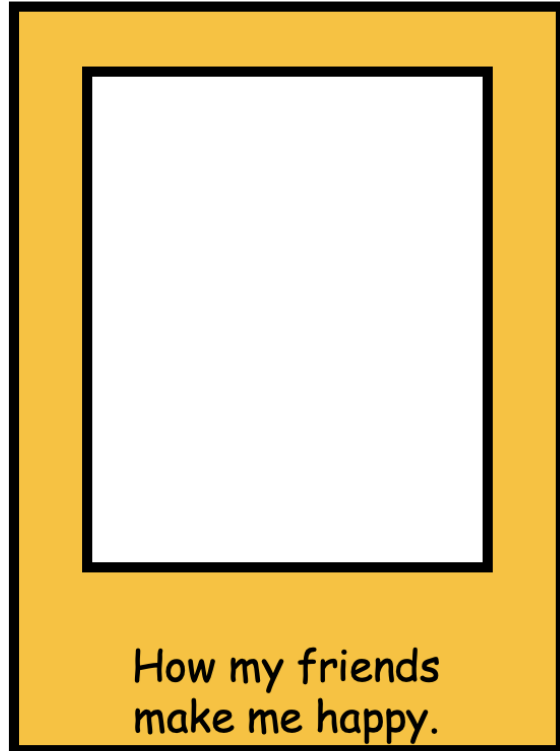
Extension Activities:

- Larger illustrations of students' favorite source of happiness.
- Narrative writing activities on the same topic.
- Circle time discussion on finding happiness and making others happy.

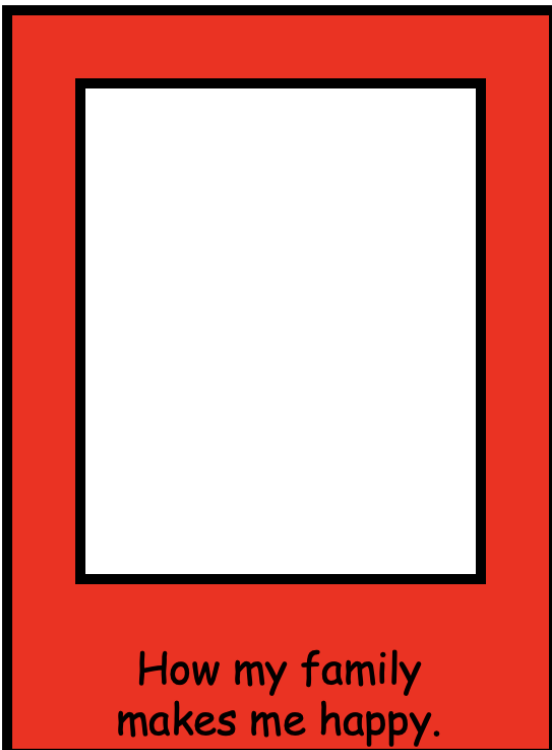
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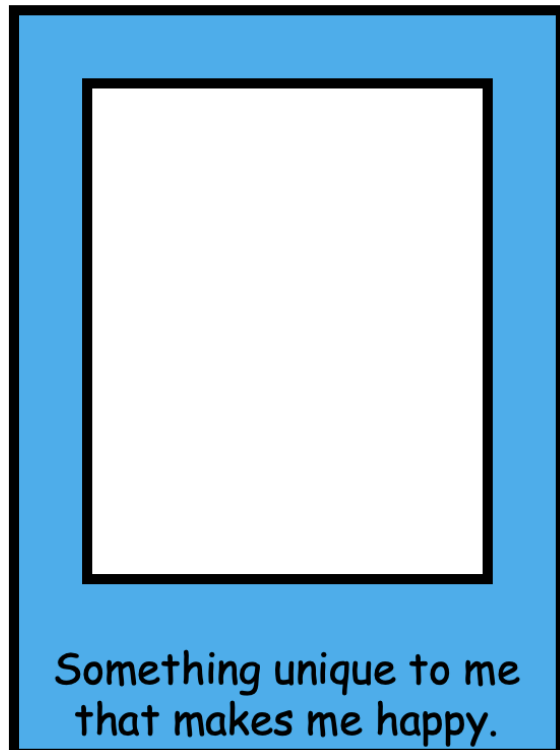
Something I do that makes me happy.



How my friends make me happy.



How my family makes me happy.



Something unique to me that makes me happy.