



Students learn about mindfulness and how it relates to “BEING PRESENT” as they use their senses to fully appreciate the “PRESENT” moment.



No materials required.  
Total Prep Time: 0 mins.



As this is the last Monday of the month, please consider sharing or re-sharing the Monthly Kick-Off activity, and if appropriate, video at [www.everymondaymatters.org](http://www.everymondaymatters.org). Additionally, a three-minute recap of the previous weeks may add extra context to this week and help connect the dots around the monthly theme.

**Educator’s Note:** We recommend reading through the entire meditation activity before leading it so you can get a good idea of how to walk students through a meditation and mindfulness exercise.

4 C's		SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL LEARNING		SERVICE LEARNING	
•	Critical thinking	•	Self-awareness		Integrated learning
•	Communication	•	Self-management		High quality service
•	Collaboration	•	Social-awareness		Collaboration
	Creativity		Relationship skills		Student voice
		•	Responsible decision-making		Civic responsibility
					Reflection
					Evaluation

## GOALS FOR THE WEEK

- Explore ways that we can live in the moment, not only with others, but also with ourselves
- Discover what it means to “BE PRESENT” and how our effort can help us fully engage in our relationships
- Learn techniques that help us focus on the now so that we can enjoy what’s happening with the people around us
- Understand how “BE PRESENT” is an important part of this month’s theme, “MONDAY GETS CONNECTED”



## **STUDENT ACTIVITY:** **“SENSING THE PRESENT”**

### **1) SHARE THE NAME OF THIS ACTIVITY WITH STUDENTS: “SENSING THE PRESENT”**

### **2) ASK 1-3 QUESTIONS FROM THE LIST BELOW TO WARM STUDENTS UP ON THE ACTIVITY’S FOCUS:**

**\*NOTE:** *Choose questions appropriate to your students’ ages, grades, ability levels, and classroom goals. Students may share their answers in pairs, small groups, or as a large group.*

- **What does it mean to meditate?**
  - Answer: To think deeply or focus the mind for a period of time
- **Have you ever meditated before?**
- **What is mindfulness?**
  - Answer: Being aware of what’s happening in the “PRESENT” moment without judging thoughts or emotions
- **What are our five “SENSES”?**
- **Do you think paying attention to our five “SENSES” can help us be in the moment?**
  - How so?
- **Have you ever paid full attention to one or more of your “SENSES,” such as mindfully eating something?**
  - What was that like, or what might it be like to do so?
- **How often do you pay full attention to what you’re doing?**
- **Do you feel like you’re easily distracted, or that it’s difficult to pay attention to any one thing at a time?**
- **What can distract you as you try to focus on something?**
- **Why do distractions prevent us from fully existing in the “PRESENT” moment?**
- **How might really feeling what our “SENSES” are experiencing help us get in the moment?**
- **Do you think paying attention to the information our “SENSES” are sending us in the current moment can help us connect to the “PRESENT,” inside ourselves and in the world around us?**
- **How can “BEING PRESENT” help remind you that YOU MATTER?**
- **How can “BEING PRESENT” help to us “GET CONNECTED”?**
- **What would your life be like if you paid attention to the “PRESENT” moment more often?**

### **3) SET UP THE “SENSING THE PRESENT” ACTIVITY:**

- **Explain:**
  - Mindfulness is a practice that allows us to “BE PRESENT” in the moment so we can “CONNECT” with ourselves, others, and what’s happening around us
  - One way to get “PRESENT” is to use our “SENSES,” such as touch, taste, hearing, smell, and sight
  - When you tune into your “SENSES,” you allow your brain to focus on what you are experiencing with your senses and in your body in the current moment
  - This is helpful a lot of the time, but especially when we’re feeling anxious, worried, or frustrated
  - When we open our thoughts up fully to one or more of our senses, we recapture the “PRESENT” and we can be more in the moment
- **Ask:**
  - How often do you pay attention to your breath?
  - How often do you pay attention to your “SENSES”?
  - How might being aware of your breath and your “SENSES” help you to “BE PRESENT”?
- **Explain:**
  - Today we are going to focus on our “SENSES” and pay close attention to the information they are giving us in order to “CONNECT” and “BE PRESENT” with ourselves and the world around us

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#### 4) START PART ONE OF THE “SENSING THE PRESENT” ACTIVITY:

- **Note:** We recommend reading through the entire meditation activity before leading it so you can get a good idea of how to walk students through a meditation and mindfulness exercise
- **Tell students that they will be doing a mindful exercise around the breath and their “SENSES” that will help them practice “BEING PRESENT”**
- **Explain that the first part of the activity is focused on understanding how relaxing and paying attention to our breathing can help us engage with the “PRESENT” moment, because when we engage with our body and breath, we slowly become aware of what different parts of our body are feeling**
- **Ask students to get settled in their seats with an upright and comfortable posture so that they can breathe easily**
- **Have students close their eyes and breathe normally through their noses with their mouths closed for a moment**
- **Then, ask students to take a breath in while counting to 3, then exhale while counting to 3**
  - Have students do this 3-5 times while feeling how their breath moves through their body
- **Then, explain:**
  - Now I will guide you through the action of focusing on different parts of your body as you “SENSE” what you feel
  - For each body part you are focusing on, do your best to send your breath there and discover what “SENSE” information your body is telling you
- **Continue while allowing a moment for each body part you mention so that students can pause and really “SENSE” what they feel:**
  - Let’s start with your feet: Focus on your feet without moving them, and just become aware of what you can “SENSE” in your feet
  - Move your awareness from your feet to your legs, and if possible, keep “SENSING” your feet at the same time
  - From here, move your awareness up into your stomach and chest, really feeling your different body parts and not just thinking about them
  - Now, move your awareness to your arms and hands and “SENSE” what you feel there
- **Then have students pause and “SENSE” their whole body, and ask them to notice:**
  - What thoughts they are thinking and to let them pass; if the thoughts are negative, don’t judge them, just to try and let them go
  - If they have any aches or pains that they didn’t realize were there
  - What their limbs are feeling and how it feels to breathe into their whole body
- **Explain that in this moment, they aren’t trying to go anywhere or get anything done, just holding the “PRESENT” moment in their awareness by breathing and “SENSING” the different parts of their bodies**
- **Remind students that the breath is the foundational piece of life and any meditation: The breath is always there and is something we can always turn to in order to engage with the “PRESENT” moment**
- **Allow up to 5 minutes to do this part of the “SENSING THE PRESENT” mindfulness activity**

#### 5) START PART TWO OF THE “SENSING THE PRESENT” ACTIVITY:

- **Ask students to keep their eyes closed as you transition from one exercise to the other**
  - Try and smoothly move from Part One into Part Two in order to allow students to focus and stay “PRESENT”
- **Explain:**
  - Now that we’ve connected with our breath and our “SENSE” of touch by moving through our body, we are more fully engaged in the “PRESENT” moment
  - It’s okay if you’ve been distracted or found it hard to concentrate
  - Being mindful and practicing engaging with our “SENSES” is a life-long goal and one that takes practice like we’re doing right now
- **Ask students to keep focusing on their breath and what they’re feeling in their bodies**

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- **Explain:**

- Turn your attention to the sounds that you are hearing and be aware of what is around you in this “PRESENT” moment
- Try and distinguish the different sounds that you are hearing
- You might hear the sound of people walking or talking outside, the sound of people breathing, or the sound of the heater running
- If you can, try and count how many sounds you are hearing
- By engaging with our “SENSE” of sound, we are practicing our ability to “BE PRESENT”

- **Pause and allow students to listen for a few moments, really hearing what’s around them**
- **Then, after a couple of minutes, ask students to come back to their breath and focus on their breathing for another minute before opening their eyes and coming back to the “PRESENT” moment**
- **Allow up to 5 minutes total for this part of the “SENSING THE PRESENT” mindfulness activity**
- **Ask for student volunteers to share out what it was like to focus on their bodies and their “SENSE” of hearing for a few moments and how they feel now**
- **Remind students that when they become frustrated or anxious, returning to their ever “PRESENT” breath and tuning in to their bodies and the sounds around them can help them let go of anxiety or worries and instead be in the moment right now, knowing that they are okay**

**6) AFTER THE ACTIVITY, ASK 1-3 OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS TO HELP STUDENTS REFLECT ON WHAT THEY’VE ACCOMPLISHED AND HOW THEY CAN TAKE THIS FORWARD:**

**\*NOTE:** *Choose questions appropriate to your students’ ages, grades, ability levels, and classroom goals. Students may share their answers in pairs, small groups, or as a large group.*

- **What was it like to meditate and practice mindfulness today?**
- **Did you enjoy this activity focused on “SENSE” awareness?**
- **Did you find it challenging or easy to be “PRESENT” as you “SENSED” your body and your hearing today?**
- **What was it like to breathe into different areas of your body?**
- **What did you feel when you were paying close attention to what your body was “SENSING”?**
- **What was it like to focus on what you hear around you as your eyes were closed?**
- **What were some of the sounds you heard during this part of the activity?**
- **Did you become aware of sound happening in the “PRESENT” that you didn’t notice before meditating?**
- **Is there anything you thought or realized that surprised you during the meditation?**
- **Will you try to meditate at home or practice mindfulness more often after this activity?**
- **Why do you think engaging with our “SENSES” helps us “BE PRESENT”?**
- **How can meditating and “SENSING THE PRESENT” help us “CONNECT” with ourselves, the moment, and the world around us?**
- **How can meditating and “SENSING THE PRESENT” help remind you that YOU MATTER?**

**7) THANK STUDENTS FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE “SENSING THE PRESENT” MEDITATION. CHALLENGE STUDENTS TO MEDITATE ON A REGULAR BASIS, AND TO SIMPLY PAY MORE ATTENTION TO THEIR “SENSES” AS THEY GO FROM MOMENT-TO-MOMENT.**

**8) ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO SPREAD THE IDEA OF “BEING PRESENT” AND MINDFULNESS OUTSIDE OF THE CLASSROOM AND TO OTHERS. REMIND THEM THAT WHENEVER THEY GET FRUSTRATED, WORRIED, OR ANXIOUS, THEY CAN TUNE INTO THEIR BREATH AND “SENSES” TO HELP THEM RELAX INTO THE “PRESENT” MOMENT.**

**9) CONTINUE EXPLORING WAYS TO MINDFULLY “BE PRESENT” BY LEADING ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING EXTENSION ACTIVITIES.**



## EXTENSION IDEAS:

**DO ONE OR MORE OF THESE EXTENSION IDEAS TO BRING THE LESSON FROM 15 MINUTES TO 30 MINUTES OR MORE.**

- 1) Journaling:** Ask the students to write about what they experienced in the “PRESENT” moment when they were engaging with their “SENSES” in their student-made YOU MATTER journals or on blank paper. Students can explore what it was like to be fully “PRESENT” with their bodies and what they heard during the second part of the meditation. Encourage them to write about why it is important to “BE PRESENT” in their lives and how they can do so going forward.
- 2) Sensory Meditations:** Lead a sensory meditation for students as a group or challenge them to try it at home, either by themselves or with a friend or family member. A good meditation to start with is this one by Tara Brach:  
<https://www.tarabrach.com/guided-meditation-coming-home-to-the-senses/>.  
Encourage students to find more meditations that they enjoy doing as a way to “BE PRESENT” and engage with their “SENSES.”
- 3) Raisin Meditation:** Have students go one step further with their meditation and mindfulness practice and lead an eating meditation focused on raisins:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oMQ7QqaHvW8>. Challenge students to eat with intention and bring mindfulness to their meals and everyday lives, starting with this meditation.

“WHAT WOULD IT BE LIKE IF I  
COULD ACCEPT LIFE--ACCEPT THIS  
MOMENT--EXACTLY AS IT IS?”

- TARA BRACH