



## Building Classroom Community

# *Lessons for the First Days of School*

**Unit Essential Question:** How can we work together to create an open, supportive, and reflective learning community?

Lesson	Overview	Materials	Main Activities
<b>LESSON 1:</b> Getting to Know Each Other (50 minutes)	Students consider the many ways in which a community, especially a classroom community, can impact an individual's sense of identity and belonging and will discuss specific actions that teachers and students can take to foster an inclusive and welcoming classroom space.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reading: "Orientation Day"</li><li>• Handout: What Do You Need? Exit Card</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» Reflect on names and identity in a journal response.</li><li>» Read about a student's experience on the first day of class.</li><li>» Discuss the reading in small groups.</li><li>» Check in about needs through an exit card response.</li></ul>
<b>LESSON 2:</b> Exploring Individual Identity (30 minutes)	Students explore the factors that make up their individual identities and how the ways in which they perceive themselves are similar to and different from the ways that others may perceive them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Handout: Starburst Identity Chart</li><li>• Handout: Don't Misunderstand Me! Exit Card</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» Reflect on identity in a journal response.</li><li>» Create individual identity charts.</li><li>» Start to learn about each other's identities in concentric circles.</li><li>» Share an important truth in an exit card response.</li></ul>
<b>LESSON 3:</b> Complicating the Concept of Community (50 minutes)	Students take a stand on their own ideas about community before analyzing a definition that raises interesting questions about the purpose of communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Handout: What Is Community? Anticipation Guide</li><li>• Handout: Exploring Community in Three Ways</li><li>• Handout: My Classroom Community Exit Card</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» Reflect on the concept of community and debate ideas as a class.</li><li>» Analyze a definition of community.</li><li>» Reflect on your classroom community in an exit card response</li></ul>

Lesson	Overview	Materials	Main Activities
<p><b>LESSON 4:</b> Creating a Classroom Contract (50 minutes)</p>	<p>Students envision a reflective class room community and then create a classroom contract, an important step in fostering and maintaining a community where students honor and value differing perspectives, question assumptions, voice their opinions, and actively listen to others.</p>	<p>None</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Reflect on past experiences at school.</li> <li>» Brainstorm expectations for how students will work together this year.</li> <li>» Choose classroom norms and expectations.</li> <li>» Create and sign the contract.</li> <li>» Reflect on the process of creating the contract.</li> <li>» Set personal goals for behavior.</li> </ul>
<p><b>LESSON 5:</b> Unlocking the Secrets of a Time Capsule (50 minutes)</p>	<p>Students analyze the contents of a time capsule and then construct a historical argument about the story these artifacts tell. Through this process, they experience some of the challenges historians face when trying to reconstruct the past—challenges that they will encounter this year as they consider the validity of sources, analyze primary and secondary evidence, and debate controversial issues in their study of history.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handout: Time Capsule #1</li> <li>• Handout: The Story of the United States</li> <li>• Handout: The Time Capsule and Me Exit Card</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Investigate the contents of a time capsule.</li> <li>» Start a historical investigation.</li> <li>» Discuss factors that impact a historian’s work.</li> <li>» Check in on feelings at the end of the lesson.</li> </ul>