



# Second Step® Community Rebuilding Unit Grades 4 & 5 Lessons

Welcome to the Second Step® Community Rebuilding Unit.

This unit is designed to support schools as they reopen after extended school closures related to the COVID-19 pandemic. It aligns with the Second Step program but can also be used by any educator looking to foster a positive school or classroom community.

This unit is part of a broad range of supports for Second Step educators during this crisis, including:

- Guides to adapting Second Step lessons for remote and hybrid learning environments
- Remote advisory and class meeting guides to support schools that are still closed
- Online resilience training for adults
- Online training on how to recognize, respond to, and report signs of abuse and neglect
- Live and on-demand webinars on important topics
- *The Imagine Neighborhood*™ family SEL podcast

All these resources will be released throughout August 2020.

For more information, visit the Second Step COVID-19 support page: [secondstep.org/COVID19support](https://secondstep.org/COVID19support)

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## SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

# Second Step® Community Rebuilding Unit Grades 4 & 5 Lessons

Lesson	Objectives	Overview
<b>Lesson 1:</b> Meet the Class	Recall the names and interests of 3 students in the class	Due to COVID-19-related closures, many students have been away from school for a long time. This lesson can help students reacquaint themselves with their school community and get to know other students. Having a strong sense of community will help students feel comfortable and confident at school so that they are ready to learn.
<b>Lesson 2:</b> Our Classroom Community	Create shared classroom expectations	Rules and routines are essential for classrooms to run smoothly. In addition to following the typical school and classroom rules, students will need to learn the new rules and routines to help prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Communicating these new rules and routines effectively is an important part of reducing students' fear and uncertainty and helping them feel empowered to do things to keep themselves and others safe and healthy.
<b>Lesson 3:</b> Let's Talk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Name one thing they are looking forward to this year</li><li>Name one thing they feel worried about</li><li>Say one question they have about school this year</li></ul>	Students' sense of belonging at school is critical to their success as they reenter the classroom after this extended closure. Many, if not most, students are anxious about the challenges they might encounter. This lesson serves to counter those fears, reassure them their concerns are normal, and help them create a positive mindset that can increase their sense of belonging.
<b>Lesson 4:</b> Learning About My Classmates	Name one way they are the same and one way they are different from others in their classroom community	Giving students an opportunity to express themselves and ask questions can help them identify what they have in common with each other and build community. This lesson encourages students to learn more about themselves and each other through art or writing. Getting to know each other and building a classroom community can help provide students with a sense of safety and support.
<b>Lesson 5:</b> Classroom Connections	Name one thing they have in common with at least two people	In this lesson, students will answer questions and listen to their classmates' answers to get to know each other. Asking questions can help students learn about each other, find things in common, and help them feel like part of their class community. This increased sense of belonging is especially important in the current, uncertain circumstances, as it will provide students with a sense of stability and comfort.

## Unit Description

The goal of the Community Rebuilding Unit is to help foster a sense of community among students and staff as they return to school after extended, COVID-19-related school closures.

To achieve this goal, the Community Rebuilding Unit will have students engage in a variety of activities designed to help them build connections with their peers and school staff. Students will also explore their thoughts and feelings about the unprecedented events they are living through so they can recognize experiences they've shared.

Staff will also receive guidance on how they can help foster a positive school community and provide meaningful support to their students.

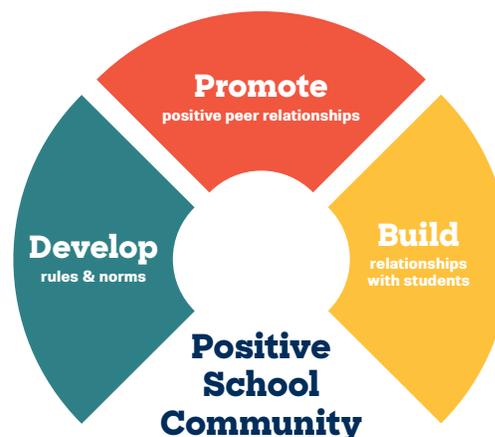
## Why This Unit Matters

The twin crises of the COVID-19 pandemic and the issues of systemic racism (highlighted by the killing of George Floyd) have damaged students' sense of safety and placed them at risk for traumatic stress and other adverse childhood experiences. Schools can play a critical role in moderating the effects of that stress by providing a safe and supportive environment where friends and caring adults can provide the social-emotional support students need to cope with what they're experiencing.

## Building a Positive School and Classroom Community

A positive school community feels safe, respectful, welcoming, supportive, and affirming of everyone's identities, perspectives, and lived experiences.<sup>1</sup> Some ways to build a positive school community:

- Develop clear, fair rules and norms that support respectful behavior
- Promote positive peer relationships
  - **Teach the lessons in this unit**
  - Notice and reinforce positive interactions between peers
- Build positive relationships with all students
  - **Check in regularly with students using the class check-in/check-out templates below**
  - Get to know students and what's happening in their lives outside of school
  - Demonstrate warmth and inclusiveness in your interactions with students
  - Connect with students about their academic progress in a supportive and understanding way
  - Offer additional emotional support to students in need



1. Bullying Prevention Unit. Committee for Children. (2013). *Second Step bullying prevention unit*. [Kit]. Seattle, WA: Committee for Children.

- Respond to behaviors in a supportive way
  - Understand that students who have experienced trauma or toxic stress may act out with disruptive behaviors, and that recognizing these behaviors as symptoms of trauma and stress is critical to building a positive school culture
  - Use the steps in "Safe Supportive Learning" on page 18 to help respond appropriately

## **Check-Ins and Check-Outs**

### **Overview**

Making sure a caring adult connects with every student every day is an effective way to build strong student-staff relationships and a positive school environment. Daily check-ins are a practical strategy for facilitating these connections schoolwide. They also serve to identify students who may need more personalized social-emotional support. The weekly check-out provides students with an opportunity to reflect on and process the week.

## **Daily Check-In**

### **Objectives**

By the end of this activity, students will be able to:

- Identify how they're feeling
- Ask for help with concerns and problems

### **Lesson Note**

Consider participating in the conversation yourself. When you share how you're feeling, you can help normalize these conversations for students.

### Group Check-In (10 min.)

1. Set the purpose of the lesson: **Let's check in on how we're doing.**
2. Have students take turns answering the following questions:
  - **How are you feeling today?** *Happy. Sad. Tired. Excited. Hungry.*
  - **What's something you're looking forward to today?** *Seeing friends. Playing. Learning. Lunch.*
  - **What's something you're not looking forward to today?** *Following safety rules. Being away from home.*
3. Observe students as they answer. If you're concerned that a student may need extra support, use the Individual Check-In to follow up with them later in the day.



**Bold**—Teacher's script  
*Italics*—Anticipated student responses

### Individual Check-In (5 min.)

1. Find a time when you can talk with the student privately and ask the following questions:
  - **How are you feeling today?**
  - **Is there anything you'd like me to know?**
  - **Is there anything you need help with?**
2. Acknowledge and affirm students' feelings. Give them space to talk, but do not pry. Contact your school counselor or administrator if you're concerned that the student may need additional support.

## Weekly Check-Out

### Objective

By the end of this activity, students will be able to reflect on their experiences over the last week.

### Lesson Note

As with check-in, consider participating in the conversation yourself. When you share how you're feeling, you can help normalize these conversations for students.

### Group Check-Out (10 min.)

1. Set the purpose of the lesson: **Let's reflect on how this week went for us.**
2. Have everyone in the class (including you!) briefly answer the following question: **What was the best part of this week?** *I wrote a whole sentence. We celebrated my friend's birthday.*
3. **What's one thing that was hard?** *Not touching my friends. Remembering to wash hands.*
4. **What's one thing you want to do this weekend?** *Sleep. See my grandma. Play with my dog.*

# Lesson 1: Meet the Class

## Getting Started

### Overview

Due to COVID-19-related closures, many students have been away from school for a long time. This lesson can help students reacquaint themselves with their school community and get to know other students. Having a strong sense of community will help students feel comfortable and confident at school so that they are ready to learn.



**Bold**—Teacher's script

*Italics*—Anticipated student responses

### Objective

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Recall the names and interests of 3 students in the class

### Prep

- Find a timer to use for this activity

### Lesson Note

N/A

### Warm-Up (8 min.)

- 1. How does it feel when you walk into a room and don't know anyone?** *Stressful. Uncomfortable.*  
**How does that feeling change once you've been introduced?** *Comfortable. Friendly.*
- 2. When you know someone's name, it can feel easier to talk to them. And when you learn someone's interests, you can talk to them about those things to get to know them better.**
- 3. Tell students the purpose: Today, you'll play a game to learn each other's names and interests. Then you'll try to remember what you learned.**
- 4. During the game, listen carefully to what other students say. How does it feel when someone listens carefully to you?** Call on students to answer. **Listening carefully can help you remember what people said. It also shows them that you care about them and what they're saying.**
- 5. In this game, you'll take turns saying your name and your favorite thing to do after school. I'll ask you what other people said later, so listen carefully!**
- 6. Let's practice.** Say your name and something you like to do. Go around the room and have each student do the same.
- 7. Once each student has had a turn, introduce the game: Now you'll play the game. By the time you're done, you'll have heard each other's names and interests a few times.**



## Activity Instructions

### Activity (12 min.)

**1. For this round, you'll go around the room as fast as you can, each saying your own name and what you like to do after school. I'll time us. Listen to the other names and try to remember at least three.** Determine an order in which students will take their turn that makes sense for your seating arrangement. Then tell students when they'll take their turn. Start the timer and have students begin. Stop the timer when the last student has had a turn.

**2.** Tell students how long the round took. **Let's try to beat that! Ready?** Let students respond. Play again. Tell students their time. **You've heard each name and interests a few times. Raise your hand if you remember at least three.** Call on students to tell what they remember.

*Tip:* Remind students that if they forget someone's name, it's okay to ask. Check to make sure students are pronouncing each other's names correctly.

**3. Let's play again, but in the opposite direction! Ready?** Start the timer and have the students take turns in the opposite order. Tell students their time. **Raise your hand if you remember five names and interests.** Call on students to tell what they remember.

**4. Let's mix things up for the next round! I'll take a turn, then the first and last student will take theirs, and so on through the class. The game will go in both directions. The round is over when someone says their name the second time.**

**5. Ready?** Start the game by saying your name and something you like to do. **That was a close race!**

### Wrap-Up (5 min.)

**1. Can anyone say all the names? How about a name and an interest?** Call on students.

**2. How does our community feel now that we know each other's names and interests?** *Friendly. Comfortable.* **This week, try to use each other's names and learn one new thing about each student in our class.**

# Lesson 2: Our Classroom Community

## Getting Started

### Overview

Rules and routines are essential for classrooms to run smoothly. In addition to following the typical school and classroom rules, students will need to learn the new rules and routines to help prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Communicating these new rules and routines effectively is an important part of reducing students' fear and uncertainty and helping them feel empowered to do things to keep themselves and others safe and healthy.



**Bold**—Teacher's script

*Italics*—Anticipated student responses

### Objective

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Create shared classroom expectations

### Prep

- On a piece of chart paper, make two columns labeled "Feel" and "Do."

### Lesson Note

N/A

### Warm-Up (3 min.)

1. Tell students the purpose: **Today, we're going to decide how we want our classroom community to be. We're going to talk about how we want to feel in our classroom and what we can do to help each other feel that way.**



## Activity Instructions

### Activity (5 min.)

1. **Think about your idea of a perfect class. What would it feel like to be part of that class?**  
*Respected. Relaxed. Safe. Like I'm having fun.*
2. Write responses on the paper in the "Feel" column.  
*Tip:* Avoid leading kids to certain responses. When kids know that their ideas and opinions truly matter, they're more likely to take more ownership over the classroom norms and expectations.
3. Point to the "Feel" column on the paper. **What could someone do to help you feel like this?** *Listen to each other. Help each other. Encourage each other.*
4. Summarize students' responses on the paper in the "Do" column.

### Discuss (5 min.)

1. **People in our classroom community want to feel like this.** Call on students to read the responses in the "Feel" column.
2. **We can help everyone feel that way by doing these things.** Call on students to read the responses in the "Do" column.

### Wrap-Up (4 min.)

1. **This poster represents how we want to feel in our classroom community—and what we can do so everyone feels this way. If you agree to do these things, you can sign your name on the poster.**
2. Ask students to come up one at a time to sign the poster.
3. Hang the poster up in the classroom as a reminder for students.

## Getting Started

### Overview

Students' sense of belonging at school is critical to their success as they re-enter the classroom after this extended closure. Many, if not most, students are anxious about the challenges they might encounter. This lesson serves to counter those fears, reassure them their concerns are normal, and help them create a positive mindset that can increase their sense of belonging.



**Bold**—Teacher's script

*Italics*—Anticipated student responses

### Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Name one thing they are looking forward to this year
- Name one thing they feel worried about
- Say one question they have about school this year

### Prep

- For each student, gather 1 pencil and 3 sticky notes
- On the board, or on separate sheets of chart paper, write three headings:
  - I'm Excited About ...
  - I'm Worried About ...
  - I'm Wondering ...

Students will stick their sticky notes under these headings for discussion.

### Lesson Note

Before teaching this lesson, determine and gather support resources for your students. These resources might include things like: a list of staff members that students can go to for help; a place in your classroom where students can take a break; or a question box students can use to ask anonymous questions.

**Warm-Up (3 min.)**

1. Tell students the purpose: **Today we're going to talk about being back at school, and how you feel about this year.**
2. **You might feel a lot of different emotions coming back to school this year. Maybe you're excited to see your friends, or worried about our new school rules. Maybe you feel a few different emotions at the same time.**
3. Ask: **What are some other emotions students might be feeling?** *Happy. Thankful. Nervous.* **All of these emotions are okay.**
4. **This school year might feel different from other years. But remember that you are not alone: you can always talk to me, other teachers, and your friends about how you feel. We're a community, and we're going to support each other all year.**

**Activity Instructions****Activity (8 min.)**

1. **You're going to write how you're feeling this year on sticky notes. You'll put all of the sticky notes up on the board, and I'll read them aloud. If you don't want me to read your sticky note aloud, you can keep it or give it to me later.**
2. **Pass out sticky notes. On your first sticky note, write down one thing you're excited about this year. It might be seeing your friends, learning new things, or anything else that you are looking forward to. You don't need to write your name.** Give students time to write.
3. **When you're done, put your pencil down and put your thumb up.** Call on students with their thumbs up to put their note on the board under the "I'm excited about..." column.
4. **On your second sticky note, write down one thing you feel worried about. It could be the new rules, staying healthy, or something else. Please include your name on this sticky note.** Give students time to write.
5. **When you're done, put your pencil down and your thumb up.** Call on students with their thumbs up to add their note to the board under the "I'm worried about..." column.
6. **On your last sticky note, write down one question you have about school this year. Remember, you don't need to write your name.** Give students time to write.
7. **When you're done, put your pencil down and your thumb up.** Call on students with their thumbs up to add their note to the board under, "I'm wondering ..."

**Discuss (8 min.)**

1. Take a minute to group the sticky notes in each column by similar answers.

**First, I am going to read some of the things students in our class are excited about. If I read something that you are excited about too, clap once.** Read what students feel excited about for the school year. **There are a lot of things to look forward to this year!**

2. **Now I'll read some of the things you are worried about. If you feel worried about the same thing, put your thumb up. If I see a note that's a very personal worry, I won't read it out loud to the class. I'll talk to you about it later.** Read students' notes aloud. If a note seems quite personal or names people, skip it and check in with that student later.
3. **Everyone feels worried sometimes. Remember, you can always talk to me about your worries.**
4. **Now I'll read the questions you have about this year. If I can tell you the answer, I will. If I don't have the answer, I'll try to find it out.** Read and answer questions as you can. Look for answers to students' remaining questions after class, and update them on what you find.

**Wrap-Up (4 min.)**

1. **This school year might feel a little different. We have new rules, new routines, and new ways of doing things.**
2. **A lot of you are excited and worried about the same things, and have the same kinds of questions. Who can you talk to when you feel worried or have questions?** Give think-time. Call on a few students. Tell students about other resources that are available to them, like the school counselor.
3. **Our new rules and routines are meant to keep us safe and healthy. You can always talk to me when you have questions or need help. We're a community and we can support each other all year.**

# Lesson 4: Learning About My Classmates

## Getting Started

### Overview

Giving students an opportunity to express themselves and ask questions can help them identify what they have in common with each other and build community. This lesson encourages students to learn more about themselves and each other through art or writing. Getting to know each other and building a classroom community can help provide students with a sense of safety and support.



**Bold**—Teacher's script

*Italics*—Anticipated student responses

### Objective

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Name one way they are like others and one way they are different from others in their classroom community

### Prep

- Gather paper and art supplies for each student
- Write these questions on the board:
  - What are some things you have in common with other students in our class?
  - What are some ways you are different from other students in our class?

### Lesson Note

Students can also create collages from pictures cut out of magazines.

### Warm-Up (4 min.)

1. Tell students two things they might not know about you—for example, where you grew up and how many siblings you have.
2. Tell students the purpose. **We each bring unique interests and experiences to our classroom community. Today you'll draw or write about a few things your classroom community might not know about you. Then you'll talk about what you learned. Talking to each other about ourselves can help us feel more comfortable here.**



## Activity Instructions

### Activity (10 min.)

1. Think of a few things we might not know about you that you want to draw or write about. Once you have the materials, you can begin. I'll let you know when there are two minutes left. When you're finished, you'll show each other what you wrote or drew.
2. Hand out materials and have students write or draw. Walk around and check in with students. Let them know when there are two minutes left to work.

### Discuss (10 min.)

1. Now, you'll walk around the room and look at each other's art or writing. Leave it on your desk so that other students can see it. Point to the list of questions on the board. As you look at other students' work, think about these questions: What are some things you have in common with other students in our class? What are some ways you are different from other students in our class? Have students walk slowly around the room and look at the art or writing on each desk, then sit down when they reach their desk again.
2. Let's talk about what you noticed. What do you have in common with other students in our class? Call on a few students to answer. It's great to find out what we have in common!
3. What are some ways you are different from other students in our class? Call on a few students to answer. In this class, we respect and celebrate our differences. They make us unique!

### Wrap-Up (1 min.)

Thanks for sharing more about yourself with our classroom community. Over the next few days, try to talk to at least one person you don't know very well about something they wrote or drew. Post papers where students can see them.

# Lesson 5: Classroom Connections

## Getting Started

### Overview

In this lesson, students will answer questions and listen to their classmates' answers to get to know each other. Asking questions can help students learn about each other, find things in common, and feel like part of their class community. This increased sense of belonging is especially important in the current uncertain circumstances, as it can help provide students with a sense of stability and comfort.



**Bold**—Teacher's script

*Italics*—Anticipated student responses

### Objective

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Name one thing they have in common with at least two people

### Prep

- For this lesson, gather one piece of paper, one pencil, and one marker for each student. You will also need one piece of chart paper.
- Write the following three questions on the board for students to answer.
  - What is something that you like to do after school?
  - What is one book/movie/game that you like?
  - What is one thing you like to learn about?

### Lesson Note

During the lesson, students will need to pay attention to their classmates' answers. Students can take notes during the lesson to remember with whom they have things in common.

**Warm-Up (3 min.)**

1. Tell students the purpose: **Today, we're going to create a visual of how everyone in our class is connected. We'll do this by answering questions and finding things we have in common. We'll see how the connections between us grow as we learn more about each other.**
2. Give each student a marker. **Each of you will have a turn to answer one of these questions.** Review the questions written on the board.
3. Tell students the activity: **After you answer a question, you'll write your name on the chart paper. Then we'll see if anyone in our class has the same answer. If someone has the same answer, they'll write their name on the board and draw a line connecting their name to your name. Then they'll answer a different question, and we'll repeat.**
4. **As we play, take notes about things you have in common with other students in our class. If you remember something you have in common with other students, you can draw lines from your name to their names, too.**

**Activity Instructions****Activity (15 min.)**

1. **I'll go first.** Write your name on the chart paper. **I'll answer question 1. What's my favorite hobby? My favorite hobby is \_\_\_\_\_.** Choose something that students might relate to, like reading, playing a sport, or photography.
2. Ask if any students have the same hobby. **Does anyone else like to \_\_\_\_\_?** Choose a student to add their name to the paper and draw a line connecting your names.
3. **Now you get to answer one of the questions.** Have the student choose a question to answer, then answer it.
4. Ask the rest of class: **Does anyone share this in common?** Have a student who answers 'yes' come up, write their name, and draw a line connecting their name to the previous student's name.
5. Have that student now choose and answer a question. Repeat until all students have added their name and a line to the paper. If students know things they have in common with other students who've had their turns, let them draw lines to show those connections, too.

**Discuss (5 min.)**

1. **Clap once if you have something in common with at least two people.** Students clap.
2. **Clap twice if you learned something new about someone in our class.** Invite students to tell what they learned about others.

**Wrap-Up (4 min.)**

1. **As we answered questions and listened to others' answers, we made connections between names on the paper. This is a visual representation of what we have in common with each other. Having things in common can help us feel connected and make new friends.**
2. **Now that we have these connections, we can use them to start conversations, invite others to join in, and ask even more questions to learn about each other.**

## Next Steps

Completing this unit is just one thing you can do to support your students during this difficult time. Here are some other steps you can take:

- 1. Use the Second Step® SEL for Adults Resiliency Module:** You cannot support your students without also taking care of your own needs. This module, which is free through 12/31/20, will provide you with concrete strategies to manage your own stress during this difficult time. For more information and updates, please visit our resource page.
- 2. Teach the Student-Facing Resiliency Lessons.** The Second Step SEL for Adults Resiliency Module also contains lessons for students to help them manage their stress. Once you have completed the module yourself use these lessons with your students
- 3. Complete Second Step® Elementary.** The skills and concepts taught throughout the Second Step program will provide students with valuable social-emotional support throughout the year.

For more information, download the Second Step Elementary 2020–2021 Implementation Plan.



# Safe Supportive Learning

## Respond to Behaviors in a Supportive Way

### Self-Check

Do a Self-Check to calm down so you can respond to a student's behavior in a supportive way.

1. Stop
2. Name your feeling
3. Calm down: breathe, count

### Student Check

Do a Student Check to help you reframe a student's behavior so you can understand what the behavior is telling you. Thinking of the behavior through a supportive frame rather than a corrective frame can help you respond appropriately and avoid blaming or punishing students for their behavior.

#### Corrective Frame

This student is a problem.  
What's wrong with this student?  
I need to correct this student's behavior.

#### Supportive Frame

What is this student experiencing in his or her life?  
What is this student trying to say with his or her behavior?  
I need to support this student.

### Respond

Once you've done the **Self-Check** and **Student Check**, you're ready to **respond** to a student's behavior in a supportive way by:

- Listening
- Showing empathy
- Providing support



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