

GRATEFULNESS

IN THE CLASSROOM

Count Your Benefits

Identify Your Benefactors

Make Time to Thank

Express Your Thanks

Simplify Expectations

Andrew Carnegie

**Letting others know by my words and actions
how they have benefited my life**



Definition



Definition

Get started by learning the character definition of gratefulness.



Key Concepts

Remember • Find • Reserve • Show • Assess
Gratefulness takes action.



Teachers

Model and praise gratefulness.
Set the standard for others to follow.



Biography

Andrew Carnegie's own gratefulness prompted him to give to others.



Nature

The porcupine makes a "point" of gratefulness.



Language

Get "happy as the dickens" with gratefulness.



The Arts

Paint yourself a rosy picture with gratefulness.



Math & Computers

Base your expressions on gratefulness.



Science

Switch on to the smooth flow of gratefulness.



Social Studies

Get out of the rut and get gratefulness.



Health & Athletics

Get ready...get set...and go with gratefulness.



Balance

Humility, sincerity, generosity, and truthfulness complement gratefulness.

GRATEFULNESS

vs. Unthankfulness

Letting others know by my words and actions how they have benefited my life

grate•ful•ness *n* **1**: appreciation for benefits received; thankfulness **2**: quality of agreeableness, pleasure, comfort

Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Ed., 1999.

Introduction

Gratefulness is a choice. Grateful people choose to look beyond their present conditions and concentrate on what they can learn through every situation. They also recognize the individuals who have contributed to their success, and they reflect an attitude of gratitude.

Gratefulness is "letting others know by my words and actions how they have benefited my life." We must first recognize how others have benefited us before finding ways to honor them—not to "repay" them for what they have done, but to demonstrate how much we appreciate their investment.

Gratefulness is not a passive thought, but an active expression. Many people are thankful for the benefits they receive but never express their appreciation. Consider those who have invested in your life: parents, teachers, neighbors, friends. Recognize the time, energy, and other resources that have benefited you—and express your appreciation.

This guide is designed to help you:

- *understand* the full scope of gratefulness and *teach* it to your students by memorizing its definition and attributes;
- *remember* gratefulness through examples from the lives of real people, from nature, and with illustrations from within your subject area;
- *recognize* the need for gratefulness in the classroom, on the job, and at home through specific and practical applications;
- *develop* gratefulness and encourage your students to do so as well; and
- *praise* your students based on evidence of good character rather than simply their achievement.



Count Your Benefits

Attitudes are greatly influenced by one's outlook or perspective. Those who focus on the negative things in life will become discouraged and perhaps even bitter. However, those who see the benefits in their lives—such as food to eat, clothes to wear, family, friends, health, and a good education—will recognize their need to be grateful.

Because gratefulness is not dependent on circumstances, anyone can choose to be grateful by looking beyond present problems and recognizing either current or future benefits. The character quality of gratefulness is marked by a long memory for those who have brought benefit in the past. Though we live in a fast-paced, forward-looking society, we do well to pause and remember those who have counseled, encouraged, benefited, and aided us in attaining our goals.

Identify Your Benefactors

Teachers, ministers, police officers, nurses, and other providers of community services often have the most challenging of daily responsibilities, yet often receive the least amount of gratitude or appreciation. Parents also deserve to be recognized and honored for their immeasurable investment in the development of human potential.

Gratefulness can be expressed through both attitudes and actions. Gratefulness is complete only after the benefit has been traced to those responsible for making it possible. This is the personal nature of gratefulness—it is expressed *by* a person, *to* a person.

Make Time to Thank

There is a clever expression: “If you cannot afford to *take time* for a priority, *make time* for it.” It underscores the importance of accomplishing priorities even in the face of difficulty. However, the reality is that no one can *make* time. We will always have to *take* time from other pressures in order to give time to what is important. This is the nature of discipline.

Though taking time to express gratefulness to others is often difficult, making time to do so is a vital discipline of leadership. It is the very inconveniences you overcome to say “Thank you” that give meaning to the gesture. The phone call, the hand-written card, or the carefully chosen gift—the fact that you made it a priority when other items could easily have taken precedence proves the measure of your gratitude.

Express Your Thanks

Words are symbols that depend upon how we live them out for their meaning. The words *thank you* are no exception. Gratefulness involves far more than words, and there are countless ways to express thanks. In fact, if gratefulness fails to go beyond words, it may not be genuine.

Say “Thank you” with your words—and also with your life. Gratefulness is more than just *feeling* thankful—it is *showing* others how they have benefited your life. A good way to do this is to write “Thank you” notes. Drawing a picture, placing a telephone call, sending an e-mail, or making a special craft for a person are also good ways to express gratefulness. An added investment of time and energy shows an extra sense of appreciation.

Simplify Expectations

True joy and happiness are not dependent on material wealth or possessions. If they were, why would multi-millionaires ever commit suicide, seek divorce, or abuse drugs? An inflated view of these things distracts people from valuing more important things such as developing their potential and maximizing relationships with family, friends, and neighbors.

If you are not grateful for what you have right now, you will never be content with that “one more thing.” By simplifying your expectations, you can learn to focus on what you do have and to be grateful for it. However, grateful contentment is not an excuse for complacency. Never sacrifice through complacency who you can be or what you can achieve. Always aim for excellence in every aspect of life.

Remember

Find

Reserve

Show

Assess

MAINTAIN A HIGHER STANDARD

People learn character best from real-life examples. Written materials and classroom instruction are effective ways to communicate specific qualities and to present ideas on how to implement them; however, the example of a teacher genuinely living the character quality communicates far more than words alone.

If a teacher tells his or her class that gratefulness is important but then neglects to say a simple “Thank you” for a student’s effort or performance, that teacher can set aside all hopes for an appreciative class.

Students who observe good character demonstrated in the lives of their instructors are much more likely to recognize the importance of character. Those instructors who praise good character in others and demonstrate gratefulness in both word and deed provide a living example to follow.

The essence of gratefulness is a simple, but profound, shift in focus—from what we can *get* to what we *already have*.

Character—understood and applied—will improve a person’s quality of work and clarify the purpose for doing that work. More importantly, character will strengthen the quality of relationships at school, on the job, at home, and throughout the community.

Gratefulness is one of the simplest character qualities to comprehend, yet one of the most easily overlooked and least often applied.

Consider those individuals who have mentored you, encouraged you, believed in you. Perhaps it is your turn to be a mentor and encourager to others.

***Express an
attitude of gratitude.***

Master the Key Concepts

- Review the Key Concepts on page 3, and list ways you can daily demonstrate gratefulness both inside and outside the classroom.
- List ways your students can daily demonstrate gratefulness both inside and outside the classroom.
- Determine to be a good example of gratefulness to both your students and your colleagues through your words and actions.

Gratefulness

Gratefulness is *recognizing* how the efforts of others have benefited my life and *making known* to them how greatly I value their investment.

Recognition

It is impossible to be grateful to someone if we do not first recognize the benefit we have received. Developing the character quality of gratefulness begins with sharpening our alertness. Our natural tendency is to self-focus and blindly overlook the countless benefits we enjoy. We take the sunshine for granted, until it rains. It is often after we lose something that we realize what we once had and want it back.

Gratefulness is honing alertness to the benefits that we now possess instead of waiting until they are gone to appreciate them. Furthermore, gratefulness is recognizing the individuals responsible for those benefits.

Response

Once we become aware of an investment or kindness extended to us, gratefulness is making a fitting response to the appropriate individual(s). This might be as simple as saying “Thank you” or as creative as our gratefulness inspires us to be.

Responsibility

Expressing gratefulness does not *end* with a response. The ultimate proof of gratefulness lies in the responsible use of the benefits that have been provided. More than the recognition made or the words expressed, the way we utilize the gifts that have been given to us demonstrates our gratefulness.

Standards vs. Expectations

There is a difference between lowering *expectations* and lowering *standards*...

- Your *expectations* define the level of provision that you believe you deserve—that which is *your right*.
- Your *standards* define the level of excellence that you believe you must uphold—that which is *right*.

In your personal character and in the quality of your work, hold yourself to high standards. Insist on the best from yourself and from your students. However, weigh your personal expectations often to ensure that they are appropriate.

Ask Yourself and Others

The following questions are designed for personal reflection, brainstorming with other teachers, or discussion in your classroom.

- How is gratitude demonstrated in the classroom? At home? On the job? In sports? In relationships?
- Discuss individuals who have impacted your life. How can you express your gratitude to those individuals for their investment?
- Fill in the blank: “I am grateful for (*benefit*). I am grateful to (*person*).” Have you ever thanked that individual for being a benefactor to you?
- Think about an individual you need to thank this week. When will you set aside time to express your thanks?
- List three benefits you receive from your job, your family, your friends, or your education. How can you demonstrate your gratitude?
- How have others expressed their gratitude to you? What is a meaningful expression of thanks you have received?
- Have you ever weathered a storm in life (either literal or figurative) that took away possessions you thought you could never live without? How did it affect your expectations? Did you learn *contentment* from that experience?

Apply Character-Based Correction

Correction is just as vital as praise for promoting a culture of character within your school. Remember: Look beyond surface problems to root causes, appeal to the *conscience* of the student (rather than the will, the emotions, or the physical), and seek to restore the broken relationship.

- An appeal to the **will**—“You can do better than that, don’t you think?” (*This is an attempt to elicit a commitment from the student to never repeat the infraction.*)
- An appeal to the **emotions**—“Don’t you know you could have hurt someone?” (*This may evoke an emotional response, but it does not address the character issue.*)
- An appeal to the **physical**—“Do you want to sit in detention for two weeks?” (*This may be an appropriate consequence, but a threat will not lead a student to take responsibility for the violation of character and seek to address it.*)
- An appeal to the **conscience**—“Did your actions demonstrate gratitude?” (*Once a student recognizes his or her violation of good character, the definition and Key Concepts of gratitude can guide the student to identify the specific area needing to be addressed.*)

Note Positive Character

Carry a pocket guide with the list of character qualities and their definitions so that you are always prepared to spot and praise good character. When you see a student demonstrate good character, pinpoint the precise character quality and *praise* the student—either in person or in a note of appreciation.

PRAISING CHARACTER vs. ACHIEVEMENT

People know what is important to you by what evokes a “Thank you” from you. Saying “Thank you” for good character rather than achievement is one way to encourage a grateful person.

When your daughter secretly saves nickels and dimes to surprise you with a bouquet of flowers, you will naturally want to thank her. What will you thank her *for*—just beautiful flowers? Or will you go one step further and also thank her for her diligent saving, her thriftiness, and her loving generosity?

When your principal gives you a pay raise, will you say “Thank you” for the increase in pay? Or will you go a step beyond and express gratitude for the attentiveness to your family’s needs and the confidence in your work?

When one of your students asks the very question you hoped someone would raise, do you thank him just for asking a good question? Or do you go one step further and thank him for demonstrating *discernment* or *alertness* and then taking the *initiative* to ask a good question?

As often as you can, incorporate character qualities into your expressions of thanks. By thanking people for the specific character qualities they demonstrate, you encourage them to further develop those qualities.

And when someone praises you, take the opportunity to express gratitude *to* that person and *for* those who had a part in your achievement.

Catch your students demonstrating good character and praise them!



Andrew Carnegie

Andrew Carnegie's first job

was in a cotton factory, earning \$1.20 a week. His income at the age of 12 helped his parents put food on the table.

The Carnegies had immigrated to Pennsylvania from Scotland, where Andrew's father had been a successful weaver before steam-powered mills took over the fabric market. The Carnegie family decided to move to America and make a fresh start.

At 15, Andrew left the cotton mill to work as a messenger boy for a Pittsburgh telegraph office. He was grateful for his new job, but he especially looked forward to Saturday afternoons.

"When I was a boy in Pittsburgh, Colonel [James] Anderson [of Allegheny—a name which I can never speak without feelings of devotional gratitude—opened his little library of four hundred volumes to boys every Saturday afternoon....

"My brother (Thomas) and Mr. Phipps, who have been my principal business partners through life, shared with me Colonel Anderson's precious generosity, and it was when reveling in these precious treasures that I resolved if ever wealth came to me that it should be used to establish free libraries, that other poor boys might receive opportunities similar to those for which we were indebted to that noble man."

Over the following decades, the diligent Scottish messenger boy did become wealthy. As the railroad industry rose steadily, Carnegie began investing in iron. Foreseeing growth in the steel industry, he eventually set up a steel mill on the outskirts of Pittsburgh and soon became one of the wealthiest men of his day.

Gratefulness is marked by a long memory for those who have brought benefit in the past. The day Andrew Carnegie retired, he gave away \$11.2 million. (Remember: This was 1901.) The first \$5 million went for libraries and for disability and pension funds for Carnegie Steel Company employees.

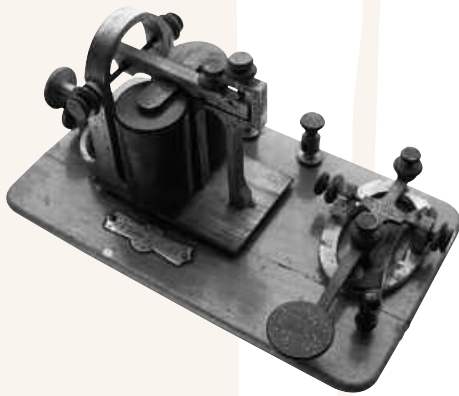
"I make this first use of surplus wealth upon retiring from business," he wrote in the letter dispersing the funds, "as an acknowledgement of the deep debt I owe to the workmen who have contributed so greatly to my success."

"The man who dies rich dies disgraced," Mr. Carnegie remarked on another occasion. Motivated by his gratefulness for those who helped him in his time of need, he purposed to use his assets to benefit others.



Andrew Carnegie
(1835–1919)

Andrew Carnegie's gratefulness was evidenced by the fact that he recognized the many benefits he enjoyed and sought to benefit others.



At age 16, Andrew Carnegie taught himself to take a direct telegraph message rather than translating the Morse code from an imprinted page. This quickly earned him a position as a telegraph operator—and a reputation as only the third operator in America with such a skill.

By the end of his life, Carnegie had given away everything he had earned. His will dispersed the last \$30 million of an estate that had been 10 to 20 times that size, leaving his bank account empty.

Much of Carnegie's generosity was motivated by gratitude, and he was careful to trace the benefits in his life to specific people or groups of people. This is appropriate since gratefulness is ultimately a *personal* quality. It is expressing appreciation to *someone*.

Andrew Carnegie also remembered Colonel Anderson, who had so generously invested in his early education. Prompted by gratefulness, Carnegie made significant contributions in order to establish more than 2,800 public libraries throughout the world. The philanthropist also invested his resources in the arts, education, and scientific causes that continue to benefit others.

Classroom Quizzers

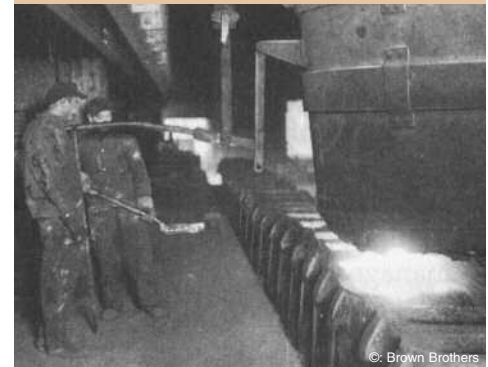
- Who inspired Andrew Carnegie to build libraries? Have students think of a person who has significantly impacted their lives. Discuss ways they could gratefully honor that individual for the investment made.
- Andrew Carnegie is still remembered for endowing libraries as a means of showing his gratefulness to communities and groups of people. For what specific expression of gratefulness would you like to be known and remembered?
- Donating funds for libraries and scientific research benefits individuals both immediately and in the future. What are other ways to invest in people or projects that have lasting results?

Carved above the entrance to one of Carnegie's many public libraries, these words pay tribute to his living legacy.



Collection of the New-York Historical Society 57982

Carnegie foresaw the demise of wooden bridges and thus began to manufacture cast-iron—and later steel—as alternative building materials. He secured contracts for bridges spanning many U.S. rivers—like New York's Brooklyn Bridge, perhaps the most famous bridge in the world.



©: Brown Brothers

With the advent of the Bessemer process, which enabled cheaper production, steel soon replaced iron as a more durable building material. Within 30 years of its founding, Carnegie Steel merged with 7 other companies to become U.S. Steel Corporation—the first company in the world to be valued at over \$1 billion.

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2. Joseph Frazier Wall, *Andrew Carnegie* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970).

Porcupine

Remember



In a sense, the porcupine “counts its benefits” rather than its troubles. Even though its enemies are many, the porcupine has over 30,000 “benefits” to match each danger. With a single swipe of its well-equipped tail, the porcupine can send even a powerful bear running. Thus, the porcupine wanders the woods with little reason for fear.

Find



The porcupine uses its quills for more than defense. It can spread its quills in order to float in water or “float” on the surface of deep snow. Often, characteristics that seem abrasive have unexpected value. An important aspect of gratefulness is learning to appreciate hidden strengths in others.



The Gratefulness of the Porcupine

Porcupines are known for their unique coat of prickly armor. With 100 to 140 quills per square inch, an adult porcupine carries more than 30,000 menacing barbs.

A porcupine can deliver a nasty slap with its swift, strong tail, implanting tens or even hundreds of painful quills in the face of a threatening coyote, dog, or bear.

However, a closer study of the porcupine reveals that it is actually a gentle, sensitive, intelligent creature. Among its many features, five characteristics of the porcupine are remarkably similar to five qualities that mark a man or woman of gratefulness: good memory, expressiveness, contentment, flexibility, and friendliness.

Good Memory

Gratefulness involves remembering the kindnesses of others. Much like grateful people, porcupines keenly recall how others have treated them.

Because it has an excellent memory, a baby porcupine can be easily trained as a pet and will remember and respond to its owner. A domesticated porcupine will even learn the name it is given and come when it is called, just like a pet dog!

Like a grateful person, a porcupine remembers and responds when it is cared for with kindness and patience.

Expressiveness

Gratefulness is not gratefulness unless it is expressed. The porcupine illustrates one of the most remarkable examples of caring expression in the animal kingdom.

Although it is normally a shy, quiet creature, the porcupine exhibits uncharacteristic boldness during mating season. During courtship, the male serenades the female with a low humming sound punctuated with grunts. As he “sings,” he may stand on his hind legs, swaying back and forth in time with the rhythm of his unique love song.

Contentment

Grateful people are most appreciative of what they receive when they are content with what they already have. The porcupine illustrates this kind of contentment.

When it comes to eating, porcupines are content with a wide variety of vegetation. It has been said that a porcupine is one of the few creatures that will never starve. There is always something available that will satisfy the porcupine’s hunger, even if it means gnawing the bark off trees when all other vegetation is buried in the snow.

Flexibility

Flexibility calls for a willingness to look at the positive side of change and to adapt where necessary. A porcupine, like a grateful person, readily adapts, even to inclement conditions.

The porcupine does not seem bothered by rain. Neither does the porcupine seem to mind subzero temperatures and snow in winter. So unperturbed is the creature that it has been known to climb a tree and remain in its treetop perch for several days during a blizzard.

Friendliness

Porcupines are not particularly gregarious creatures. In fact, they tend to be loners. Nevertheless, a porcupine responds quite amiably when treated kindly and carefully.

Tame porcupines get along very well with adults and even children. They love to be handled, carried, and appreciated. Just be careful how you pet a porcupine!

Classroom Quizzers

- Have students list several ways the porcupine demonstrates gratefulness.
- The porcupine demonstrates gratefulness even in the midst of difficult circumstances. Discuss some of the following scenarios with your students—or list your own. For what can you be grateful, even in these situations?

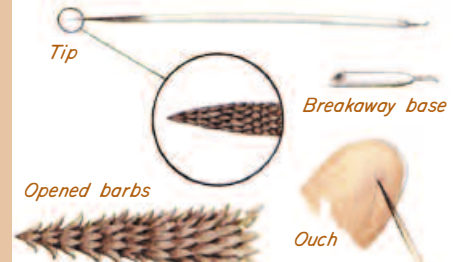
You have to take out the trash or wash the dishes.

Someone gives you a gift, but it is not something that you want.

You study hard for a test and still do not get the highest grade in the class.

Your best friend moves to another state.

Reserve



Although the porcupine makes its point quickly, its “message” sticks with the recipient for a long time. The barbed tip of a porcupine quill expands under the skin, making it difficult to remove. The sponge-like expanding action of the quill also serves to draw it deeper into the body.

Show



In proportion to their parents, newborn porcupines (called *porcupettes*) are the largest offspring of any mammal. For a mother porcupine, giving birth is equivalent to a human mother delivering an 80-pound baby! The birth of a new family member is always a reason for gratefulness.

Assess



The porcupine is not a finicky eater. When food sources are scarce in winter, the porcupine is content to gnaw on the bark of a tree for enough nutrition to keep going.

Character Connection

Charles Dickens' classic tale *A Christmas Carol* demonstrates the truth that gratefulness does not depend on our circumstances, but on how we choose to respond to those circumstances.

Bob Cratchit and his family had very little, but they chose to be grateful—which resulted in joy, love, and harmony in their home. “They were not a handsome family; they were not well dressed; their shoes were far from being waterproof; their clothes were scanty.... But they were happy, grateful, pleased with one another, and contented with the time....”

In contrast, Scrooge had “everything”—yet he was unthankful, complaining, always grasping for more. “The cold within him froze his old features, nipped his pointed nose, shrivelled his cheek, stiffened his gait; made his eyes red, his thin lips blue; and spoke out shrewdly in his grating voice.” Because he was never content with what he had, Scrooge begrudged what others had—especially their happiness. And he did his best to make them as miserable as he was. By not counting his benefits, he became an angry, selfish, lonely miser.

- Scrooge took for granted the benefits around him and his own means and ability to benefit others. Discuss things and people that are easy to take for granted.
- Discuss things or circumstances for which you can choose to be grateful. Remember: Gratefulness is more than a feeling—it is a choice and an action based on that choice.
- Review the Key Concepts on page 3. Have students point out how the characters they are studying demonstrate gratefulness or unthankfulness. Discuss the results of a certain character's actions. (Choose any character from your current reading list.)

Etymology

The ancient Romans combined the adjective *gratus* (“pleasing”) with the verb *facere* (“to make; to do”) and coined the Latin word *gratificus*, which meant “doing a kindness.” This word found its way into Middle English as *gratyfien*, initially meaning “to favor.” By 1540, however, this verb was spelled *gratify*, meaning “to reward or show appreciation.”

Another derivative of the Latin *gratus* was the early 1500s English word *grate*, meaning “agreeable.” Combining it with the suffix *-ful* gave birth to the word *grateful*. Etymologically, the central meaning of the word *gratefulness* is that of being pleased and making it known.

- Have your students list words related to *gratefulness* in a language they are learning (e.g., *benefit, thanksgiving, thank you*).
- Have language students trace the roots of the word or the concept of *gratefulness* in the language they are currently studying.

Thank you

These two words are an important part of our culture, and probably the most familiar and common way to express gratefulness. Take a look at ways to say “Thank you” in other languages.

Chinese - 謝謝你 <SHYEH-shyeh-nee>

French - *Merci* <mare-SEE>

German - *Danke* <DAHN-kuh>

Hawaiian - *Mahalo* <MAH-hah-lo>

Italian - *Grazie* <GRAHT-see>

Norwegian - *Takk* <TAHK>

Russian - *Спасибо* <spah-SEE-bah>

Spanish - *Gracias* <GRAH-see-as>

Swahili - *Asante* <ah-SAHN-tuh>

- Have students research customs for expressing gratefulness that are unique to other countries. Discuss the importance of expressing gratefulness in a way that will mean the most to the receiver.
- Have students keep a gratefulness journal to record each day five things for which they are grateful. Encourage them to take time to express their gratefulness to those responsible for the benefits they enjoy. (See “Note Your Thanks” on page 11.)
- For Americans, the annual celebration of Thanksgiving Day has its roots in the Pilgrims' 3-day feast in 1621. Discuss the history of Thanksgiving and read an official proclamation or have students write their own. (*President Abraham Lincoln's 1863 Thanksgiving Proclamation delivered during the Civil War demonstrates an “attitude of gratitude” in the midst of difficult circumstances.*) Encourage students to demonstrate an “attitude of gratitude” throughout the year.



Note Your Thanks

One of the key components to building a culture of character is expressing gratefulness in the form of praise. The three steps of praise are:

- 1) Give the *definition* of the character quality.
- 2) Give a specific *illustration* of how it was demonstrated.
- 3) Explain the *benefit* to you and others.

Look for ways to “DIB” (*Definition - Illustration - Benefit*) your students, and encourage your students to “DIB” others. Pick up the telephone, send an e-mail or electronic card, write a poem or song—however you do it, make a point to express grateful praise to others.

Following are some tips for writing a thank-you note:

- Let *you* come through. Seek to capture your feelings about the gift on paper.
- Be specific and sincere. Tell why you like or appreciate the gift and how you plan to use it. If you are thanking someone for help or hospitality, give specific ways that individual benefited you.
- The sooner, the better! Don’t delay expressing your gratefulness.

Gratefulness Glasses

The expression “viewing life through rose-colored glasses” describes a cheerfully optimistic outlook. And although we need to be realistic about our circumstances, we do have a choice about how we view them.

When you don a pair of glasses—whether prescription glasses or tinted sunglasses—they simply change the way we *view* our surroundings. They do not alter reality, only our perception of it. For example, polarized lenses reduce glare and enable anglers to see beyond the water’s surface to spot a fish—or help skiers distinguish the moguls from the rest of the slope.

The next time you put on a pair of glasses, think about the way you view your circumstances. Do you choose an attitude of gratitude?

- Provide several types of glasses or show pictures of people wearing glasses in various contexts (*e.g., with different colored lenses or prescriptions*). Or have students that wear glasses let other students look through them. Discuss how glasses can change our perspective but not the reality.
- Challenge students to a “No Complaints” day, reminding them that gratefulness is a *choice*, not a feeling. Let them keep you accountable as well!
- Have students make “Gratefulness Glasses.” Shape colorful pipe cleaners to create the rims of the glasses, and attach pipe cleaner earpieces. Encourage them to be creative! The rims can be formed into a multitude of shapes and sizes, and multi-colored pipe cleaners or paper die cuts can be attached to personalize. Use this as a reminder that glasses give us a new perspective. They change our *perspective*, not *what* we see. In the same way, an attitude of gratitude changes our perspective on life. When facing a difficult or unpleasant situation—pick up your gratefulness glasses and seek to see purposes in events that others overlook.

Patronage

Imagine being responsible for furthering the development of such great artists as Botticelli, Verrocchio, and Leonardo da Vinci. That is what Lorenzo de’ Medici did, and today we realize what a great gift he gave to humanity in supporting these young men.

Lorenzo loved the arts. He collected ancient manuscripts and displayed antique sculpture in his garden. He also loved to encourage young artists, so he gathered many of them under his protection and sponsored them until they were able to survive on their own.

One of those artists was discovered to have unusual talent by age 15, and he lived with the Medici family for many years. His name was Michelangelo Buonarroti.

How grateful the artists must have been for such an investment. It allowed them to explore their talent and create works that have survived the centuries, still recognized throughout the world today.

- Do you have any benefactors like Lorenzo de’ Medici? Perhaps they are not wealthy, but they may give of themselves in countless other ways.
- How can you be a benefactor to others? What do you have that you can share (*e.g., time, talent, encouragement*)?
- What talents can you share with others as a demonstration of your gratefulness for them? (*Sing a song, write a poem, draw or paint a picture, choreograph a dance.*)

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Simplify

Sally has three apples. Bob has four oranges. Together, how many apples and oranges do Sally and Bob have? While this is quite simple, word problems range from easy addition to the most complex calculus problems. And students typically have more trouble with word problems than with any other type of problem.

The key to simplifying word problems, whether adding apples or calculating the speed of light, is just that—*simplify*.

Word problems are often simplified versions of real-life situations. In business, people who can break down major problems into achievable steps are in high demand. They are known as *troubleshooters*.

This ability to distill something to its essence is a key element of gratefulness—*simplifying expectations*. People who simplify their expectations identify the basic needs necessary to sustain life and understand that everything above and beyond those necessities is extra—just one more reason to be grateful.

- Discuss some basic necessities in life (*food, clothing, shelter*).
- What are some items we often take for granted that are above and beyond the bare necessities (*eating special foods, having the "right" brand of clothing, owning the latest computer game or CD*)?
- Discuss other areas of life that involve simplifying problems (*technical support for computers, marketing, public relations, engineering, counseling*).

Count Your Benefits

Part of gratefulness is counting your benefits—realizing just how good life really is.

There are many different ways to count. The simplest is our traditional counting method, usually referred to as *base ten*. 1, 2, 3, 4, etc. A common computer method of counting is *base two* or *binary*. 0, 1, 10, 11, 100, 101, 110, 111, etc. Yet another way is *hexadecimal* or *base sixteen*. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, A, B, C, D, E, F, etc.

These are a just a few examples of the many ways to count (*e.g., Octal, Roman, Egyptian, Incan*). Regardless of *how* you decide to count, remember to take the *time* to count your benefits.

- As a class, make a list of things for which everyone can be grateful and number them using a base other than ten.
- Have each student determine his or her age using the binary system.

The Wealth of Health

Would you pay 10 cents for an extra breath at the end of your life? What if you had to pay 10 cents for *every* breath? Breathing is one benefit that is easy to take for granted. Count your breaths—and your benefits.

- Have students count the number of breaths they take in one minute. Reproduce the chart below and have students fill in the blanks to find out how many breaths they take and how much it would cost if they had to pay for each one.

____ breaths per minute x 60 minutes = ____ breaths per hour
 ____ breaths per hour x 24 hours = ____ breaths per day
 ____ breaths per day x 365 days = ____ breaths per year
 ____ breaths per year x 70 years = ____ breaths per lifetime
 ____ breaths per lifetime x \$.10 = \$ ____

Command Prompt

Everything a computer does is dependent on its user. While it contains hardware and software, every byte of usable information is useless apart from a user. Even simple tasks like playing a CD or sending e-mail require a user to put in the CD or key in the information.

Consider this analogy for gratefulness. Where did you get the clothes you are wearing? Were they given to you? Were you given money to buy them? Did you earn the money to buy them by working? Whatever the case, there is a benefactor—a *user*, in computer terminology—to whom you can demonstrate gratefulness.

- Learn to trace benefits to benefactors. As a class, discuss how the school obtained the computers in the classroom. (*The school received money from the district. The district received money from the taxpayers. The taxpayers received money from the companies where they work, and so on.*)

Cellular Devastation

An incredible drama is staged every day within our bodies. Cells develop, grow, absorb nutrients, perform their appointed tasks, and die.

Every cell has a reason for existence—to help sustain life. Cells *take in* nutrients in order to *give back* strength. What would happen if a cell took in but did not give back? What would happen if a cell did not stop growing at an appointed time? The answer is *cancer*.

Cancer cells are characterized by several things, but two will be emphasized here. First, cancer cells keep growing and multiplying when they should not. Cancerous cells override the control mechanisms that tell cells when to stop multiplying. They then grow to incredible sizes, forming a tissue mass that interferes with the normal operation of the body. The cancerous cells will even cross boundaries into other cells, hijacking those cells for additional room to grow.

Second, cancer cells take in blood and nutrients but do not contribute to the health and defense of the body. After a tumor grows to a few millimeters in diameter, it persuades the body to provide it with blood vessels, which supply oxygen and vital nutrients that enable it to grow faster.

Failure to demonstrate gratefulness can be just as deadly as cancer. An unthankful attitude will slowly but surely permeate other areas of life—changing the way a person acts, reacts, and perceives other people.

Also, just as cancer can consume the body and steal or disable its proper functions, unthankful people consume valuable resources from others without giving back to those around them.

Conversely, gratefulness involves give-and-take. Seek to recognize the benefit that others have been to you and let them know. In addition to expressing gratefulness, look for ways that you can be a benefit to others.

Dr. Robert Buckman, et al., *What You Really Need to Know About Cancer: A Comprehensive Guide for Patients and Their Families* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).

- Study some of the two hundred types of diseases commonly listed under the title *cancer*. What are other things that characterize cancer cells? (*They can invade other tissue. They can invade the bloodstream. They can establish secondary tumors. They can produce substances that interfere with the function of the body.*) Can any additional analogies be drawn to gratefulness or unthankfulness?
- How can you “give back” to those who strengthen and encourage you? (*Listen to them. Praise them. Thank them. Help them.*)
- Evaluate your gratefulness. Do you more often give to or take from those around you?

The Circuit of Science

Click. Flip a light switch *on*. Millions of electrons immediately flood the circuit, causing the light bulb to glow. *Click.* Flip the light switch *off*. The circuit is interrupted, and darkness results.

Basic principles of electronics teach us that running a line from a power source to its point of use is not enough. The circuit must also run from the point of use back to the power source.

When the positive pole of a battery is connected to a light bulb, a *potential* exists for light, much the way a potential exists when you receive something from someone else. However, potential alone will not light the bulb. The circuit must be completed for current to flow through the bulb, and it is this current that actually lights the bulb.

Gratefulness is like completing the circuit. If a recipient uses what is given without “completing the circuit” by thanking those who made it possible, he or she fails to realize the true potential and risks damaging the relationship.

- Study electrical circuits and various types of current (*direct current, alternating current*).
- Who has given to you in the past that you have yet to thank? Set aside time this week to “complete the circuit.”





Grateful Response

Lord Randolph was in a hurry. He had an important speech to deliver! Unfortunately, the rutted road he was traveling slowed his carriage. Suddenly, he felt a great *thump*. The horses strained their muscles, but they could not budge the carriage.

Lord Randolph had despaired of arriving in time to deliver his speech when a young man named Alex, about 16 years old, approached him. Alex offered to help and went to fetch his father's work horses. He cheerfully assisted Lord Randolph, mud and all. In gratefulness, Lord Randolph offered to help Alex finish his education and go to college.

Lord Randolph did indeed pay Alex's way through medical school, and the young man distinguished himself in the field of bacteriology. After becoming Dr. Alexander Fleming, he discovered the powerful antibiotic *penicillin*.

It was years later, during World War II, that Lord Randolph's son and the strength of England—Prime Minister Winston Churchill—lay dying from pneumonia. When the wonder drug penicillin was administered, Churchill recovered to lead the Allies to victory. Through a remarkable series of circumstances, the gratefulness of a father saved his own son's life—and perhaps the free world.

- Lord Randolph did not just *feel* grateful—he *demonstrated* his gratefulness. Discuss the difference.
- Gratefulness is a powerful character quality. Are there any other examples where it influenced the course of history?
- You may not be able to send someone through medical school, but you can demonstrate gratefulness in other ways. Discuss some ideas.

- How has demonstrating gratefulness made an impact on your life?

Richard "Little Bear" Wheeler, *Providential Occurrences in World History* (Bulverde, Tex.: Mantle Ministries Press, 1997).

Gratefulness on the Job

Managers formulate policies and ensure the company's objectives are met. They also direct the day-to-day operations within the company and are responsible for various aspects of productivity.

A recent survey conducted by Glenn Tobe & Associates revealed that while most managers think employees are motivated by money, employees say that appreciation is more important. Paul Cook, founder of Raychem Corporation, agrees, "The most important factor is individual recognition—more important than salaries, bonuses, or promotions.... [The employees'] greatest reward is receiving acknowledgement that they did contribute to making something meaningful happen."

A grateful manager will:

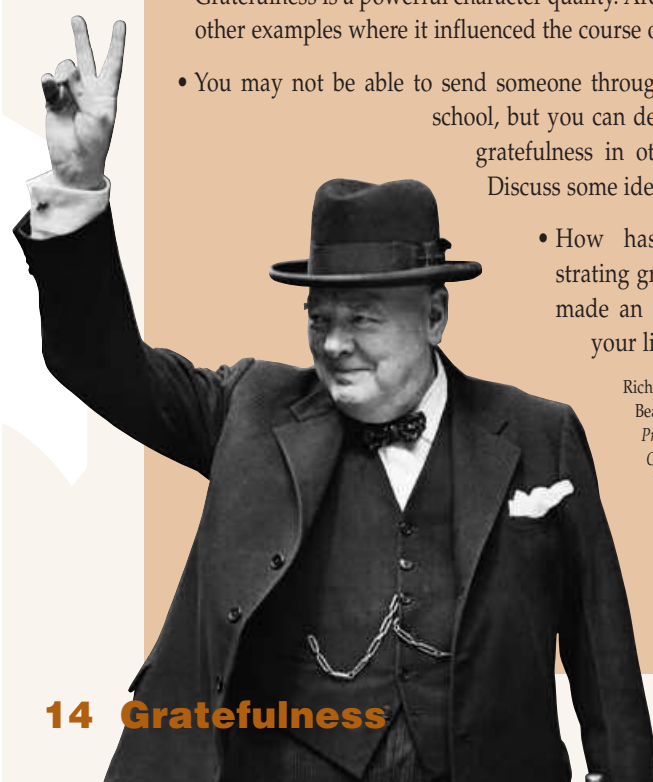
- Count the benefits he enjoys—including the employees who work for him. Acknowledging the vital role they play in his personal success and the success of the company will encourage retention of quality employees, boost employee satisfaction and production, and secure the future success of the company.
- Recognize that others have invested in various ways that have benefited him both personally and professionally.
- Make time to thank the employees under his management.
- Express gratitude both in word and in deed by finding creative ways to say "Thank you" to employees for things like their loyalty to the company, their diligent work, and their attention to detail.
- Distinguish between *expectations* and *standards*, balancing a requirement for excellence from employees with an understanding of the demands that are placed on them from work, family, and community responsibilities.

Discuss various public servants who risk their lives in order to protect others (*police officers, firefighters, military personnel*). Have students "adopt" such a person and write letters expressing their gratefulness. Invite that individual to visit your class, and find a way to gratefully honor him or her.

- Have students list other vocations or summer jobs that especially require gratefulness (*fund-raiser, philanthropist, time management consultant*). Using the Key Concepts on page 3, discuss why gratefulness is so important.

Heroes From History

- Review Andrew Carnegie's story on pages 6–7. Have your students think about the people they are studying in class: historical figures, world leaders, people who affected the record we call *history*. Ask them to pinpoint specific instances in which someone they are studying demonstrated gratefulness—or lack of it. What were the results?





Warm Up

You are psyched and ready to run. Your sneakers are on, your adrenaline is pumping, and you feel the call of the road. But wait! Before sprinting out the door, take time to start slowly and warm up your muscles.

Professional athletes realize the importance of stretching in preparation for exercise. Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, who played in the NBA for 20 years, credits the longevity of his career to his stretching routine. Stretching greatly reduces the possibility of injury and provides a competitive edge.

At a ball game, observe the relief pitcher. He does not leap onto the field directly from the bench. Instead, he begins a warm-up routine, gradually increasing to practice throws. Because pitchers want their pitching arm to last, they will not begin high-speed pitching with “cold” muscles.

Just as it is important to prepare for exercise by taking time to stretch and warm up, it is even more important to prepare for life by having a right outlook—an attitude of gratitude. Take the time necessary to count your benefits, identify your benefactors, and express your thanks.

- Discuss the consequences of not warming up. Ask your students if they have any personal examples to share.
- How can you make time to thank people? How can you use “wasted” moments to thank others? (*Write a note while riding in a car, waiting in a doctor’s office, standing in line.*)
- How does having an attitude of gratitude change the way you look at life?

Andrew Feldman, M.D., *The Jock Doc’s Body Repair Kit* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999).

Skin

Do you know what your largest organ is? Hint: You can see it, and it is what keeps your insides in—*skin*.

Skin serves multiple functions. It protects the body from outer elements, but it is also sensitive to the slightest touch. It is virtually waterproof, protecting the high-water content of our bodies from complete evaporation. Skin has an amazing ability to regenerate itself when injured, and it helps to regulate body temperature by producing sweat. In one square inch of skin, there are four yards of nerve fibers, 100 sweat glands, 3 million cells, and 3 yards of blood vessels.

Try to imagine life without your skin! We could not go swimming because in freshwater we would become saturated and sink, while in salt water we would lose the water from our body and shrivel. We could not go out in the sun, since there would be nothing to protect us from UV rays. Without skin, our eyes would be unprotected, our organs would be easily dislodged, and we would have no fingerprints. Are you grateful for your wonderful skin?

- Have students research further some of the many functions of skin.
- Discuss how to care for your skin (*wash it, protect it, exercise it*). Learn what nutrients are especially important for skin (*vitamin D, vitamin C, calcium*).

http://www.crahealth.org/about_cra/facts.htm

The Set Up

The opposing team lunged for the ball, diving a split second too late. The gymnasium erupted with cheers as the ball hit the floor with a *thud*, sealing the state championship! Fans flooded the floor, hoisting onto their shoulders the player who had made the winning spike.

Forgotten in their jubilation was another equally important person: the team member who “set” the crucial spike. If the ball had not been in the right place at the right time—however talented the spiker was, she would not have scored the game point.

Sometimes life is like that volleyball game. It seems as though only the achievers are recognized. The people who work tirelessly in the background are often overlooked.

Champions sometimes neglect to mention those who sacrificed, encouraged, and cheered them on—and all the glory goes to the star. Yet behind every champion stands a host of shadowy figures who contributed to the success of that individual.

- What about you? When you are praised, do you immediately begin to think of those who invested in you to make that recognition a reality?
- Think about the people who have invested in your life. When was the last time you thanked them?
- How will you work to “set” others for achievement?



Balance

Letting others know by my words and actions
how they have benefited my life

Gratefulness in Quotes

“No duty is more urgent than that of giving thanks.”
—Saint Ambrose

“Gratitude is the memory of the heart.”
—Jean Baptiste Massieu

“Gratitude preserves old Friendship and procures new.”

“Gratitude is the least of Virtues, but Ingratitude is the worst of Vices.”
—Thomas Fuller

“When you drink from the stream, remember the spring.”
—Chinese Proverb

“What is it that we say?”
—Mom

“Swift gratitude is the sweetest; if it delays, all gratitude is empty and unworthy of the name.”
—Greek Proverb

“My evil genius Procrastination has whispered me to tarry ‘til a more convenient season.”
—Mary Todd Lincoln

“That best portion of a good man’s life; / His little, nameless, unremembered acts / Of kindness and of love.”
—William Wordsworth

“Men are more prone to curtail their gratitude than either their desires or their hopes.”
—La Rochefoucauld

“And if we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.”
—Saint Paul

“Gratitude is the most exquisite form of courtesy.”
—Jacques Maritain

Express Humble Gratefulness

Only a humble heart can truly express gratefulness. Humility is “acknowledging that achievement results from the investment of others in my life.” Proud people fail to recognize how others have invested in their lives and will therefore see no reason to express gratefulness.

Trace achievements to your benefactors and express humble gratefulness.

Be Sincerely Grateful

Insincere gratefulness is as offensive as unthankfulness. Therefore, learn to demonstrate *sincerity*, “eagerness to do what is right with transparent motives.”

It is true that gratefulness is a powerful motivator with significant pragmatic potential. Yet the moment gratefulness conceals selfish motives, it ceases to be genuine.

Guard against selfish motives—and be sincerely grateful.

Show Grateful Generosity

Gratefulness is an important response, but constantly taking is selfish. Seek to balance gratefulness with *generosity*, “carefully managing my resources so I can freely give to those in need.”

Demonstrating gratefulness should not distract us from giving to others. If we only give to those who have already given to us, we fail to be truly *generous*. Generosity is giving to those to whom we owe nothing, and especially to those who are unable to do anything in return.

Recognize those who benefit you and thank them. Moreover, recognize those who are themselves in need and be generous with your time, abilities, and resources.

Exercise True Gratefulness

If gratefulness is exaggerated or manufactured, it can be worse than neglect. Balance gratefulness with *truthfulness*, “earning future trust by accurately reporting past facts.” People will appreciate it, and it will build their trust in you.

Wrap-Up

Gratefulness Is Critical to Personal Success

People make countless investments in our lives that we may simply overlook. For example, the skills you have acquired and the character you have built—are they a result of the investment a parent, a teacher, a mentor, a colleague, or a supervisor has made in your life? Have you ever taken time to thank those individuals specifically for the ways their time and investment have benefited you? Make it a priority to express your gratefulness—in both word and action—to those who have invested in your life and work. It does make a difference!