



Why Habits Matter

Lesson #1



ALLIANCE FOR
**DECISION
EDUCATION**

Focus Standard

VAR.7 – Create and track sustainable and desirable habits

Suggested Time

35–50 minutes

Resources

- [Video #1: Why Habits Matter](#)
- [Worksheet: Habits and Your Current and Future Self](#)

Impact

Nurturing positive habits over time puts students in control of shaping the life they want to live. In this lesson, students reflect on habits they have developed, and habits they would need to develop to reach their goals.

Objectives

- Students will define *habit* and describe the long-term effects that our habits can have on our lives.
- Students will identify areas in their lives where they want to improve their habits and develop strategies for persistence in these habits.

Optional Teaching Strategies

- Have students track their habits using a habit journal.
- Introduce the [weekly habit recap](#) sheet as a resource students can use in their journals.

Key Vocabulary

- **Habit:** a behavior that becomes automatic from repeating it often.
- **A habit to nurture:** when we recognize that a behavior improves our life, we can work on doing it regularly.
- **A habit to crush:** when we recognize that a behavior has negative effects on our life, we can work on eliminating it.

Differentiation

- Some students might require scaffolding around identifying habits that can impact their future. Consider giving a few examples (cell phone habits, study habits, patterns in their stress management, etc).

What To Look and Listen For

- How are students describing the impact habits can have on their future?
- Can students identify ways to make habits sustainable?
- Can students create behavior patterns to support new habits and maintain persistence?

Engage (20 minutes)

To open the unit, lead your students in a discussion about habits and their effects—positive or negative—on our lives.

Suggested Prompts & Questions:

- Explain in your own words what a habit is.
- What are some different ways habits impact our lives?
- How much control do you think we have over our habits?
- Many people know they need to change a habit, but they struggle to make or sustain the necessary changes in their regular routines. Why do you think these changes are difficult?

Show [Video #1: Why Habits Matter](#) and continue the class discussion by asking about the positive and negative impact of habits they have developed.

Suggested Prompts & Questions:

- Earlier, I asked you to explain what a habit is in your own words. Would you like to add or modify your explanation? If so, what important changes did you make to your explanation?
- Can you name a habit you have that makes your life better?
- Can you name a habit you have that affects you negatively?
- Name something you would like to achieve or get better at. What habit would you like to form that can support your goals in this area?
- How do you think your habits could have a lasting impact on your life?

Apply (10–15 minutes)

Use the worksheet below to dive deeper into examining what values and goals students hold for their current and future selves.

[Worksheet: Habits and Your Current and Future Self](#)

Reflect (5–10 minutes)

Following the lesson, have your students select one habit from the worksheet to write about in their journal. They will focus on this habit for the upcoming week.

Suggested Prompts & Questions:

Pick one habit from your worksheet to begin working on:

- What do you need to do, or what changes do you need to make, to develop this habit? Identify small steps you can take to make this habit sustainable. Be specific!
- Pick a date this week to take the first steps to develop this habit.

Habits and Your Future Self

	List two habits that can help you achieve it.	List two habits that could hurt your chances of achieving it.
What is something you would like to accomplish in the near future (1-2 months from now)? _____ _____ _____	1. _____ _____ 2. _____ _____	1. _____ _____ 2. _____ _____
What is something that you'd like to accomplish in the distant future (5-10 years)? _____ _____ _____	1. _____ _____ 2. _____ _____	1. _____ _____ 2. _____ _____

Pick two habits to begin working on.

What can make it difficult to stick to these habits? Why?

What small, incremental steps can you take to ensure you either nurture these helpful habits or crush the harmful habits?

Weekly Recap



Recap and reflect on the experiences you've had working to crush and nurture habits this week. This will help you monitor your progress and make any necessary changes during the next week.

	Habit I'm nurturing: -----	Habit I'm crushing: -----
What successes have I had?		
What obstacles have I run into?		
What changes can you make to help you stay motivated and track your progress?		
What rewards can help you stay motivated this week?		
How will this reward be helpful? Consider any possible negative side-effects to this reward.		
What have I learned about myself from working on this habit?		