

# Gratitude chains - Gratitude

## EXPLANATION:

Gratitude is a thankful expression of appreciation for what one receives – tangible and intangible. We feel and express gratitude in multiple ways. Making a chain of gratitude statements allows the group to share their ideas and experiences of gratitude. Taking moments to consider why we have received or feel gratitude also supports reflective practices.

**YEAR LEVELS:** Years 11 - 12

**STUDENT GROUPING:** Small group creations and whole group conversations

**ACTIVITY LENGTH:** 30 – 40 mins

## LINK TO CURRICULUM:

### Link to General Capabilities in the English curriculum:

**Personal and social capability:** Students develop personal and social capability in *English* by enhancing their communication skills, teamwork and capacity to empathise with and appreciate the perspectives of others. Close study of texts assists students to understand different personal and social experiences, perspectives and challenges. Students identify and express their own opinions, beliefs and responses by interacting with a range of texts. *English* actively assists students in the development of communication skills needed for analysis, research and the expression of viewpoints and arguments. Students work collaboratively in teams and also independently as part of their learning and research endeavours.

## SCOPE OF TASK:

Some notes about gratitude:

- Gratitude is a positive emotion felt after being the beneficiary of some sort of gift. It is also a social emotion often directed towards a person (the giver of a gift) or persons.
- Studies show that when children and students practise expressing gratitude, they develop higher levels of optimism, increased life satisfaction, and decreased negative feelings. Additionally, children who regularly express gratitude appreciate close relationships and feel better about life and school.
- The feeling of gratitude involves two stages
  1. An acknowledgement of the 'goodness' and positive aspects within one's life. These positive acts, gifts or circumstances gratify us, and we are conscious of these circumstances.

2. Awareness that some of these circumstances have evolved outside of our selves. We feel grateful to other people, to animals, and to the world, but not to oneself. At this stage, we are thankful to others.

1. Begin the activity by asking students what gratitude is? Pose questions to scaffold the conversation:
  - What is gratitude?
  - Why is it important to express gratitude?
  - What are the benefits of gratitude?
  - How does it make the giver and receiver feel?
  - Share an example of gratitude that you have witnessed?
2. Ask the students to consider, in these particular circumstances, what they might have gratitude for? Responses could include:
  - The opportunity to come to school
  - Friendships/teachers
  - Holiday or holiday destination
  - Family or support networks
  - Sporting teams
  - Favourite technology
  - A favourite thing about yourself
  - A favourite movie/actor
  - A favourite food item
3. Provide the students a few minutes to reflect on what they have gratitude for and ask members of the group to share some of these positive experiences, gifts or circumstances that they have received or encountered
4. Give students strips of paper and ask them to write on the strips the experiences, acts, gifts or circumstances that they are grateful for. A short sentence can be included giving details as to why gratitude is felt. Encourage students to write on a few strips
5. Fold one of the strips into a circle, staple the ends together to form a ring, slip another strip through the previously formed ring and staple the ends of the new circle together. Repeat this process until you've made a long chain.



6. Once the chains are complete bring the group together and read out some of the things written on the chain links. Ask who wrote it and see if they would like to elaborate and share details? Were there certain things that many of the group were grateful for? Were there similarities and/or differences among the group?
7. In conclusion, ask the group:
  - Why is gratitude important in their context and life generally?
  - What benefits do they associate with gratitude?
  - How can they make their space more positive, inclusive and welcoming with gratitude?
8. Hang the chains up in a space where students can read the gratitude sentiments (for example classroom, corridor, school foyer) and reflect on the positive aspects of their life and the value and significance of gratitude.

### **RESOURCES:**

- Coloured A4 paper or white photocopy paper
- Sticky tape or stapler
- Scissors
- Colour pens