

LESSON 6.1.3.

TIME
30 minutes

CORE SKILLCollaboration

6th GRADE EXAMPLE

LESSON

Myth Buster: You Are an Island

What connects us all?

PREP

- Prepare teacher example (Step 1)
- Print Bingo cards if your students use the app (Step 2)
- Optional: Step 2 can be student led.
- · Slide deck recommended.

MATERIALS

Wayfinder workbook/app, Island Bingo cards

LEARNING OBJECTIVE(S)

- Students will be able to make connections between belonging and their connections with others.
- · Students will be able to define belonging.

THE WAYFINDER WHY

Why is it important to feel connected to one another? When we understand that there are many things that connect us, we are able to create a community where we can all feel like we belong.

LESSON BACKGROUND

- **Defining Belonging:** Belonging is the acceptance and valuing of our own and each others' fullest selves without changing who we are to meet expectations.
- Research: Students who feel that they belong at their schools have stronger relationships with their peers and teachers and demonstrate higher levels of motivation, participation, and achievement. Conversely, those who feel they do not belong show a loss of self-esteem, and report feeling alienated and isolated—all major risk factors for mental illness. Close relationships are better predictors of long and happy lives than social class, wealth, intelligence, or genes, and people who experience belonging show greater levels of positive psychological functioning, including self-esteem, self-efficacy, stress management, and life satisfaction.

Opening Ritual (Optional)

Directions:

- Invite students to share their answers to one of the following discussion questions with the whole class, in small groups, or in the chat if facilitating virtually.
- Students may pick the question they want to respond to. Alternatively, you might pick one of the questions below for the entire class to respond to.

Discussion Questions:

Self-Awareness Check-In Questions

3 min

- What do you think your childhood self would be most surprised to learn about your current self?
- What's one object or toy you loved as a child?
- What's one thing you appreciate about yourself?
- What puts you in a good mood?
- What is something the class doesn't know about you?
- What is something you're proud of, and why?
- If you had a magic button that would bring you anything each time you pressed it, what would you want it to bring?
- To close the activity, praise students for sharing openly about themselves and acknowledge the growth that comes from deepening the connections in this community.

Step 1

Deserted Island

beserted island

Directions

• Invite students to spend two minutes writing or drawing their responses in the Wayfinder workbook/app.

7 min

Student Workbook Prompt:

Imagine you are stranded on a deserted island. You have all the food and shelter you need. Write or draw what else you need to thrive

Learning Support

Learning Supports [Writing Activity]:

- Preview Vocab
 - · Stranded: to be left alone.
 - · Deserted: unoccupied wilderness.
 - · Thrive: to grow or develop positively.
- Sentence Starters
 - · To survive on a deserted island, I would need...
 - · Other than food and shelter, I would need...

· Scaffolded Questions

- Imagine you are stranded on a deserted island. You have all the food and shelter you need. Write or draw what else you need to thrive.
 - (Yes/No): Imagine you are stranded on a deserted island. You have all the food and shelter you need.
 Besides food and shelter, do you need other supplies to thrive? (Yes, No)
 - (Offer Choices): Imagine you are stranded on a deserted island. You have all the food and shelter you need. What would you rather have to help you thrive? (Fishing net/pole, Matches, Hammock, Bug spray, Sunblock, Inflatable raft, Flashlight, Batteries, Book, Game, Playing cards)
 - (Simple Rephrase): Write or draw the things you would need to thrive on a deserted island.

① Educator Tip!

It is likely, with food and shelter acknowledged, students will want to bring people in their lives, which will support the remainder of the lesson. You know your students best. It may be helpful to scaffold the question by sharing a personal example to include someone in your life. Additionally, encourage students to focus on thriving on the island versus escaping.

- Invite students to share with a partner for two minutes.
- Encourage pairs to ask: If you could choose only one thing to bring from your list, what would it be? Why?
- Next, invite students to write one example on a sticky note and bring it up to the board. Read aloud what students wrote.

Discussion Questions:

- What do we notice about what we would bring?
- · Anything that surprised you?
- Why do you think we chose those examples?

® Learning Support

Learning Supports [Discussion]:

- · Sentence Starters
 - · I noticed...
 - I was surprised by...
 - I think we chose these examples because...
- Scaffolded Questions
 - · What do we notice about what we would bring?
 - (Yes/No): Would everything we talked about be helpful? (Yes, No)
 - (Offer Choices): Would everything we talked about be helpful or unhelpful? (Helpful, Unhelpful)
 - (Simple Rephrase) Tell me what you notice about the items we decided to bring.
 - · Anything that surprised you?
 - (Yes/No): Were you surprised by some of the items we would bring? (Yes, No)
 - (Offer Choices): Offer choices for this question based on what was shared during the activity, or by brainstorming choices together with the student.
 - (Simple Rephrase): Which of these items surprised you?
 - · Why do you think we chose those examples?
 - (Yes/No): Do you think we chose these items for a reason? (Yes, No)
 - (Offer Choices): Do you think we chose answers that would help us thrive or were some of the answers silly? (Thrive, Silly)
 - (Simple Rephrase) Tell me why you think we chose those examples.
- Summarize what you notice, emphasizing aspects of community that were named on the sticky notes and in the discussion.

Learning Support

Learning Supports [Game]:

- Preview Vocab
 - Mingle: to move around and speak with others.

Teaching Virtually?

Use breakout rooms for pairs and a collaborative and editable Google Slides deck for writing.

Teaching Virtually?

After completing Step 1, complete this activity extension instead of Step 2: Island Bingo:

Step 2

Island Bingo

This activity invites movement, interaction, and cooperation in a Bingo game.

13 min

Directions:

① Educator Tip!

Put on music while students mingle around the room.

- Tell students that their goal is to complete the entire Island Bingo card.
- Invite students to mingle with one another, writing classmates' names in the corresponding boxes of their Island Bingo cards.
 - Access the Bingo card in the Wayfinder workbook, or <u>print</u> copies if your students use the app.
- The top of each square tells students how to greet each other when trying to find someone who fits the bottom description.
 - For example, if Student A is trying to find someone who has a pet, they should high five Student B before they ask them.
- Students should put only one name in each square and try to find different people for each square. If you have fewer than 24 students in your class, students can use names up to two times on their boards. Students may include their own names in one square.
- When students complete their cards, they should say, "My island is full!"
- Review the Bingo card, reading out all of the names of students from the card.
- Next, say, "While Bingo usually has one winner, this game shows that one cannot actually win without the help of other people!"

① Educator Tip!

This Bingo card includes 24 examples, making it possible for 23 or 24 students to "win" the game. If you would like to ensure every student "wins," download a copy and make additions to the Bingo card.

Step 3

Island Discussion

This activity invites students to reflect on what it means to be connected.

5 min

Directions:

- Invite a student to read the quote on the slide.
 - "No person is an island entirely of itself; every person is a piece of the continent, a part of the main." —John Donne

(b) More Time?

It may be helpful to share <u>why islands don't sink</u> to illustrate the point that islands are connected to tectonic plates and the ocean floor. So, even though they might appear to be completely independent, they are deeply connected.

Learning Support

Learning Supports [Game]:

- Preview Vocab
 - Continent: one of the great divisions of land on the globe.

Discussion Questions:

- First, what is an island?
- What do you think this quote means?
- Is it possible for human beings to thrive without others? Why, or why not?
- In our "Deserted Island" activity, many of us brought people. Why is that?

Learning Support

Learning Supports [Discussion]:

- Sentence Starters
 - An island is...
 - · This quote means...
 - It is possible for humans to thrive without others, because...
 - It is not possible for humans to thrive without others, because...
 - Many of us brought people, because...
- · Scaffolded Questions
 - · First, what is an island?
 - (Yes/No): Is an island an isolated body of land? (Yes, No)
 - (Offer Choices): Is an island an isolated body of land or connected to other land? (Isolated, Connected)
 - · What do you think this quote means?
 - (Yes/No): Do you like this quote? (Yes, No)
 - (Offer Choices): Do you think this quote supports the idea of community or isolation? (Community, Isolation)
 - (Simple Rephrase) Tell me what you think this quote means.
 - Is it possible for human beings to thrive without others? Why, or why not?
 - (Yes/No): Is it possible for human beings to thrive without others?
 (Yes, No)
 - (Offer Choices): Would human beings thrive or fail without others? (Thrive, Fail)
 - (Simple Rephrase) Do you think human beings can thrive without others supporting them? Why or why not?
 - In our "Deserted Island" activity, many of us brought people. Why is that?
 - (Yes/No): Did you notice that many of us brought people to our deserted island? (Yes, No)
 - (Offer Choices): Did we bring people or just things to the deserted island? (People, Just things)

Talking Points:

- Sometimes, we think we need to do things alone in order to be successful.
- But in reality, it's normal, healthy, and expected to work together and ask for help to reach our goals. In life, we not only rely on ourselves, but often on the support of others.

Directions:

• Invite students into a circle, then invite each person to share one highlight (mountain) and one lowlight (valley) from the past week/day/weekend.

Closing Ritual (Optional)

Mountains + Valleys

2 min

Talking Points:

• Validate students' willingness to share with one another.

Deeper Dive

Click <u>here</u> for additional resources or activities from the Wayfinder Activity Library related to this lesson.



LESSON 7.1.3.

TIME
30 minutes

CORE SKILLSelf-Awareness

7th GRADE EXAMPLE

LESSON

Myth Buster: You Need to Be Like Everyone Else

How is belonging different from fitting in?

PREP

Cue 2-min <u>video</u> (Step 3) Slide deck recommended.

MATERIALS

Wayfinder workbook/app

LEARNING OBJECTIVE(S)

Students will be able to identify and discuss how connecting with their authentic selves creates belonging.

THE WAYFINDER WHY

Why is it important to be ourselves even when we feel pressure to fit in? Standing by our own opinions, beliefs, and values encourages others to do the same—our unique qualities are what make us who we are.

LESSON BACKGROUND

- **Defining Belonging:** Belonging is a strong meaningful foundation built through connection.
- Research: Studies have found that many students define belonging as fitting in and conforming to a group, which is a <u>primary objective of young people</u> in secondary school that, for some, is even more important than academic goals. According to researcher Brené Brown, "Fitting in is the greatest barrier to belonging," and her studies have found that people with "the deepest sense of true belonging are people who also have the courage to stand alone when called to do that. They are willing to maintain their integrity and risk disconnection in order to stand up for what they believe in."

Opening
Ritual
(Optional)

To access Thumb-O-Meter click here, or choose your own from our Activity Library.

Thumb-O-Meter

Step 1

Original Object

This activity invites students to identify something unique in the room.

7 min

Directions:

- The goal of the game is for students to identify an object that no one else has. The object they identify needs to meet the parameters of each round for them to win.
- In each round, students should spend one minute, from their seats, looking around the room to identify a unique object that meets the criteria for the round (something blue, something square, etc.).
- When one minute has passed, invite students to move to the object they identified. If
 no one else picks their object, they're one of the winners of that round. If other
 students picked the same object, all students who picked that object lose. For
 example, if the round's criteria was "find something yellow" and three students picked
 a pencil, all three students are out.
- Prompts:
 - · Find something yellow.
 - · Find something round.
 - · Find something square.
 - · Find something soft.
 - · Find something that we use every day.

Talking Points:

- To win this game, you had to not only be different but be completely original and unique.
- Sometimes in life, it can feel hard to be completely original. Especially in middle school, there's a lot of pressure to be more like each other and less like ourselves.

Step 2

A Country Starting With "E"

This activity pressures students to make a choice to stand alone or go along with the crowd.

7 min

Talking Points:

- In the first game, we focused on how to stand out and be different. In the next game, we'll think about what being pressured to fit in might feel like.
- We're going to play three quick rounds of a silent game. I'll give a prompt, and as soon
 as you have your answer, sit down. We'll move on when most people have sat down.
 When you think of your answer, don't say it out loud—just take your seat.

Directions:

- Take students through the following series of prompts. The facilitator's goal is to create some pressure so students feel the urge to sit down just because their peers have. Before starting a round, invite students to stand up again to reset.
 - Think of an animal that begins with "G."
 - Think of a fruit that starts with "C."
 - Think of a country that starts with "E."

□ Teaching Virtually?

To start a round, ensure students' cameras are off. Invite students to turn their cameras on when they've thought of an answer to the prompt.

Discussion Questions:

• How did you feel when you saw that most people had sat down?

- Did anyone want to sit down when most people had already sat down?
- Did anyone think about pretending they had the answer when they didn't?

Learning Support

Learning Supports [Discussion]:

- · Word Bank
 - Surprised, relieved, disappointed, lonely, shocked, confused, nervous, calm
- Sentence Starters
 - I felt...
- · Scaffolded Questions
 - How did you feel when you saw that most people had sat down?
 - (Yes/No): Did you notice when most people had sat down and you were still standing? (Yes, No)
 - (Offer Choices): Were you surprised, nervous, or calm when you saw that most people had sat down? (Surprised, Nervous, Calm)

Step 3

Fitting In to Stand Out

6 min

Talking Points:

- Trying to fit in is really common, especially in middle school. We try on different likes, dislikes, and personalities.
- It's natural to do this to some extent. It's one of the key ways we figure out who we are.
- Before we reflect on what this might look like in our own lives, we're going to watch a video of musical artist Janelle Monáe, who is an example of someone we now celebrate for being themselves.

Directions:

• Play this two-minute video.

Learning Support

Learning Supports [Video]:

- We've provided a summary of the video below that can be shared with students. To translate the summary into a different language to support multilingual learners, click on the translation tool at the top of the lesson guide and select the preferred language.
 - In the video, Janelle Monáe shares a story about how she was fired from Office Depot because she sang too much while working. She explains how her love for music couldn't be contained, even at her job. This experience was a turning point that encouraged her to pursue her passion for music full-time. The video highlights how following your true passion, despite obstacles, can lead to success and fulfillment.

Talking Points:

- Janelle Monáe worked at Office Depot while figuring out how to become a singer and artist.
- Sometimes you might feel pressured to be like others, and this is totally normal. But
 when you follow what feels right to you, like Janelle Monáe, your life starts to feel more
 in line with who you are.

Step 4

Journal

Directions:

• Invite students to respond to the journal prompt in the Wayfinder workbook/app.

5 min

□ Student Workbook Prompt:

When have you tried to fit in?
Was it worth it?
When was it not worth it?
How do you change in order to fit in at home? At school? With friends?
What are some of the pressures you notice to fit in?
Are there parts of you that you keep to yourself?

® Learning Support

Learning Supports [Writing Activity]:

Preview Vocab

 Pressures: the stress or demand you may feel to do something a certain way.

Sentence Starters

- · One time I tried to fit in was...
- · It was worth it because...
- · It was not worth it because...
- I change in different places by...
- Some of the pressures to fit in I notice are...
- · I keep some parts of me to myself, like...
- I don't keep parts of me to myself, because...

· Scaffolded Questions

- When have you tried to fit in?
 - (Yes/No): Have you tried to fit in? (Yes, No)
 - (Offer Choices): Was the last time you tried to fit in recently or a long time ago? (Recently, A long time ago)
- How do you change in order to fit in at home? At school?
 With friends?
 - (Yes/No): Do you change in order to fit in at home? At school? With friends? (Yes, No)
 - (Offer Choices): Do you change in order to fit in more at home, at school, or with friends? (At home, At school, With friends)
- · What are some of the pressures you notice to fit in?
 - (Yes/No): Do you notice pressures to fit in? (Yes, No)
 - (Offer Choices): Do you notice more pressure from friends or family to fit in? (Friends, Family)
- · Are there parts of you that you keep to yourself?
 - (Yes/No): Are there parts of you that you keep to yourself? (Yes, No)
 - (Offer Choices): Do you keep parts of you to yourself or do you show everyone who you truly are? (Keep parts of me to myself, Show everyone who I truly am)

- If students are struggling with this prompt, suggest they consider any of the following:
 - Opinions, beliefs, or interests they have
 - Past school experiences
 - Their home or family life
 - Past friendships they have had

Talking Points:

- It's important to be ourselves, even if it's different from everyone else.
- In the next lesson, we'll think more about why it's important to be ourselves, regardless of the pressures that exist around us.

Closing Ritual (Optional)

Heads Down, Thumbs Up

2 min

To access Heads Down, Thumbs Up click <u>here</u>, or choose your own from our <u>Activity</u> <u>Library</u>.

Deeper Dive

Click <u>here</u> for additional resources or activities from the Wayfinder Activity Library related to this lesson.





TIME
20 minutes

CORE SKILLEmpathy

8th GRADE EXAMPLE

ACTIVITY

The Power of Healthy Belonging

Students watch and discuss a TED talk by previous Wayfinder, Tristan Love, who explores the power of belonging and offers actionable steps to create inclusive spaces where everyone feels accepted and supported.

PREP

N/A

Click here for the Spanish slide deck.

Directions:

- Preview the discussion questions with students.
- Play the video (slide 2).
- Then, debrief using the discussion questions.

Discussion Questions:

- When do you feel like you belong the most? What are the key elements that contribute to this feeling?
- How can schools and communities create spaces where everyone feels accepted, respected, included, and supported?
- Have you ever experienced unhealthy belonging? If so, how did it make you feel? How did you move away from it?
- How do you think the concept of belonging changed over time, especially with social media?
- What is one thing you can do personally to create a more inclusive and welcoming environment in your own community?