



GROWTH MINDSET

Sample Strategies

Growth mindset is the belief that you can grow your talents and abilities with effort. Students with a growth mindset see effort as necessary for success, embrace challenges, learn from criticism, and persist in the face of setbacks.ⁱ They might ask the teacher to demonstrate a different way to solve a problem, volunteer answers in class even when unsure, or seek out challenging problems. For a more detailed description of growth mindset, [click here](#).ⁱⁱ

Transforming Education has developed a **toolkit** to help educators learn more about growth mindset. The toolkit includes a more detailed explanation of growth mindset, video clips summarizing the supporting research and capturing students' own experiences related to growth mindset, as well as a variety of strategies that teachers can use to help students develop a growth mindset. To download the Growth Mindset Toolkit, [click here](#).ⁱⁱⁱ

STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORTING STUDENTS' GROWTH MINDSET

Below is a list of strategies that can be integrated into any curriculum and adapted for various grade levels. These approaches can encourage students to use effective learning strategies, exert effort, embrace challenges, and persist through difficulties.

Focus on process over product. Emphasize process and perseverance by posting students' work in progress, instead of only finished products, so that students can see how work evolves with effort and feedback.^{iv}

"Be a detective." Nurture a culture that tolerates risk and mistakes by portraying challenges as fun and exciting, while portraying easy tasks as boring and less useful for the brain. When students initially struggle or make mistakes, use it as an opportunity to learn how to try different strategies if the first ones don't work—how to step back and think about what to try next, like a detective solving a mystery.^v

Embrace mistakes as part of the learning process. Communicate your growth mindset goals by writing your students a letter about how mistakes are opportunities to learn." See this [example](#) of a teacher's welcome back letter.^{vi}

Set high expectations. Communicate high learning expectations in your classroom by using phrases from Mindset Work's helpful Growth Mindset Framing [Tool](#).^{vii}

Talk up strategies and efforts. Use targeted language that focuses attention on students' strategies and efforts, rather than results. Doing so conveys the belief that consistent effort leads to desirable results and encourages students to persist and pursue greater challenges. For example, "You got a great score! You must have worked hard to figure out those problems," or, "Tell me about the different strategies you used to get to that answer."^{viii} Refer to this [Growth Mindset Feedback Tool](#)^{ix} for helpful language frames to encourage students along the way.

The Struggle is Good. Normalize struggle as part of the learning process and emphasize reflection by modeling and guiding student learning through a think-aloud. Watch this [video](#)^x for ideas on targeted strategies.



Try a Different Way. When students initially struggle or make mistakes, use that as an opportunity to teach students how to try different strategies if the first ones don't work. Invite them to step back and think about what to try next. For example, *"You tried to rework this sentence, but you still need more colorful detail to bring your story to life. Can you find a book that might give you ideas? Think of a book that helps you paint a picture in your mind."*

I Believe You Can. Use [wise critiques](#)^{xi} when providing feedback to your students, pre-empting each feedback statement with the following: *"I'm giving you these comments because I have very high expectations and I know that you can reach them."*

Effective Effort. Work with students to assess their perceived level of learning and effective effort by using this [Effective Effort Rubric](#)^{xii} as their guide. Have students rate themselves first. Then, have a discussion about how you both rated the student's effort. Establish working goals about how the student can improve.

GRADE-SPECIFIC STANDALONE LESSONS & ACTIVITIES

Below is a list of standalone lessons about growth mindset, categorized by grade levels. However, keep in mind that all the lessons are adaptable for students of different grade levels than those indicated.

Elementary School

- Teach students about the importance of trying new and challenging things [here](#).^{xiii}
- Assign mindset-related writing prompts [here](#).^{xiv} Students' journal entries can help you and them see whether and how their mindsets shift over time.
- Explore a video series with accompanying activities about learning to have a growth mindset by visiting [The Mojo Show's Growth Mindset website](#).^{xv}
- Explore the difference between a growth and a fixed mindset using *The Day The Crayons Quit* for a guided discussion [here](#).^{xvi}

Middle School and High School

- Discuss an article about brain research with your students. The article can be found [here](#).^{xvii} Have students write a letter giving advice to a friend who is struggling based on what they learned from the article.
- Help students develop a growth mindset by learning about neuroscience. Watch this 2-minute [video](#)^{xviii} together to guide your discussion.
- Study a novel about learning from loss and overcoming adversity. See [this list](#) for sample books.^{xix}
- Explore a growth mindset lesson plan developed by Khan Academy & PERTS [here](#).^{xx}



Growth Mindset: Additional Readings & Resources

Readings	Videos	Websites & Other Learning Tools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even Geniuses Work Hard: Strategies for Developing a Growth Mindset^{xxi} • The Power of Mistakes: Creating a Risk-Tolerant Culture at Home and School^{xxii} • Students' View of Intelligence Can Help Grades^{xxiii} • Develop A Growth Mindset in High School Students – Practitioner Brief^{xxiv} • 'Growth Mindset' Gaining Traction as School Improvement Strategy^{xxv} • The Atlantic's "How Praise Became a Consolation Prize"^{xxvi} • Celtics' Brad Stevens Discusses a Growth Mindset^{xxvii} • Growth Mindset Read-Aloud Books & Teacher Readings^{xxviii} • Mindsets for the 21st Century and Beyond^{xxix} • What We Know About Growth Mindset from Scientific Research^{xxx} 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview on Growth Mindset with Carol Dweck and Greg Walton^{xxxi} • TEDx Talk on Mindsets and Success^{xxxii} • Carol Dweck's TED Talk on the power of believing that you can improve^{xxxiii} 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MindsetKit's Professional Learning Series^{xxxiv} • TransformEd's Growth Mindset Toolkit^{xxxv} • A detailed definition of Growth Mindset from Carol Dweck's <i>Mindset</i>^{xxxvi} • MindsetKit.org's "About Growth Mindset"^{xxxvii} •

Find an online board with these growth mindset strategies and other resources online at: www.bitly.com/TE_GMstrategies



SOURCES

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- ⁱⁱ Transforming Education (2014). [Introduction to Growth Mindset](#).
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- ^v Dweck, C. (2010). [Even Geniuses Work Hard: Strategies for Developing a Growth Mindset](#). *Educational Leadership*, 68(1).
- ^{vi} Mindset Works (2016). [Welcome Back Letter](#).
- ^{vii} Mindset Works (2016). [Growth Mindset Framing Tool](#).
- ^{viii} Mindset Works (2017). [Teacher Practices: How Praise and Feedback Impact Student Outcomes](#).
- ^{ix} Mindset Works (2016). [Growth Mindset Feedback Tool](#).
- ^x Teaching Channel. [Encouraging Students to Persist through Challenges](#).
- ^{xi} Stanford SPARQ. [Wise Critiques Help Students Succeed](#).
- ^{xii} Mindset Works (2016). [Effective Effort Rubric](#).
- ^{xiii} Maria B. (2015). [Growth Mindset \(Kindergarten\)](#). *Mindset Kit*.
- ^{xiv} Rhonda M. (2015). [Mindset Assessments \(Journal Writing in 2nd Grade\)](#). *Mindset Kit*.
- ^{xv} Class Dojo. [Growth Mindset](#).
- ^{xvi} [Growth vs. Fixed Mindset Lesson](#).
- ^{xvii} Mindset Works (2016). [You Can Grow Your Intelligence](#).
- ^{xviii} PERTS (2015). [Explain the Neuroscience](#). *Mindset Kit*.
- ^{xix} Ward, R. (2017). [Young Adult Novels that Teach a Growth Mindset](#). *Edutopia*.
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- ^{xxii} Blackwell, L. (2018). [The Power of Mistakes: Creating a Risk-Tolerant Culture at Home and Culture](#). *Mindset Works Blog*.
- ^{xxiii} Trudeau, M. (2007). [Students' View of Intelligence Can Help Grades](#). *NPR Morning Edition*.
- ^{xxiv} [Developing a Growth Mindset among High School Students](#). *National Center on Scaling Up Effective Schools Practitioner Brief*.
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- ^{xxxv} Transforming Education (2014). [Growth Mindset Toolkit](#).
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- ^{xxxvii} PERTS (2015). [About Growth Mindset](#). *Mindset Kit*.