



MINDFUL SCHOOLS 6-12 SAMPLE

6-12 Curriculum, Lesson 2

6-12 Student Journal, Lesson 2

Mindful Schools' vision is for all children to learn in “mindful schools” that nurture a new generation of leaders to create a more equitable and thriving world.

Developed by educators, for educators, the Mindful Schools approach provides an accessible pathway for educators to bring mindfulness to their classrooms, through professional development and K-12 curriculum training for educators, community resources and events, and a national network of schoolwide mindfulness programs.

The complete Mindful Schools K-12 Curriculum is available in the 201: Mindfulness in the Classroom course, a comprehensive 8-week training for educators.

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About the Mindful Schools K-12 Curriculum

The Mindful Schools K-12 Curriculum consists of:

- 20 lessons for students Kindergarten through 5th grade and
- 24 lessons for 6th-12th graders

The lessons unfold in a progression that supports students in cultivating mindful awareness, and then utilizing mindfulness practices in a variety of contexts.

The goals of each lesson in this curriculum are:

1. To articulate the **relevance of mindfulness** for students and help them make connections about how they might **use mindfulness in their daily life**
2. To provide basic instructions and support to **empower students in their capacity for self-awareness and self-regulation**
3. To provide time for **direct experience with mindfulness** through formal practice
4. To create emotional safety sufficient for students to **share and explore their inner experience**

Important Frameworks

Below are the frameworks that inform our approach in designing and delivering our educator trainings and the Mindful Schools K-12 Curriculum.



An Embodied Approach

Both teacher and student explore the dynamic, real-time awareness of their inner experience (emotions, sensations, movements, thoughts, and biases) and outer experience (environment and context, the physical space and individuals around them), and how these experiences impact and are felt in the body.



Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy

Lessons are designed to start with what students already know, to meet students where they are, and to center students' cultural lived experience, thus helping teachers to foster a sense of belonging and agency.



A Constructivist Approach

The teacher facilitates an experience where students can learn and discover through personal inquiry and exploration.



Critical Pedagogy

The teacher supports students in understanding their own lived experiences, examining power dynamics and systems of oppression, and fostering individual and collective agency, empowerment, and action.

The complete Mindful Schools K-12 Curriculum and Teaching Kit are available in the **201: Mindfulness in the Classroom** course, a comprehensive 8-week training for educators. The course provides multiple models of implementation so that educators are equipped to teach lessons in different configurations, time-frames, and classroom contexts.

Mindfulness and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

Mindfulness teaches strategies and techniques to cultivate emotion and attention regulation skills, giving students a solid foundation that makes it possible to effectively engage in both social-emotional and academic learning.

Most adults and children experience various levels of dysregulation in their nervous system throughout the day, whether caused by minor distractions and stressors or more pervasive and persistent trauma. States of stress, reactivity, or conflict can inhibit functioning in critical parts of the brain, making it challenging to access social-emotional, relational, and critical thinking skills. In order to be able to learn effectively, and engage and connect with others, **we need strategies to regulate our attentional and emotional systems.**

In order for self-regulation techniques to work in stressful or overwhelming situations, they must be practiced when the system is more relaxed and at ease. In addition to the curriculum, mindfulness can be an integral part of the school day and classroom culture, giving students many opportunities to **practice** these simple, yet powerful strategies throughout their day. With these foundational skills, students can *then* start to effectively engage in social-emotional and academic learning.

SEL programs encourage students to “stop” or “calm down” before acting—but often don’t explicitly teach concrete skills for this crucial first step. **Mindfulness is a critical missing ingredient that empowers students to shift gears in the brain and nervous system and bring their executive function back online.**

The Mindful Schools K-12 Curriculum Supports Nervous System Regulation

Emotion Regulation



- Emotional Awareness
- Impulse Control
- Navigating Stress and Overwhelm

Attention Regulation



- Focus and Concentration
- Executive Function
- Paying Attention on Purpose

With simple, engaging, and inclusive practices, in language that students can understand, the Mindful Schools K-12 Curriculum provides a foundation for and serves to reinforce programs addressing the social, emotional, and relational needs of school communities. By targeting the critical skills of attentional control and emotion regulation, **mindfulness builds student self-regulation to a greater extent than social-emotional programs alone.**

Mindful Schools offers an empowering program for teachers and students that is:



Research-based



Trauma-sensitive



Asset-based

How to Use This Curriculum

We suggest teaching **one lesson** from the curriculum **each week**, and then **incorporating the practice from the lesson throughout the week**. This allows students time to experiment with each practice and integrate it over time, and ultimately notice which practices are most supportive for them.

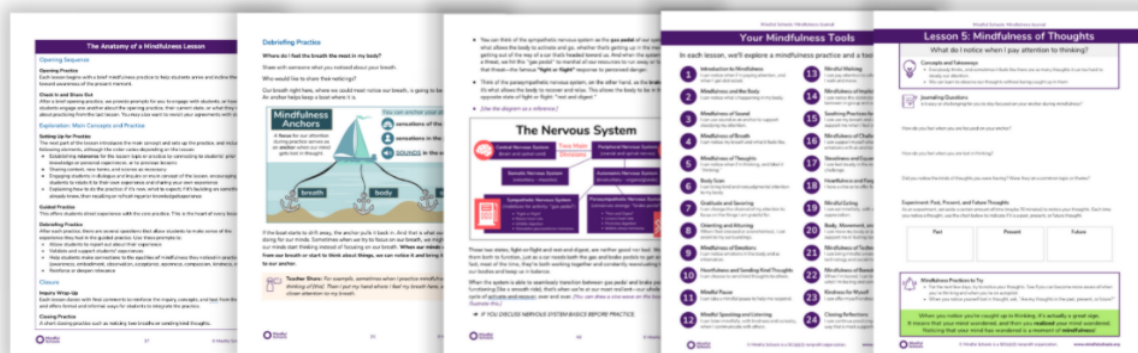
The lessons as written are intended to be completed in **15-20 minutes**. That said, in a cohesive and expressive class environment, exploration and conversation **may extend the lesson time beyond 20 minutes**. We've erred on the side of giving more information and options (rather than less).

Mindful Schools 6-12 Curriculum At-a-Glance

The Mindful Schools 6-12 Curriculum, with twenty-four lessons, supports student exploration of the following applications of mindfulness: Body, Senses, Breath, Thoughts, Emotions, and Heartfulness.

Lessons 1-7 can be considered the foundational series. Lessons 8-14 can be considered a secondary or applied series, deepening students' exploration of the first seven lessons. 15-24, while written sequentially, could be offered as "stand-alone" lessons, once the first 14 lessons have been taught.

#	6-12 Lesson	#	6-12 Lesson
1	Understanding Attention: Intro to Mindfulness	13	Mindful Walking
2	Supporting Attention: Mindfulness and the Body	14	Mindfulness of Implicit Bias
3	Steadying Attention with Anchors: Sound	15	Soothing Practices for Regulation
4	Steadying Attention with Anchors: Breath	16	Mindfulness of Difficult Emotions and Anger
5	Steadying Attention with Anchors: Thoughts	17	Steadiness and Equanimity
6	Steadying Attention with Anchors: The Body Scan	18	Forgiveness and Heartfulness
7	Gratitude and Savoring	19	Mindful Eating
8	Orienting and Attuning: Mindfulness of Overwhelm	20	Body, Movement, and Mood
9	Mindfulness of Emotions	21	Mindfulness of Technology
10	Heartfulness and Sending Kind Thoughts	22	Mindfulness of Boredom
11	Mindful Pause	23	Kindness for Myself
12	Mindful Communication and Listening	24	Closing Reflection and Gratitude



SAMPLE 6-12 Curriculum, Lesson 2

Supporting Attention: Mindfulness and the Body

Summary

This lesson builds on the previous lesson by exploring the relationship between the body and the quality of our attention. Rather than prioritizing stillness in the body, we invite students to explore what movement feels like and what stillness feels like. In addition, students will explore what is supportive to them in steadying their attention. This lesson also establishes an Opening Sequence for mindfulness lessons.

Objectives

In this lesson, students will:

- Consider the relationship between their body and the quality of their attention.
- Practice a mindfulness of the body exercise to explore stillness, sensation, and movement in the body.

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Inquiry

What does it feel like when my body is still? What does it feel like when my body isn't still?



Practice

Mindfulness of the Body



Concept

Attention is a physical task.



Tool

I can notice what's happening in my body.

Special Considerations or Questions

- In this lesson, you can introduce students to your Opening Sequence for each lesson. While you can vary this based on the time you have available and your own teaching style, we recommend the following as an opening sequence:¹
 - Ring the vibratone and notice three breaths.
 - Check in with students and inquire what students noticed about the practice from the previous lesson when they tried it at home. This can be a great time to have students share their reflections from the previous lesson's journal page.
- The essential part of this lesson is giving students an experience of paying attention to their body, both when it is moving and when it is still. We want to help their nervous systems recognize that it's possible to slow down, and be still and relaxed, if even for just a few moments.

¹ See Appendix for more information about Opening Sequences for lessons.

Opening Sequence

6-12 Lesson 2

Opening Practice

Mindfulness is about paying attention in a kind and curious way. Starting today, we will open each lesson with a short mindfulness practice to orient our attention and prepare ourselves for our mindfulness lesson. First, I'll ring the vibratone and we'll notice three breaths together, paying attention to the breath with kindness and curiosity. You can close your eyes if you'd like, or keep them open.

[Ring the vibratone and notice three breaths.]

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Check In and Share Out

Take a moment to just notice how you feel right now, after a few moments of directing your attention to your breathing. Maybe you can notice sensations in your body, or thoughts you are having, or any emotions that are present. *[Invite students to share what they notice.]*

Exploration: Main Concepts and Practice

6-12 Lesson 2

Setting Up for Practice

Based on our last lesson, and your experimenting with mindfulness over the last several days, what is your working definition of mindfulness? What words or phrases might we use to describe or define it?

Mindfulness is paying attention to what's happening right now in a kind and curious way. We can notice our thoughts, emotions, sensations, and the environment and people around us with lots of kindness and curiosity.

In our last lesson, we practiced noticing what it's like to pay attention on purpose, and what we notice about our minds wandering. What did you notice when you practiced this on your own? *[If students indicate they did not practice, you can normalize that by mentioning that forgetting to practice is yet another example of how we get distracted; you can also normalize that it can feel hard at first to make the time or space to practice. When students indicate they did practice on their own, you can ask follow-up questions.]*

- Were you able to notice times you were paying attention and times you were distracted?
[Reinforce that the moment of noticing distraction is the moment of mindfulness.]
- Were you able to notice times when you were paying attention or focused?
 - What were you doing during those times? What supported you in being able to pay attention?
- Were you able to notice times when you weren't paying attention or distracted?
 - What were you doing during those times? What made it challenging to pay attention? What distracted you?
- What supported you in realizing that you weren't paying attention?

[Students may report times when they were more focused as times when they were moving or active: playing sports, playing an instrument, engaged in conversation. Be sure not to praise “focus” as good or “distraction” as bad. Noticing either state is mindfulness!]

Let’s continue experimenting with paying attention.

Mindfulness of Posture

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Right now, in this moment, check in with your posture. You don’t need to move and adjust your posture to how you think it should be. Just notice, right now, how you are sitting, how you are holding your body. **How does this posture feel? How does your body feel? What do you notice about the quality of your attention right now?** Do you feel alert or engaged? Do you feel tired or distracted?

Maybe we can just “freeze” in this posture right now to really notice how it feels.

Now, I invite you to come into a mindful posture. If you’re willing and able, try placing both feet on the floor, and bring yourself into an upright posture. You can think of this posture as being “upright, but not uptight.” See if you can lengthen your spine, perhaps rolling the shoulders back and then down. If there are any places where you feel like you can soften or find greater ease by making a small adjustment, feel free to do that as well. And now just notice this posture. What does this feel like? How does your body feel? What is the quality of your attention now? Do you feel alert and engaged, or something else?

Does this upright posture feel different? If it does, how?

[Students may indicate that this posture is actually more uncomfortable; if so, you can normalize that, as we may not often sit in an upright posture. You can also ask them to explore how they might adjust their body to find ease and alertness.]

There’s actually a really powerful relationship between how we are holding our body, and the quality of our attention. We’ll talk more about this as we go, but it has to do with the way our bodies understand threat and safety, so how we feel in our bodies shapes what we pay attention to. Maybe you’ve already noticed this in your exploration from last week.

This is something we can experiment with—when we notice that our mind has wandered, we can check in with our body and our posture. Is there a way that we can be in our body that supports paying attention?

Today we’re going to learn a basic mindfulness practice. There’s often a lot to take in when we try to pay attention, so it can be helpful to slow things down and settle a bit to support us in strengthening our attention.

We are going to explore what we notice in our body—when we are moving, and when we get still. We’re just learning to slow down enough to be able to look at the ways stillness and movement support our paying attention.

Guided Practice: Mindfulness of the Body

- Take a moment to check in with how you are sitting in your chair. Notice how your body feels right now: comfortable, sore, relaxed, achy, numb, or something else? Maybe it would feel good to stretch your body, perhaps bringing your arms above your head, slowly moving your head from side to side, shrugging your shoulders up and down, shaking out your arms and hands, or moving your ankles in circles. Notice how it feels to move and stretch.
- You can continue with this gentle movement, or you can slowly invite yourself to become a bit more still. If it feels okay, you can close your eyes as you do this, or you could let your gaze shift down, looking at something on your desk or on the floor. **I'll keep my eyes open while we do this to stay aware of what's happening in the room.**
- Allow yourself to sit in a comfortable and relatively upright position in your chair. When we practice mindfulness, it's helpful to be in a position where our **body feels both relaxed and alert**. We often don't think of these things happening at the same time, but see if you need to move or adjust your body at all to find this comfortable and alert posture. You can fold your hands in your lap or place them on your legs.
- See if you can **notice the feeling of gravity**. It's not something we often pay attention to. See if you can bring awareness to this subtle downward force that's always acting on the body. If it feels okay, you can just let your body get really heavy, letting the chair fully support the weight of your body.
- Remember, mindfulness is just about observing and paying attention to what's happening; there's nothing that's "supposed" to happen, and you can't do it wrong.
- Notice if there's anywhere in your body where you're holding any tension: maybe in your shoulders, your neck, or somewhere in your face, like the forehead, the jaw, or around the eyes. See if you can let those areas of tension soften a bit.
- As the body settles, simply be aware of the whole body sitting. This is mindfulness of the body: being aware of and feeling the sensations of your body sitting, noticing what it feels like to invite a bit of stillness.
- As you sit quietly, what do you notice?
- You could think of this practice as a way of stepping back from all the "doing" in our lives and practicing just "being" instead, and seeing what that feels like. It may feel quite different at first since many of us spend most of our waking hours "doing," and then doing more.
- **Mindfulness can be a time when we let go of all the doing for a bit and learn to just notice what's happening underneath all that doing.**
- You don't have to notice anything special. In fact, our experience is usually very ordinary. That's fine.
- In just a moment, I will ring the vibratone to end this practice. When you can no longer hear

the bell, you can gently open your eyes if they're closed or bring your gaze upwards.

[Ring bell.]

- As you open your eyes, notice how you feel. Notice how it feels in the room right now. Maybe move your hands or feet, and slowly look around the room.

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Debriefing Practice

What does it feel like when my body is still? What does it feel like when my body isn't still?

Since mindfulness is about paying attention and noticing, with curiosity, let's take a moment to talk about what we noticed. *[You can also offer students an option to first write or sketch their responses.]*

- What did you notice? How did it feel when your body was still? How did it feel when you stretched or moved your body? What three words might you use to describe what you noticed?
- Did you notice if paying attention to your body and your posture made you feel more alert? *[Students may also note that this made them feel sleepy; you can normalize this response by explaining that sometimes we're so busy in "doing" mode we miss the fact that we're exhausted.]*
- Raise your hand if you noticed that you felt relaxed. Raise your hand if you noticed that you didn't feel relaxed. *[Normalize all experiences that students may have noticed. Mindfulness is about being aware of whatever is present, regardless of whether it is relaxing or pleasant. Students may note they felt more tired or more stressed as a result of practice. You might say: "Sometimes when we're really busy, we don't notice our stress or exhaustion, but then when we relax, it comes rushing into our awareness. Mindfulness didn't necessarily make us feel that, but it allows us to see what is already there. That's not a problem at all. In fact, mindfulness is designed to help us with that. We'll talk more about that in future lessons."]*
- Raise your hand if you noticed sensations in your body. What sensations did you feel?
- What does it feel like when your body is still even if your mind isn't?

Closure

6-12 Lesson 2

Inquiry Wrap-Up

When might it be helpful to try this practice during your day?

In the next few days, see if you can pay closer attention to your body: what it feels like when it's moving, and what it feels like when it gets still. You don't need to "make" anything happen. Just notice! *[Incorporate students' answers from the questions above and suggest times when they could practice this—after exercising, before a test, before going to bed, etc.]*

You could also do this informally throughout your day—just pausing to notice what things feel like in your body.

Closing Practice

I'm going to ring the vibratone and we'll notice three breaths together.

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6-12 Lesson 2 | Supporting Attention: Mindfulness and the Body

After the Lesson

Journaling Prompts

- In our practice today, we explored the sensations in the body when we were moving and stretching, and when we were still. What did you notice during the practice? What did it feel like to let your body be still and heavy for a few moments? When might this practice be helpful for you?
- In your daily life, what helps you to be aware of your body? When do you tend to notice what you're feeling in your body, and when don't you tend to notice it? (It could be certain times of day, certain activities, or something else entirely.)
- Do you have a preference for stillness or movement?
- Tell the story of the last time you were truly, truly still. Where were you and what brought about that stillness? What did it feel like to be still in that way? (Was it pleasant, unpleasant, neutral?)

Extension and Integration

You can invite students to take a "mindful moment" for stillness or a check-in with the sensations in their body at any time during a lesson. You can do this at the beginning or end of class, or as a mid-class check-in if it seems that attention has waned or the class needs a moment to settle after an activity.

"Mindful Bodies" for Grades K-5

To see how mindfulness concepts and practices are intentionally scaffolded throughout our curriculum for different age groups, see the Mindful Schools K-5 Curriculum Sample Lesson: "Mindful Bodies."

Curriculum samples may be found on the **201: Mindfulness in the Classroom** course page. Visit www.mindfulschools.org.

SAMPLE 6-12 Student Journal, Lesson 2




Each lesson in the Mindful Schools 6-12 Curriculum includes an accompanying journal page that supports students in integrating their learning. These pages can be done in class immediately after the lesson, later in the week as review, or at home.

Mindful Schools: Mindfulness Journal


Lesson 2: Mindfulness and the Body

What does it feel like when my body is still?
What does it feel like when my body isn't still?



Concepts and Takeaways

- There is a powerful relationship between how we hold our body and the quality of our attention.
- We can pause to notice what's happening in the body.



Journaling Questions


In our practice today, we explored the sensations in the body when we were moving and stretching, and when we were still. What did you notice? What did it feel like to let your body be still and heavy for a few moments?

When might this practice be helpful for you?

In your daily life, what helps you to be aware of your body? When do you tend to notice what you're feeling in your body, and when don't you tend to notice it? (It could be certain times of day, certain activities, or something else entirely.)

Do you have a preference for stillness or movement?

Tell the story of the last time you were truly, truly still. Where were you and what brought about that stillness? What did it feel like to be still in that way? (Was it pleasant, unpleasant, neutral?)



Mindfulness Practices to Try

- Pay closer attention to your body: what it feels like when it's moving, and what it feels like when it gets still.
- If you notice that your mind has wandered, check in with your body and your posture. Is there a way that you can be in your body that supports paying attention?

There's often a lot to take in when we try to pay attention, so it can be helpful to slow things down and settle a bit to support us in strengthening our attention.

The Mindful Schools Approach to Mindfulness in Education

At Mindful Schools, we support educators to engage in the practice of mindfulness and bring the benefits of mindfulness to the students, families, and communities they serve. **Transforming our educational settings from the inside out is essential to transforming the external challenges in our world.** We believe in the power of educators to lead the changes that will make the world a better place for future generations.

Because this work begins internally, we support teachers in developing a deep, heart-centered relationship with themselves through practice first so they can **embody mindfulness as they teach**. Our programs are centered on four key guiding principles that we believe are essential for bringing mindfulness to education. Our programs are:



Grounded in Practice

We support educators in cultivating their own mindfulness practice and *then* offering the practice to others.



Context-Specific

We empower educators to create programs that are inclusive, equitable, and a reflection of the community that they serve.



Competency-Based

We help educators nurture and develop the capacity to teach mindfulness through a core set of skills, strategies, and knowledge.



Intentionally Designed

We guide educators to align mindfulness offerings with the structures, common practices, and norms of their context.

The Mindful Schools Training Path

Educators may earn credits in Mindful Schools trainings

101: Mindfulness Foundations 4 WEEKS, 1 LIVE SESSION

Learn the science, uncover blindspots, disrupt implicit bias, and explore practice with a trauma-sensitive lens. Learn simple yet powerful strategies for daily life.

201: Mindfulness in the Classroom 8 WEEKS, 2 LIVE SESSIONS

Gain comprehensive training to integrate mindful practices and the research-based Mindful Schools K-12 Curriculum and Teaching Kit in your classroom.

School Implementation Clinic SELF-PACED, 6 LIVE COACHING CALLS

Leaders within your school will begin to guide your organization in creating a whole-school mindfulness program.