FACING HISTORY AND OURSELVES

Building a Classroom Community

Creating an Environment for Connection and Learning
BUILDING A CLASSROOM COMMUNITY

Creating an Environment for Connection and Learning

This resource collection is designed to help you lay a foundation of community and care with your students. As you prepare to welcome your students into the classroom, whether it is at the start of an academic year, of a new term or at the beginning of a relationship with a new class, it is important to spend time nurturing community, building relationships, and supporting students’ social-emotional needs before introducing academic content. While educators may feel pressured to jump right into instruction, doing the groundwork to create an environment in which students feel comfortable to share their thoughts and ideas can not only help students excel academically, it can also create a supportive foundation from which to overcome challenges and disruptions that might arise during the school term.

This resource is divided into three sections. In the first section, we outline some preparation work that can be done to help you get ready for a new term and/or teaching a new class: this includes reflection prompts and strategies that encourage you to start with yourself, to centre relationships and care in your teaching, and to prioritise self-care. The second section outlines activities that you can do to help your students adapt to the term, feel comfortable in your classroom and build relationships with you and each other, as well as activities that will help create a classroom community. The third and final section outlines opening and closing routines that you can use in your classroom: routines are a key strategy for creating calm, continuity, and predictability if classes shift between face-to-face and remote settings.

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As you prepare to welcome your students back to school this autumn, we recommend the following:

1. **Start with Yourself.**
2. **Centre relationships and care in your teaching.**
3. **Infuse personal reflection and self-care into your practice.**

We have included teacher reflection prompts and suggested strategies within each section to help you prepare to greet your students.

### 1. Start with Yourself

In order to develop classroom communities that are centred around relationships and care, educators need to start with themselves. This process involves reflecting on your individual identity (and considering how this may have impacted your recent experiences both in and out of school), and then becoming aware of your beliefs, values, biases, politics, and emotional responses. Doing so empowers educators to be thoughtful about how these forces and factors influence their interactions with, and expectations of, their students.

**Reflection Prompts**

1. **What challenges did I face last year/term? What surprised me?**
   - What fears do I have going into the new term? What hopes do I have?
2. **Who am I? What factors make up my identity?**
   - What parts of my identity are visible and what parts are invisible?
   - How is my identity shaped by power and privilege?
   - What parts of my identity have the greatest impact on how I interact with my students?
3. **What are my core beliefs about teaching and learning?**
   - What factors helped to shape these core beliefs?
   - How might my core beliefs about teaching and learning influence what my students experience in my class?
   - How do they shape how I want to appear at the moment?

### Action Steps

- **Read one or more of these educators’ reflections:** Secret Teacher: the UK Has a Complex Racial History. Why Aren’t We Teaching It?, Secret Teacher: A Counselling Course Revolutionised My Teaching, or Inspiration from Teaching History 127 ‘Sense and Sensitivity’. Then, using one of these personal essays as a model, write your own reflection in response to the reflection questions included above.

- **Create an identity chart.** Notice which identities grant you membership and privileges in certain groups with power, which ones deny you membership, and which ones shift depending on the context.
2. Centre Relationships and Care in your Teaching

Students will bring a range of thoughts and feelings about their previous experiences at school (and at home) into the classroom. Incorporating SEL (social-emotional learning) strategies to build relationships and develop empathy will help students feel connected to their learning and to one another (and the routines and activities included in these resources are designed to assist educators in doing just that). This is especially important for students who have experienced trauma and/or grief.

Consultant and community college teacher Alex Shevrin Venet discusses four core priorities for trauma-informed remote instruction: connectedness, predictability, flexibility, and empowerment¹. At the heart of this approach lies the relationships between students and teachers. When teachers prioritise cultivating these relationships and developing students’ SEL competencies, everyone benefits.

### Connectedness

When students have a strong relationship with their teachers and peers, it is easier to support their emotional well-being and respond to their urgent needs as these arise. Students need regular reminders that their teachers care about them, and they need opportunities to connect with one another in informal and academic contexts.

**Reflection Prompts**

1. How will I learn about my students’ home and community contexts in order to support and teach them this year?
   - How can I avoid making assumptions about my students and their families based on my understanding of their contexts?

2. What does each one of my students appreciate, need, and worry about?
   - How can I honour what they appreciate in my approach and curriculum?
   - How can I address their needs and worries?

3. Where can I build in opportunities to share my story and learn alongside my students as we start to build relationships and a sense of community this autumn?

4. How can I create opportunities for students to connect socially or outside the academic context?

**Action Steps**

- Design opportunities to check in with your students, and for your students to meet or connect informally with each other, on a regular basis.
Predictability

By creating predictable routines and structures that work for remote and face-to-face instruction, teachers can help their students feel safe and emotionally secure. Using the same routines, such as check-ins and journaling, when learning in person and remotely can help students engage with the learning and can support their emotional well-being.

Reflection Prompts
1. What effective classroom routines and structures have I used in the past that centre relationships and care?
2. Which routines and structures can I focus on this term to help centre relationships and care?
3. What systems can I put in place to track students’ emotional health, interests, challenges, and concerns that they share during opening and closing routines?
4. How can I involve students in the classroom routines so they are positioned to lead them in the future?

Action Steps
- Establish opening and closing routines that you use, whether meeting remotely or in person, to welcome students and check in on everyone’s emotional well-being.
- Organise students into consistent small groups for in-class and remote breakout sessions. Teachers have had success with triads that meet over time and develop a level of comfort and trust with one another.
- Establish a routine for receiving weekly feedback from students about what is and is not working for them in class. Incorporate this feedback loop into assessments as well.

Flexibility

Incorporate best practices in culturally responsive teaching and differentiation by adopting a flexible approach to instruction and assessment. Prioritising what really matters at the moment, even if it means letting go of content, and engaging students in this process allows them to feel a sense of agency over their own learning.

Reflection Prompts
1. What steps can I take to ensure that students have some agency in what and how they learn?
2. How can I help my students draw connections between events in the past and what is happening in the world today?
3. Where in my curriculum can I provide choice for how students engage with one another and show their learning?

4. How can I create authentic assessments that tap into students’ interests and engage them in complex problem-solving?
   - How can I inspire them to think about who they are and who they want to be in the world?

**Action Steps**

- Tap into students’ expertise by inviting them to help shape the learning environment. Invite pairs of students to lead the opening and closing routines.
- Follow Facing History UK on Twitter to stay up to date with our resources and to learn how to incorporate current events into the curriculum in order to build students’ capacities for critical thinking, emotional engagement, ethical reflection, and civic agency.
- Create multiple pathways for students to demonstrate their mastery of knowledge or tasks, and allow them to choose one that aligns with their interests and learning preferences. Consider student-created videos, blogs, podcasts, e-portfolios, and creative projects.

**Empowerment**

A classroom environment that takes into account the social-emotional needs and wide range of experiences that students bring with them empowers students by including them in class decision-making and provides them with authentic choices and tasks. Gen Z is the only generation that has experienced remote learning during a global pandemic. Tapping into their expertise and interests, and giving them voice and choice to make decisions about their learning will develop their SEL competencies and their sense of agency.

**Reflection Prompts**

1. Who are my most vulnerable students, and what specific actions can I take in the first weeks of school to engage them and their families?
   - How will I start the process of relationship building with these students?
   - Who can I turn to for help with this effort?

2. How can I use surveys and no-stakes pre-assessments to understand my students’ interests, learning needs, and learning preferences?

3. How will I incorporate aspects of my students’ identities and values when differentiating instruction for in-person and remote learning?

4. Who in my school community can I partner with to support students with technology issues, learning differences, and English language needs?

**Action Steps**

- Review your class lists and identify your most vulnerable students. Prioritise these students when creating your check-in schedule. Then, schedule individualised check-ins with all of your students. Adapt Activity 14 and Activity 15 from Community Matters: A Facing History Approach to Advisory to help guide your conversations.
3. Infuse Personal Reflection and Self-Care into Your Practice

At Facing History, we recognise that the current moment can be an uncertain time for educators and students alike, with regular routines disrupted and many unknowns ahead. Setting aside time for personal reflection and self-care will help you recharge, so you are intellectually and emotionally available to your students and loved ones.

Reflection Prompts
1. How can I build in time for the people and activities I cherish so that I don’t burn out this year?
2. Where can I seek out opportunities to join a professional community of teachers and educators to share ideas and seek answers to my questions about teaching and learning?
3. How can I incorporate journalling, meditation, reading, or other activities that create space for personal reflection into my daily routine?

Action Steps
- Create a daily schedule for the non-teaching part of your day that includes blocks of time for lesson prep, office hours, other work commitments, and personal activities, such as family commitments, exercise, hobbies, and friends.
- Write alongside your students in a journal. Build in the habit of writing and/or sketching for ten minutes at the beginning or end of each day. Share ideas from your journal with your students. Learn more about Facing History's approach to journalling.
- Connect with educators committed to equity and social justice by following Facing History UK Facebook Page and/or the Facing History UK Twitter account.
- Join a vibrant community of educators and continue your professional growth by participating in a Facing History live webinar, online course, or seminar.
Activities for Building Classroom Community

Educators need to consider how they can create welcoming environments that prioritise care, relationships, and community, regardless of how and where their students are learning. Students will be more likely to engage, take risks, and support each other if they feel a sense of trust and belonging among the group members and with their teacher.

**Activities**
- Welcome to the Classroom
- Exploring Identity and Getting to Know Each Other
- Fostering a Community of Learners

**Navigating the Activities**
The activities are designed for teachers to use in conjunction with Opening and Closing Routines. Teachers can choose from multiple activity options and coordinate with colleagues who may teach the same students to avoid repetition of activities or readings. Each activity includes an extension activity to help students apply key concepts to their own lives in meaningful and creative ways. Teachers should also review our journalling and Contracting teaching strategies before these introductory activities.
SECTION 1: Welcome to the Classroom

Since the start of the pandemic, students will have experienced a unique learning and living experience. We therefore recommend beginning the term and/or relationship with a new class with the activity ‘Looking Back, Looking Ahead’, which gives students an opportunity to reflect on the past year/term and share their experiences. They will feel a sense of agency in the class when they recognise themselves as thought partners in the creation of a positive learning environment.

Looking Back, Looking Ahead

Learning Objective
Students reflect on the past school year/term before generating ideas for the kind of learning community and learning experiences they want to have this year/term. When students believe that they have agency over their learning experiences and are being taken seriously by their teacher, they feel valued and respected. This is an important step in fostering individual student-teacher relationships.

Activities

1. Reflect on Learning Experiences

- Start by acknowledging the uniqueness of the moment. Gen Z is the only generation of students who have navigated distance learning during a global pandemic. At the same time, there has been racial injustice and violence, social protest, and a continuously unpredictable news cycle. For these reasons, it will be important to reflect on key lessons and takeaways from the variety of experiences and use these to inform classroom practices this year.

- Explain to students that they will be reflecting in their journals on their experiences from the past year/term, both the good and the bad, and offering their expert advice for this year/term. Model risk-taking by sharing your own response to each of the following questions. Tell students that you will collect their responses at the end of the reflection time, and their responses will not be shared with classmates unless they choose to share them.

  - Q1: Think back on the past year/term. What were some positive experiences that you had during this time? What impact did those experiences have on you? Consider learning experiences as well as general life experiences.

  - Q2: What were some negative experiences? What impact did those negative experiences have on you?

  - Q3: What three pieces of advice do you have for me and our school leaders that will help make room for your positive experiences and support you in the aftermath of the negative experiences?

- Depending on how much time you have, ask for volunteers to share a response to one of the questions. But be mindful of the unique vulnerability involved when sharing personal experiences before classroom contracting and relationship building. Read the room and be prepared to hold space for whatever is shared. If you don’t feel confident supporting students in real time with what they share aloud, skip this step.
2. Complicating the Concept of ‘Normal’

- Explain to students that for the next part of the activity, they will think about what it means for school to ‘go back to normal’.
- In pairs or small groups, ask students to respond to the following prompt:
  - The pandemic disrupted ‘normal’ school. As a result there may be some positive aspects of that disruption we may want to hold onto this year/term.
    - What aspects of ‘normal’ do you not want to return to?
    - What aspects of last year/term’s schooling do you hope to continue this year/term (and beyond)? How do they benefit you? How do they benefit other members of your school community?
- Then have pairs or groups share their responses in a class discussion, focusing on the final question of the prompt.
- Teachers should take notes on their responses or assign a student note-taker as this discussion can be the foundation for the contracting that will happen in the coming class periods.

Extension

Letters of Introduction

Write a letter of introduction to your students to help them start to get to know you. In addition to sharing some of your interests, include your thoughts about the following questions:

1. What to you is the most meaningful part about working in a school?
2. What strategies do you use to sustain yourself and push through the difficult parts of being a teacher?
3. How are you planning and hoping to maintain these experiences and strategies this year? What are you excited to change?

Have students reply to your letter, introducing themselves and then responding to the same three questions but from their point of view as a student:

1. What to you is the most meaningful part about being in school?
2. What strategies do you use to keep going through the difficult parts of being a student?
3. What can you do to maintain the parts of school that are most meaningful to you? What do you need from others to help you do so?

Consider giving students a list of get-to-know-you questions. Provide choices for how students reply to your letter, e.g., Google Doc, Flipgrid video (make sure they are private and only viewable by the teacher), text message, or a format they suggest.
SECTION 2: Exploring Identity and Getting to Know Each Other

This section is all about helping students to get to know each other and build relationships with one another. The first sequence of activities, What’s in a Name?, focuses on names as explorations of identity often start with names, the first piece of information we may share about ourselves. Then Exploring Individual Identity and Exploring Where I’m From encourage students to reflect on their identities and the factors that make up who they are. Finally, Frame a Special Item helps students understand the relationship between identity and storytelling, and the power that comes with telling your story in your unique voice.

What’s in a Name?

Learning Objective
Students explore the relationship between our names, identities, and the societies in which we live.

Materials
- Handout: The Power of Names Group Work

Activities
1. Reflect on Names
   - Project the following quotations on the board:
     - “If I’m gonna tell a real story, I’m gonna start with my name.” — Kendrick Lamar, Vulture
     - “A wife should no more take her husband’s name than he should hers. My name is my identity and must not be lost.” — Lucy Stone, nineteenth-century abolitionist and suffragist
     - “Tigers die and leave their skins; people die and leave their names.” — Japanese proverb
     - “I’d be stupid not to take into consideration that there are certain things people will not consider me for because my name is Lopez. And I know I can do any kind of role. I don’t want anybody to say, Oh, she can’t pull this off. So those are barriers that you have to overcome.” — Jennifer Lopez
     - “It is through our names that we first place ourselves in the world. Our names, being the gift of others, must be made our own.” — Ralph Ellison, The Collected Essays of Ralph Ellison
   - Then have students choose two quotations that resonate with them and reflect on each one by taking notes in their workbook. If they need a writing prompt to get started, write one or more of the following questions on the whiteboard:
     - Why did you choose this quotation?
     - What do you think it means?
     - What idea about names do you think the speaker/writer wants us to consider?
     - What questions does it raise for you?
   - Have students apply the Think, Pair, Share strategy with a partner, and then invite any students to share their responses with the whole class.
2. Consider the Power of Names

- Project the following questions on the board or distribute the handout The Power of Names for students to discuss in small groups:
  - In what ways can names be empowering?
  - In what ways can names be limiting?
  - What can we do in this class to ensure our names are always empowering and never limiting?
- Invite students to take down at least three ideas for each bullet point.
- Debrief the activity as a class, inviting students to share their ideas with everyone.
- End by having your students respond to the following question: *What is one step you are committed to taking that will help to ensure that names are always empowering and never limiting in this class?*

3. Reflect on Given Names

- Finally, project the following sentence starters and have students choose one or more to explore in a journal reflection:
  - I was given / I chose my name because . . .
  - I like / I dislike my name because . . .
  - My name is / isn't a good fit for my personality because . . .
  - People assume _____ about me because of my name . . .
- Before having students apply the Think, Pair, Share strategy with a partner, inform them that they can choose what to share and what to keep private. It is also important to acknowledge that it can be hard to share our ideas with others, so model risk-taking by sharing something from your journal reflection about names with the class.
- Invite students who'd like to to share their responses with the rest of the class.
The Power of Names Group Work

Directions: Assign the following roles to your group: facilitator, note-taker and summariser. The facilitator will keep time and lead the discussion. The note-taker will type the group members' ideas on this handout. The summariser will report out to the class.

1. In what ways can names be empowering?
   - 
   - 
   - 
   - 
   - 

2. In what ways can names be limiting?
   - 
   - 
   - 
   - 
   - 

3. What are some steps we can take in this class to make sure that our names are always empowering and never limiting?
   - 
   - 
   - 
   - 
   - 
Exploring Individual Identity

Learning Objective
Students will identify social and cultural factors that help shape their identities and then create their own personal identity charts.

Notes to Teacher

1. Using Identity Charts as a Teaching Strategy
   - Identity charts are a graphic tool that can help students consider the many factors that shape the identities of both individuals and communities. In this lesson, students will use the Starburst Identity Chart to analyse the ways they define themselves and the labels that others use to describe them.
   - Sharing information from their own identity charts with peers can help students build relationships, break down stereotypes, and start to build a classroom community. In this way, identity charts can be used as an effective classroom community-building tool. It is important to remember that your students may not know each other yet and have not established norms and expectations for their interactions with one another. Because identity is personal and can be difficult to discuss, students should have a choice about what aspects of their identities they share with you and others in the class.
   - Modelling the identity chart activity by creating your own starburst on the board sends the powerful message that you are willing to take risks and engage in the collective effort of building a strong classroom community. Also, as with journaling alongside your students, engaging in activities that involve sharing stories demonstrates that you are a participant in the learning along with your students and lets them start to build a meaningful relationship with you as you get to know them in the opening weeks of school.

Materials:
- Handout: Starburst Identity Chart
- Handout: Don’t Misunderstand Me! Exit Card

Activities
1. Reflect on Your Identity with a Journal Response
   - Ask students to respond to the following two questions in a journal entry. They can list the first seven to ten ideas that come to mind for each question. Project or write the questions on the board one at a time so students can focus separately on each one.
     - Who am I? What words or phrases would you use to describe yourself?
     - How might others (family, friends, teachers, mentors, strangers) describe you?

2. Create Individual Identity Charts
   - Pass out the Starburst Identity Chart handout and explain to students that they will be transferring ideas from their journal to the charts in order to capture how they see themselves (arrows pointing outward) and how others perceive them (arrows pointing inward). Model the activity on the board, using ideas from your journal entry that you feel comfortable sharing to create an identity chart.
for yourself. Let students know that they might not use all of the arrows or they might need to add more to the starburst.

- Then have students create their own identity charts on their handouts. Inform students that they will be able to keep their handouts private, but they will be discussing aspects of their identities that they feel comfortable sharing with a partner.

3. Start to Learn about Each Other’s Identities

- Project the four questions and ask students to respond to the questions in their books:
  - What is the most important part of your identity? What is a story that explains its significance to you?
  - What is one thing that you want other students in the class to know about your identity, and why?
  - Do you think you see yourself differently to how others might see you? Explain your view.
  - Who is a historical or fictional figure that you identify with or admire, and why?

- Invite students to share their responses with a partner in a Think, Pair, Share.

- Give students who would like it an opportunity to share their responses with the rest of the class.

4. Provide an Opportunity for Students to Share an Important Truth

- Pass out the Don’t Misunderstand Me! Exit Card handout and explain that you are interested in getting to know each of your students so you can help them reach their academic and personal goals for the class and in school. Before students complete the exit card, share your own response to the two sentence starters:
  - One misunderstanding a teacher might have about me is . . .
  - But in reality, the truth about me is . . .
**Handout**

**Starburst Identity Chart**

**Directions:** Write your name (or the name of a person or character) in the circle. At the ends of the arrows pointing outward, write words or phrases that describe what you consider to be key aspects of your identity. At the ends of the arrows pointing inward, write labels others might use to describe you. Add more arrows as needed.
Don’t Misunderstand Me! Exit Card

Directions: Respond to the following questions, and then submit your work to your teacher.

**EXIT CARD**

Name....................................................................................................................................................................

One misunderstanding a teacher might have about me is...

But in reality the truth about me is...

Adapted from Kristina J. Doubet and Jessica A. Hockett, *Differentiation in Middle and High School: Strategies to Engage All Learners* (Alexandria: ASCD, 2015), 165.
Notes to Teacher

- These activities work best if students have completed the Exploring Individual Identity sequence of activities.

Materials

- Reading: Where I'm from

Activities

1. Reflect on Identity

- Ask students to reflect on the following questions in a journal entry:
  1. Which parts of your identity do you choose for yourself?
  2. Which parts are chosen by society?
  3. To what degree are we all a product of our environment?
- Invite students to share their responses with a partner in a Think, Pair, Share.
- Give students who would like it an opportunity to share their responses with the rest of the class.

2. Read and Discuss ‘Where I’m From’

- Pass out and read aloud ‘Where I’m From’. You might choose to read it to the class or use an approach outlined in the Read Aloud teaching strategy.
- Ask students to reread the text themselves and underline a line that resonates with them. Ask volunteers to share the text they chose.
- Then, discuss the following questions as a class:
  - List five things that we learn about Melanie Poonai and her family in the poem.
  - What do you think Poonai means when she uses the phrase ‘a life filled with colour’? What might this phrase suggest about who she is and her experiences?
  - What features of her identity has Poonai chosen for herself? Which ones have been determined by others or external factors?
  - Why do you think Poonai wrote the poem? What message does she want to send?
- As a class, complete an identity chart for Melanie Poonai on the board using ideas from the poem.

3. Reflect on Identity Poems

- Lead a short class discussion using the following question:
  - What has reading Melanie Poonai's poem taught you about your own identity?
  - What has it taught you about identity in general?
Extension

Students craft their own identity poems, using Melanie Poonai’s ‘Where I’m From’ as a model. While you will need to create the parameters for this task to suit your context, consider having students reflect on the following questions in their journals: What experiences are you shaped by? What place(s) do you feel you are from? What is unique to your heritage and upbringing? Students can use ideas from their reflection to help them get started drafting their poems. They can also use the handout Where I’m From Brainstorm to generate further ideas. Encourage them to follow a similar structure to Poonai’s poem.

Provide students with choices for how they submit their poems: typed and printed, Flipgrid video, handwritten and illustrated, audio recording, etc. Collect students’ poems so they can watch, listen, read, learn about, and celebrate each other’s work in a future class.
Frame a Special Item

Learning Objective
Students identify an object that holds special meaning and learn about each other by sharing the stories of these special items.

Notes to Teacher
- Write. Right. Rite.
  This activity uses a short video from Jason Reynolds's video series Write. Right. Rite. Reynolds is an author, poet, and the US Ambassador for Young People's Literature. In his video series, Reynolds shares his passion for storytelling and provides inspiration for young people to write. Speaking directly to youth in each short video, Reynolds shares a writing prompt, which he contextualises with personal vignettes and guiding questions.

Materials
- Video: Frame a Special Item
- Handout: My Very Special Item

Activities

1. Learn about Jason Reynolds’s Special Item
   - Explain to students that Jason Reynolds is an author, poet, and the US Ambassador for Young People’s Literature. Then tell them that they will be watching a short video in which Reynolds discusses some special items that he has framed and has hanging in his home.
   - Play the video Frame a Special Item (02:18). Discuss the following questions about the video:
     1. What did you learn about Jason Reynolds?
     2. What kinds of objects does he have framed in his home?
     3. How is framing an object different from saving it in a scrapbook, album, box, or drawer?
     4. What connection does Jason Reynolds make between framing a special item and storytelling?

2. Reflect on a Special Item to Frame
   - Now it’s time for students to write. Let them respond to the questions Reynolds poses to them at the end of the video. Provide each student with a copy of the handout My Very Special Item and explain that they will answer the three questions in Part 1: Gather Ideas. Model the activity by sharing your own responses to the three questions, or write with your students and share first in the class debrief.
     1. What would you frame?
     2. Where would you hang it?
     3. Why would you frame this particular thing?
   - Debrief by asking everyone to share the item they would frame and where they would hang it. See if any students want to tell the story of their item to the group. Alternatively, students could share in small groups. If you would like your students to do this activity’s extension, provide instructions for getting started, which are explained below.
Extension

Students tell a story about the item they chose to frame. Their story should help convey the significance of the item. Consider asking students to describe the item in detail and then list the stories they associate with it. Jason Reynolds names a pair of sneakers (trainers in UK English) as an example. A story could be a memory of the first time lacing them up, or a significant win or loss while wearing them. Finally, students choose one of the stories to tell in a short piece of writing that they draft in Part 2 of the My Very Special Item handout.

Consider creative ways that students can share their stories:

1. Include a photograph of the special item with their submission.
2. Draw the special item inside of a frame and then handwrite or type the story.
3. Use a video tool, such as Flipgrid or Screencastify, to create a short video, similar to Reynolds’s ‘Frame a Special Item’. Outline the story in writing and then record it on video, perhaps showing the special item if it is available.
4. Imagine the item is framed and hanging in a museum. Title the special item and then write the description that would appear alongside it.
**Handout**

**My Very Special Item**

**Directions:** Assign the following roles to your group: facilitator, note-taker and summariser. The facilitator makes sure everyone contributes to the discussion and keeps track of time. The note-taker writes down key points on this handout. The summariser presents key points from the discussion to the class.

1. **Read the story out loud or to yourselves.**
2. **Discuss the questions. Make sure everyone contributes to the discussion.**

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<td>What special item would you frame?</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Where would you hang it?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Why would you frame this particular thing?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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My Very Special Item Part 2: Tell the Story

Directions: Think about a story that helps to explain the significance of the item you are choosing to frame. Zoom in on a specific moment, such as running a race in a pair of trainers, or the time a treasured toy got lost, or the first text you received on your first mobile phone. Then tell the story in the space below.

My Story:
SECTION 3: Fostering a Community of Learners

In order to understand ourselves, we must also understand the communities to which we belong. The activities in this section lay the groundwork for the important step of creating a classroom contract. Choose between ‘Making Meaning of Community’ and ‘Community Is...Community Isn’t’ to introduce the concept of community. Follow on with ‘Envisioning Our Classroom Spaces’, which helps students imagine a classroom where all members feel seen, valued, and heard in preparation for creating a class contract in the final lesson.

Making Meaning of Community

Learning Objective

Students explore the idea of ‘community’ in order to identify its key aspects and deeper meaning.

Notes to Teacher

- Gather Materials for the Big Paper Activity
  This activity starts with the class working together to explore the concept of community using the ‘Make Meaning’ thinking routine from The Power of Making Thinking Visible, by Ron Ritchhart and Mark Church. Students will apply the thinking routine using a modified Big Paper teaching strategy. To prepare for the activity, gather chart paper and a set of multicoloured markers for each group.

- My Community Exit Card Wordle
  This activity’s exit card will help you learn a little more about your students and the communities to which they belong. After reading their responses, consider making a ‘My Community’ Wordle by capturing one or two key words from each student’s exit card. Start the next class by sharing the Wordle to help them feel connected to you and each other.

Materials:

- Handout: My Classroom Community Exit Card

Activities

1. Make Meaning of the Concept of Community

- Let students know that they will be exploring the idea of ‘community,’ a word that we use frequently but don’t always take the time to define. In order to support one another and engage in challenging conversations this year, the group needs to recognise that they are a collection of unique individuals and members of a larger classroom community with shared goals.

- Break the class into small groups of four to six students and give each group chart paper (with the word ‘community’ written in the centre) and a set of multicoloured markers. Each student in the group should choose a colour they will use for the activity. The groups will apply the steps of the ‘Make Meaning’ thinking routine to explore the idea of ‘community’.

- One at a time, in their small groups, have each student write one word on the group’s Big Paper that they associate with the idea of ‘community’. Each student must share a unique word so as to add to the collective meaning of the term.

- In the next round, each student adds to someone else’s word with a new word or phrase. They can write their word or phrase alongside their classmate’s, draw a line connecting the words, and explain the connection.
Collectively, have students make additional connections between the ideas on the paper, using lines, arrows, and colour to indicate the connections or explaining them out loud or in notes on the page.

Each student then adds a question about ‘community’ to their paper based on what has emerged thus far.

Give students several minutes to walk around the room and read the other groups’ Big Papers before the final activity.

2. Create a Working Definition of Community

For the final step of the ‘Make Meaning’ routine, students rejoin their groups to develop a working definition of ‘community’. Let them know that they should collaborate on this task using the ideas that the class has generated and should not consult a dictionary.

Debrief by having a member of each group share their definition, which you can add to a collective Big Paper or whiteboard at the front of the room.

Take a minute to review the various working definitions and discuss similarities and differences. Ask if any groups would like to amend their definition.

3. Complete a “My Community” Exit Card

At the end of the lesson, perhaps for your closing routine, have each student complete a My Community Exit Card.

1. What is an example of a community that you belong to?
2. What makes you feel as if you are part of this community?

Extension

Students use the Colour, Symbol, Image strategy to explore the concept of community independently. Instruct students to think about how they would represent their concept of ‘community’ visually, using a colour, symbol, and/or image. In the next class meeting, after the warm-up routine, have students share their nonverbal concept of community in a brief presentation.
My Community Exit Card

Directions: Respond to the following questions, and then submit your work to your teacher.

EXIT CARD

Name....................................................................................................................................................................

What’s an example of a community that you belong to?

What makes you feel part of this community?

www.facinghistory.org/uk
Community Is... Community Isn’t

Learning Objective
Students explore the factors that make up a community.

Notes to Teacher

• Prepare for Four Corners
  1. This activity uses the Four Corners strategy. Before class, label the four corners of the room with signs reading ‘strongly agree,’ ‘agree,’ ‘disagree,’ and ‘strongly disagree’.

Materials:

• Handout: Exploring Community in Three Ways
• Handout: The ABCs of Community

Activities

   • Distribute the What Is Community? Anticipation Guide and ask students to respond to each statement.
   • Then explain the Four Corners strategy and choose a few of the prompts from the anticipation guide to discuss. You might begin by asking students which prompts they feel passionately about discussing together.

2. Analyse a Definition of Community
   • Explain to students that they will be analysing a definition of ‘community’ in small groups and capturing their ideas on a shared handout. Each group should assign a facilitator who leads the discussion and watches the time, a note-taker who makes notes on the handout, and a summariser who presents to the class during the debrief. Share the handout Exploring Community in Three Ways. Read Goldsmith’s definition at the top of the handout out loud. Then break students into groups to complete the graphic organiser together.
   • Debrief as a class by having the summariser from each group share their key ideas. Depending on your class size, you might have two groups present for each row of the handout.
   • Then discuss the questions they wrote on the graphic organiser.

Extension

Working alone or in pairs, students use the Alphabet Brainstorm teaching strategy to generate words that begin with each letter of the alphabet and reflect an aspect of ‘community’. They can submit their work on the The ABCs of Community handout or use the handout to brainstorm ideas and then present their work in a creative format of their choice (e.g., spoken-word abecedarian poem, Flipgrid video, collage or poster).
What Is Community? Anticipation Guide

**Directions:** Read the statement in the left column. Decide if you strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D), or strongly disagree (SD) with the statement. Circle your response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Your opinion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communities are made up of people who are more or less the same.</td>
<td>SA A D SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joining a community means you have to give up some of your individual identity.</td>
<td>SA A D SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communities have certain rules for membership. Not just anyone can belong.</td>
<td>SA A D SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For a community to be strong, all members must like each other.</td>
<td>SA A D SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A subject class is a kind of community.</td>
<td>SA A D SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The United Kingdom is a kind of community.</td>
<td>SA A D SD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Choose one statement to explore in a journal response. Copy the statement in your journal and then write about why you “strongly agree,” “agree,” “disagree,” or “strongly disagree” with it. Support your thinking with examples from your own experiences or the world.
“Communities are not built of friends, or of groups with similar styles and tastes, or even of people who like and understand each other. They are built of people who feel they are part of something that is bigger than themselves: a shared goal or enterprise, like righting a wrong, or building a road, or raising children, or living honorably, or worshipping a god. To build community requires only the ability to see value in others, to look at them and see a potential partner in one’s enterprise.”
—Suzanne Goldsmith

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Draw/upload a symbol that represents this idea about community.</th>
<th>Capture the main idea of this sentence in one word. (The word doesn't have to be in the sentence.)</th>
<th>Write a question that this idea raises for you.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communities are not built of friends, or of groups with similar styles and tastes, or even of people who like and understand each other.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Exploring Community in Three Ways

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Draw/upload a symbol that represents this idea about community.</th>
<th>Capture the main idea of this sentence in one word. (The word doesn't have to be in the sentence.)</th>
<th>Write a question that this idea raises for you.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>They are built of people who feel they are part of something that is bigger than themselves: a shared goal or enterprise, like righting a wrong, or building a road, or raising children, or living honorably, or worshipping a god.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To build community requires only the ability to see value in others, to look at them and see a potential partner in one's enterprise.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Directions: Review your class materials about ‘community’. Then try to come up with one or two words that begin with each letter of the alphabet to represent ideas about community. The first one is done for you. See if

Alliance, Affinity
My Community Exit Card

Directions: Respond to the following questions, and then submit your work to your teacher.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXIT CARD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name: ....................................................................................................................................................................</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What's an example of a community that you belong to?

What makes you feel part of this community?
Envision Our Classroom Space

Learning Objective
Analyse a poem in order to determine the qualities of a classroom community where members are seen, valued, and heard. Use ideas generated in this activity as framing for creating a classroom contract in your next lesson.

Materials:
- Reading: Untitled Poem by Beth Strano

Activities

1. Reflect on a Space Where You Know You Belong

   - Share the following prompt with students: Think about a time when you were in a space where you felt seen, heard, and valued. This might have been a classroom space, a sports field or court, a club or activity, a religious space, your home, or some other space. Take a moment to visualise the space and remember how you felt there.

   - Then have students respond to the following prompts in their journals. Let them know that they will be sharing their ideas with a partner.
     1. Briefly describe the space you were visualising.
     2. How do you know that you were seen, heard, and valued in this space?
     3. What were other people saying or doing that made you feel seen, heard, and valued?

   - Ask volunteers to share from their journal reflections. Point out patterns or connections that you notice.

2. Read and Discuss a Poem about Spaces

   - Distribute the reading Untitled Poem by Beth Strano and read the poem out loud two times, perhaps asking for a volunteer to read it the second time.

   - Then have students reread the poem to themselves and choose a line that resonates with them for one of the reasons listed below. Instruct them to write the line in their journals and then write two or three sentences that explain why they chose it.

     The line that stands out to me is ___________ because . . .
     1. . . . of something about who I am. (What in particular?)
     2. . . . it reflects human nature or how people are in the world. (What human characteristics or ways of being?)
     3. . . . of how the poet expressed the idea. (What did they do that makes you feel this way?)

   - In groups of three, ask students to share their lines and why they chose them before discussing the following questions. If students are struggling with the third question, you might prompt them with an idea, such as reflective space, courageous space, intentional space, etc.

     1. Do you agree or disagree with Beth Strano’s idea that there is no such thing as a ‘safe space’? What makes you say that?
2. Think back to the space you wrote about in your journal. In what ways is that space ‘imperfect’? What are examples of people in that space working on it ‘side by side’?

3. Reread the final five lines of the poem, starting with ‘This space will not be perfect.’ Imagine that Strano is describing your classroom. If, as she argues, there is no such thing as a ‘safe space’, what word could describe your classroom as a space where everyone can feel seen, heard, and valued?

- Our classroom should be a _______ space.

**3. Envision our Classroom Space**

- Facilitate a class discussion by first asking each group to share their ideas for the first question. Then have them share the words they chose to describe a classroom space where members feel seen, heard, and valued. Record their ideas on the board or flipchart paper to refer back to when creating their classroom contract. Debrief the activity by asking students to notice patterns.

- Let students know that when they are meeting as a class, in smaller groups, or working on their own, it is important that the classroom environment is one they create and uphold together. In the next class, they will be using the ideas they generated today to create a classroom contract that will establish the norms and expectations for this space.

**Extension**

Students review the poem and choose one line to illustrate with a drawing or represent with an image they find online or in a magazine, writing two or three sentences explaining the significance of their chosen line and image. Start the next class by displaying students’ creations on the wall and asking each student to present their contribution. Notice connections and patterns, such as favourite lines or common images, as well as original ideas that might only appear once or twice.
Preparing for Contracting with Your Students

- Before teaching this lesson, familiarise yourself with the Contracting teaching strategy. Facing History teachers have found that effective class contracts typically include several clearly defined expectations, as well as logical consequences for those who do not fulfill their obligations as members of the classroom community. There are many ways to facilitate the development of a classroom contract, and we suggest one method in the activities section of this lesson. The contract should be considered a living document that can be revisited or altered at any time. For this reason, you may want to structure time to return to the contract at strategic points throughout the year—for instance, to preface a particularly emotionally charged reading or in-class activity, or at the beginning or end of each unit or term.

- The fifth step of the activity, reflecting on the process of creating the contract, is as important as the creation of the contract itself. As we adults know, collaborating to create a shared final product is hard work, and it is important for students to reflect as a group on their process so that they can identify and celebrate their successes and develop a plan for addressing areas for growth.

Activities

1. Reflect on Past Experiences at School
   - Project the following questions one at a time and ask students to respond in their journals. Let them know that they will be sharing their ideas with a partner.
     - When have you felt comfortable sharing your ideas and questions in a class? What happened in those moments to help you feel comfortable?
     - When have you had ideas or questions in a class but did not share them? What was happening at those moments that made you not want to share?
   - Then have students turn and talk with a partner about moments when they felt comfortable or uncomfortable sharing their ideas in a class.

2. Brainstorm Expectations for How Students Will Work Together This Year
   - Remind students that this year, they will be learning about difficult histories and engaging in challenging discussions that might spark debate and disagreement in the group. In preparation, they will need to establish norms and expectations for behaviour that will allow everyone to feel as if they can voice their ideas, pose questions without fear of ridicule, and be heard by others.
   - Explain that in order to create and maintain this kind of safe and brave space that encourages risk-taking and where challenging, and often uncomfortable, conversations and learning can happen, they will be working together to develop a classroom contract.
• Ask them to define contract and share ideas about the purpose of contracts and the types of things they can protect. Make sure students understand that a contract implies that all parties have a responsibility to uphold an agreement. You might also define and discuss norm: a principle of right action binding upon the members of a group and serving to guide, control, or regulate proper and acceptable behaviour.

• In pairs, ask students to come up with three norms that they feel are important for everyone in the class to follow in order to foster the kind of space that invites participation, sharing, and growth.

3. Choose Classroom Norms and Expectations

• Ask each pair to share at least one of their norms with the class, explaining why they think each one is important.

• Write their ideas on the board.

• Ask a volunteer to read the list out loud and discuss as a group whether or not the class feels like they have captured the norms and expectations that they think are important to uphold in this class.

4. Create and Sign the Classroom Contract

• After the class has agreed to its norms and expectations, have students record the list of norms in their books and sign it. Or, if it can be done safely, print out a copy of the norms and ask students to each sign it.

• Let students know that they will revisit and reflect on the contract over the course of the year, before and after challenging conversations, or if one or more of them feels like the group has strayed from its initial promise to one another.
Routines can be a key component of a safe and reflective classroom community, especially at a time when students’ lives and learning have been disrupted by public health crises, racial injustice and violence, social protest, and a continuously unpredictable news cycle. Setting aside five to ten minutes at the beginning and/or end of class to welcome students to the learning space, gauge their emotional well-being, and nurture community can help students experience school as a crucial part of their day that is predictable, meaningful, and supportive.

Routines are also a key strategy for creating continuity and predictability if classes shift between face-to-face and remote settings. The routines recommended here include suggestions for both face-to-face and remote environments.
Opening routines set a welcoming and inclusive tone. They are short and can be done in small groups or as a full class before moving on to the main learning activities for the day. You might begin every class with the same opening routine, assign specific routines to each day of the week, or open with something different each day. The important thing is to establish the first few minutes as a time to engage in reflection, nurture community, build relationships, and mindfully transition into the day’s academic activities.

This collection of ten opening routines prioritises relationship building, social and emotional well-being, and community interaction.

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OPENING ROUTINES

Mood Meter

This routine helps students recognise how they are feeling and learn strategies for regulating their emotions. It also helps teachers understand how their students are feeling so that they can make a plan to follow up one-on-one as needed. Over time, and with repeated use of this routine, students can develop an increasingly sophisticated vocabulary to describe their feelings and work their empathy muscles by listening to their peers and thinking about ways to support them.

Face-to-Face Learning

Display Marc Brackett’s Mood Meter and model the process of reflection for students by pointing to where you place yourself on the graph. As you identify the colour on the Mood Meter that represents how you are feeling, do a “think aloud” to explain how the square represents your state of mind and what might be causing you to feel this way.

Have students identify and plot how they are feeling on a Mood Meter handout that you create (or that they create in their journal). Then ask students to respond to the following questions in their journals: Where do you place yourself on the Mood Meter right now? What emotion best describes what you are feeling? What might be causing you to feel this way? Debrief in a quick Wraparound activity. If time allows, brainstorm strategies as a class that can help improve a person’s energy and mood.

Remote Learning

Share your screen to show Marc Brackett’s Mood Meter and model the process of reflection by explaining where you place yourself on the graph. As you identify the colour on the Mood Meter that represents how you are feeling, do a “think aloud” to explain how the square represents your state of mind and what might be causing you to feel this way.

Next, pose the question to the class: Where would you place yourself right now? First, have students write their colour in the chat. Then have them write their coordinates. Finally, ask them to name their emotion. If time allows, create breakout groups and have each group come up with a strategy that could help someone improve their energy and mood. Groups can share their ideas in the chat, on a virtual whiteboard, in a shared Google Doc, or verbally.
In this routine, students use emojis to name and communicate what they are feeling and to build empathy by listening to others share their emotions.

### Face-to-Face Learning

Project a slide or create a handout with emojis that represent a wide range of emotions. Take into account representation (race, ethnicity, gender, ability) when choosing the emoticons. Title each emoji or invite students to name the emotion for each one. Model the activity by pointing to the emoji that represents how you are feeling and explain what might be causing you to feel this way. Invite each student to choose an emoji or draw a new one if none of the choices resonate with them. Then ask them to write a quick journal response to explain how the emoji reflects what they are feeling.

Debrief in groups of three and have students brainstorm strategies or words of encouragement that might help peers who are not feeling positive emotions.

### Remote Learning

Share your screen to project a Google slide or document with emojis that reflect a range of emotions. Take into account representation (race, ethnicity, gender, ability) when choosing the emoticons and give each one a title. Students will use the chat window to participate, so model the activity by sharing the emoji that represents how you are feeling (or its name, if the conferencing platform does not support emojis) in the chat. Explain verbally or in writing why you chose your emoji and what is impacting your feelings. Then ask each student to do the same.

Time permitting, debrief by gathering in breakout groups, by having students raise their (virtual) hand to speak, or by asking students to write in the chat window. Ask them to brainstorm strategies or words of encouragement that might help other students who are not feeling positive emotions.

Alternatively, you can use Padlet instead of the chat box for this routine. Students create a post by typing their name in the title bar, uploading their emoji, and writing a brief reflection that explains their choice.
Face-to-Face Learning

Before the start of class, project an intriguing image so students see it as they enter the room. Don't reveal the title or any context. In pairs or triads, have students analyse the image using the See, Think, Wonder strategy in order to infer what is happening or what it might represent. Model the strategy by examining the image and listing on the board a few things you see. Then have your students spend two minutes on each step of the strategy. Before groups share their responses with the class, ask them to create their own title for the image. Then debrief in a class discussion before revealing the details about the image.

Remote Learning

Share your screen to project an intriguing image. Don't reveal the title or context. Then provide students with a link to an “Intriguing Image: See, Think, Wonder” Padlet or a Google Doc with three columns or text boxes. Model the strategy by examining the image and typing a few ideas into the Padlet or document. Then lead students through the strategy, giving them about two minutes for each step. Let them review what everyone wrote, and send them into small breakout groups to create their own title for the image. When they return, have one person from each group type their title in the chat or report it to the class before revealing details about the image.

Outline
- Picture This
  - This routine encourages closely viewing, making inferences about, and analysing an intriguing image. After students have experienced this routine a few times, ask them to send you ideas for images. You can also invite them to co-facilitate the routine with a peer or facilitate it on their own if they are comfortable doing so. Sources for intriguing images include the New York Times weekly feature What's Going On in This Picture?, The Guardian's Twenty Photographs of the Week, and any museum collections (consider local, national, and global museums).

- Face-to-Face Learning
  - Before the start of class, project an intriguing image so students see it as they enter the room. Don't reveal the title or any context. In pairs or triads, have students analyse the image using the See, Think, Wonder strategy in order to infer what is happening or what it might represent. Model the strategy by examining the image and listing on the board a few things you see. Then have your students spend two minutes on each step of the strategy. Before groups share their responses with the class, ask them to create their own title for the image. Then debrief in a class discussion before revealing the details about the image.

- Remote Learning
  - Share your screen to project an intriguing image. Don't reveal the title or context. Then provide students with a link to an “Intriguing Image: See, Think, Wonder” Padlet or a Google Doc with three columns or text boxes. Model the strategy by examining the image and typing a few ideas into the Padlet or document. Then lead students through the strategy, giving them about two minutes for each step. Let them review what everyone wrote, and send them into small breakout groups to create their own title for the image. When they return, have one person from each group type their title in the chat or report it to the class before revealing details about the image.
Three Good Things

This routine helps students practice gratitude, an important component of well-being. Students intentionally focus on positive thinking by naming and recording three good things they experienced or witnessed that day. On Twitter and Instagram, people around the world use #threegoodthings to share their own “three good things”.

Face-to-Face Learning

Start the lesson by asking students to sit in silence for one minute, perhaps closing their eyes, and reflect on positive things happening in their lives, communities, or the world right now. Then have them choose three good things to list in their journals and reflect on one that feels most significant to their well-being in this moment. Finally, in pairs or triads, have students share one of their good things and explain why they chose it. Alternatively, share in a Wraparound activity.

Remote Learning

Project or, if your school’s tech policy allows, have students use their personal devices to scroll through some posts with the hashtag #threegoodthings on Twitter or Instagram. Then instruct students to write or sketch in their journals a list of their own three good things and then reflect in writing on the one that feels most significant at this moment. Students can share one of their good things in the chat or in a remote Wraparound activity by unmuting when called on. Alternatively, create a “Three Good Things” Padlet or Flipgrid where students can reflect and share their ideas rather than doing so in their journals.
This routine invites students to consider a meaningful, inspirational, or thought-provoking quotation. Depending on the quotation you choose, you can use this routine for lighthearted community building or, more seriously, to invite students to share their perspectives on important topics and ideas. When you choose quotations that resonate with students and are relevant to their lives, you demonstrate that you care about their identities and interests. The following sentence starters can prompt students’ thinking as they write and talk about the quotations.

**Notable Quotable Sentence Starters**
- The quotation makes me think of/about . . .
- The writer/speaker wants us to consider . . .
- I wonder what the writer/speaker means by . . .
- Parts I agree with are . . ., and parts I disagree with are . . .
- I don’t understand . . .
- This quotation resonates with me / relates to my experience because . . .

### Face-to-Face Learning

Write or project a quotation on the board so it is visible when students enter the room. Start by asking students to reflect on the quotation in their journals, providing them with the Notable Quotable sentence starters as needed. Then ask them to share their ideas in a pair or triad discussion with their peers. Debrief with a **Wraparound** activity or brief class discussion.

### Remote Learning

Share a quotation on a virtual whiteboard like Jamboard or Zoom's whiteboard feature, or in a Google Doc, and have students use the Notable Quotable sentence starters (or their own ideas) to respond to the quotation. Give them a minute to read each other's comments, and then, using a different coloured sticky note (Jamboard) or different font colour (Zoom whiteboard or Google Doc), respond to two classmates' comments. Time allowing, invite students to notice patterns of thinking, places of agreement, and places of disagreement.
Face-to-Face Learning

Write or project the title of the poem and ask students to predict what it might be about. Play a recording of a poem or read the poem out loud. Then have students read the poem to themselves and respond to one of the following questions in their journals:

- What’s worth talking about in this poem?
- What is your favorite line and why?
- What does this poem make you think about?

Have students place a star by one idea in their journals to share in a Wraparound activity, pair-share, or small-group discussion.

Remote Learning

Share your screen to project the title of the poem as students log in to class. When they’ve all arrived, ask students to use the chat to predict what the poem might be about. Play the audio recording of the poem or read it out loud (you might want to share a transcript of the poem so students can read along). Next, have students read the poem to themselves and respond to one of the following questions in their journals:

- What’s worth talking about in this poem?
- What is your favorite line and why?
- What does this poem make you think about?

Move students into breakout groups for a few minutes to discuss what they feel is worth talking about in the poem.
Face-to-Face Learning

If this is the first time using the routine, start by defining the terms. Explain that the rose is a highlight, success, or small win that students experienced recently. The thorn is a challenge, frustration, or something stressful they experienced. The bud is an opportunity or something they are looking forward to. Distribute the Rose, Thorn, Bud handout and have students take a minute to think back on the past day or week and then respond to the prompts on the handout. Model the activity by sharing your Rose, Thorn, Bud reflection, asking students for advice to help with your thorn, and then have students debrief in pairs or triads. Collect the handouts so you can check in on students’ well-being, offering support and guidance where needed.

Remote Learning

Follow instructions for the face-to-face strategy (above). Distribute the Rose, Thorn, Bud PDF or Google Doc handout, or create a three-column Padlet that replicates the handout if you would like to create a communal space for reflection. If using a Padlet, after students have finished writing, invite them to give shout-outs verbally or in the chat, acknowledging the roses and buds in the class and offering suggestions to help peers navigate their thorns. Model by first by asking students to help you with your thorn.
**Handout**

**Rose, Thorn, Bud**

**Directions:** Reflect on recent successes and challenges and upcoming opportunities by responding to the following “rose,” “thorn,” and “bud” prompts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rose</th>
<th>Thorn</th>
<th>Bud</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Write about a recent highlight, success, or small win.</td>
<td>Write about a challenge, frustration, or something that is causing you stress.</td>
<td>Write about an opportunity or something that you are looking forward to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What actions did you take that helped make your rose happen?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Where can you look for support for your thorn?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What steps can you take to help your bud flourish?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[www.facinghistory.org/uk](http://www.facinghistory.org/uk)
OPENING ROUTINES
Fist to Five

This routine helps students assess and communicate how they are feeling. Use this routine to check in on their emotional well-being, comfort level with technology, or something fun, like their opinion about a recent social media campaign, television series, or music release.

Face-to-Face Learning

Seat the class in a circle, if possible given social-distancing requirements, and pose a question. Have students respond by holding up a fist or 1–5 fingers. The fist indicates the low end of the scale, and five represents the high end. Use their responses to spark small-group discussions or a class discussion, focusing on strategies to move everyone closer to the high end of the scale. Possible questions include:

- Fist to five, how are you feeling today?
- Fist to five, how was your time management this week?
- Fist to five, how well are you able to manage the class technology when working at home?
- Fist to five, how is social distancing at school working for you?

Remote Learning

Start class by posing a question to the group, which you can say aloud, write in the chat, or share on your screen. If possible, encourage students to turn on their cameras for this activity, even if they are not in the picture and you just see their hands when they hold up their fingers. If students’ cameras are off, they can write the number of fingers they are holding up in the chat. Explain that you will be asking some questions, and they should respond by holding up a fist or 1–5 fingers to the camera. The fist indicates the low end of the scale, and five represents the high end. Use their responses to spark a class discussion, focusing on strategies to move everyone closer to the high end of the scale, or have students come up with strategies in breakout groups and record them on a collaborative document. Possible questions include:

- Fist to five, how are you feeling today?
- Fist to five, how is your Wi-Fi connection today?
- Fist to five, what’s your interest level for our current project/book/your independent reading?
- Fist to five, how well are you able to access class videos at home?
- Fist to five, what’s your motivation level today?
Take a Stand

This routine encourages debate, active listening, and perspective taking by asking students to take a stand on one or more controversial statements. Choose statements that your students will care about and that will elicit a range of responses.

Face-to-Face Learning

Create a list of statements that will generate a range of opinions from your students. Project or say the first statement and have students respond in a way that works for your classroom space. They can raise their hand a little (I agree a bit) to all the way (I strongly agree), keeping their hand down to disagree. Alternatively, you can use the Barometer teaching strategy and have students line up along a continuum if you have the space so students can do so while maintaining appropriate distance from each other. Students can also sit/stand to indicate their opinion. Use their responses to spark small-group or class discussion. Sample statements include those below; your students will most likely come up with great ones to use as well.

- The Marvel Universe is superior to the DC Universe.
- Domino’s beats Nando’s any day (or two restaurants/foods).
- Basketball is more exciting than Football.
- It’s important to learn a second language.
- The voting age in the United Kingdom should be 16.

Remote Learning

Create a list of statements that will generate a range of opinions from your students. Use Poll Everywhere or another online polling tool to create a multiple-choice poll with the statements. Students can respond by using their phones or web browsers. Depending on the statements you choose, you might have four options ranging from “Yes! I strongly agree!” to “Nope, I strongly disagree!” When setting up your poll, choose to reveal the results after everyone has responded so students aren’t influenced by each other’s opinions. Use the statements above and then invite students to submit their own ideas for future Take a Stand polls. Discuss the results as a class using the chat or by having students unmute to speak.
Face-to-Face Learning

If possible, arrange the class in a circle and read aloud from the first chapter of a book that you think will interest your students. Decide in advance where you will stop, looking for places that will leave students asking for more. Invite students to just listen or doodle in their journals if that helps them focus. Alternatively, show a video of the author reading from their book. Then ask students to discuss the following questions in pairs, small groups, or as a class: What struck you as interesting or important? What’s worth talking about?

Remote Learning

Invite students to sit somewhere comfortable. Then start the lesson by reading aloud from the first chapter of a book. Decide in advance where you will stop, looking for places that will leave students asking for more. As you read, invite students to doodle or write a question or comment in the chat if it helps them connect to the story. Alternatively, play a video of the author reading from their book. Then ask students to think about the following questions:

- What struck you as interesting or important?
- What’s worth talking about?

Students can respond in the chat, or, time allowing, you can send them to breakout rooms in small groups for a short discussion.
Closing routines provide an opportunity to re-establish connection, summarise key concepts, reflect on emotions, and set academic and personal goals. Closing routines can take place in whole-class discussion, small groups, and individual reflections.

As with opening routines, repeating closing routines will help your students internalise the steps and modeled behavior, and eventually students will be able to facilitate routines in your place.

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CLOSING ROUTINES
Maintain and Modify

This routine helps students develop self-awareness by identifying their strengths and limitations. Alternatively, the routine can serve as a means of group reflection.

Face-to-Face Learning
At the end of the lesson, project the following questions one at a time for a quick journal reflection:

- What helped me stay focused and engaged in class today that I should maintain?
  or
  What helped us function well as a class today that we should maintain?
- What's something I should modify so I can improve my engagement and participation in this class?
  or
  What's something we should modify so we can improve how we work together?

Debrief in a Wraparound activity, in pairs, or in small groups. Students can revisit their reflections in the future to see if they were able to make any of the modifications they identified.

Remote Learning
At the end of a lesson, share the following questions on a Padlet, shared Google Doc, or individual exit cards:

- What helped me stay focused and engaged in class today that I should maintain?
  or
  What helped us function well as a class today that we should maintain?
- What's something I should modify so I can improve my engagement and participation in this class?
  or
  What's something we should modify so we can improve how we work together?

Acknowledge the habits and skills that students want to maintain, and highlight one or two that they would like to modify in the future. In the next synchronous lesson, review their goals so they can hold themselves and one another accountable for trying to meet them.
Especially when learning from home, it is important that students have regular opportunities to communicate what’s working and what isn’t so their teachers can help them get the support they need to feel successful. This routine provides a structure for students to give positive feedback about the class, offer ideas to support their learning, and communicate their needs and worries. The compass points on the handout represent the following categories:

- N = Needs
- S = Suggestions
- E = Excitement
- W = Worries

**Handout: Compass Points – PDF/Google Doc**

**Face-to-Face Learning**

Pass out the Compass Points handout and let students respond to the questions. Students can share their ideas in small groups or in a class discussion. Focus first on what Excites them and their Suggestions for improvements in the class. If you have established a strong classroom community, students might also feel comfortable enough to share Needs and Worries, but it shouldn’t be required. Collect the handouts and look for patterns in students’ feedback. In the next class, devise possible solutions to the feedback with your students (without mentioning names). Follow up with individual students as needed.

**Remote Learning**

Project the Compass Points handout or have students access the Google Doc from their devices. Have them respond to the questions on the handout. Then share and project a public Google Doc version of the handout and have students add ideas to two compass points of their choosing. Debrief by talking about one compass point at a time. Focus first on what Excites them and their Suggestions for improvements in the class. If you have established a strong classroom community, students might also feel comfortable enough to discuss Needs and Worries, but it shouldn’t be required.

You can read the suggestions out loud and have students write ideas in the chat for how to implement them. Or you might notice a pattern of feedback that you want to address in the moment. Have students submit their individual copies of the handout so you can look for patterns to address with the class or one-on-one.
**Compass Points**

**Directions:** Think about how you feel in this class, and then share what excites you about the class, your needs and worries, and suggestions for steps that could help make the class a positive learning environment for you.

**Needs**
What do you *need* from your teacher and classmates to be successful this year?

**Worries**
What *worries* you about this class?

**Excitement**
What *excites* you about this class?

**Suggestions**
What *suggestions* do you have for this class that would help to address some of your needs and worries?
This routine helps students nurture their classroom community by sharing appreciation for their peers, apologies when they may have hurt others’ feelings, and “aha” moments they experienced in understanding themselves, the class, or the world.

**Face-to-Face Learning**

Sit in a circle, if possible to do so in accordance with social-distancing guidelines, and give students a minute to reflect on the day’s lesson. Ask students to prepare to share an appreciation, an apology, or an aha moment. Model by starting with your reflection first, and then use the Wraparound strategy so each student has an opportunity to share.

**Remote Learning**

Ask students to reflect on the lesson and prepare to share an appreciation, an apology, or an aha moment. Debrief by calling on each student to unmute and share their reflection. Alternatively, students can respond in the chat or on an “Appreciation, Apology, Aha” Padlet or Flipgrid. Regardless of the format, it is important that you start by modeling with your own response first.

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CLOSING ROUTINES

Closing Challenge

This routine helps develop students’ self-efficacy and decision-making by supporting them in setting personal and academic goals. Whether students are learning in school or at home, the following goals can help get them started with their brainstorming:

- Attend a teacher’s office hours this week.
- Read a book of your choice for ten minutes each day.
- Write a positive comment on a classmate’s social media post.
- Meditate for five minutes. Find a free video online if meditation is new for you.
- Before you go to sleep, list or sketch in your journal three things you are grateful for.

Face-to-Face Learning

As a class, brainstorm possible personal and academic goals, writing the list on the board or chart paper. Invite students to choose one (or create their own) that they can commit to focusing on for the week. Have students do a quick journal reflection to explore why they chose the goal and list three concrete steps they can take to help meet it. Finally, have students share their closing challenge in a Wraparound. Have students revisit their goals during the week to chart their progress.

Remote Learning

Using a virtual whiteboard or a collective Google Doc, have students type ideas for personal and academic goals. Then have students choose one (or create their own) and do a quick journal reflection to explore why they chose the goal and list three concrete steps they can take to meet it. Finish by asking students to type their goal and one concrete step in the chat. Save the chat and check in with students during the week, perhaps asking them to send you an email with an update.
Ideas for Prompts:

The 3-2-1 and S-I-T: Surprising, Interesting, Troubling teaching strategies work well as exit card responses. You could also adapt the Emoji Emotions opening routine for this closing routine by offering five emoticons for students to choose from to express how they are feeling about their understanding, participation, or overall well-being. Here are a few other prompts you might consider for exit cards:

- **What Do You Need?**
  - What is something I can do as your teacher to support you in this class?
  - What is something other students can do to support you in this class?

- **Don't Misunderstand Me**
  - One misunderstanding someone might have about me is . . .
  - But really, the truth about me is . . .

- **Where Am I?**
  - Today I accomplished . . ., and you can see this by . . .
  - I still need to . . .
  - My next steps are . . .

- **Works for Me!**
  - This week we used the following strategies . . .
  - These strategies worked best for me because . . .

### Face-to-Face Learning

Create exit card handouts or project the prompt and distribute index cards for students to record their responses. Regardless of the format, it is important that students' ideas are valued and heard. Use the exit card responses to inform future planning and communication with individual students.

### Remote Learning

Create exit cards for remote learning using Google Forms, Google Docs, Padlet, or Flipgrid. When students are learning from home, exit cards can help teachers build in regular check-ins so students can share what they are feeling, raise technology issues, get support with time management, and connect privately with their teachers. It is important that students’ ideas are valued and heard. Use their responses to inform future planning and one-on-one communication with students.

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4 Adapted from Differentiation in Middle and High School: Strategies to Engage All Learners by Kristina Doubet and Jessica Hockett (ACSD, 2015).