

From the Belly

ADVANCEMENT
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Breathing is an important part of yoga, but it's also an important way to help students manage emotions in the classroom. Introduce students to intentional breathing techniques and guide them to incorporate techniques into their day with this low-prep lesson.

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Objective: Students will be able to explain intentional breathing and why it is useful. Students will also be able to demonstrate intentional breathing.

Grades: K–12

Time: 45 minutes

Materials: copy of the provided sentence starters, yoga mats or large towels (optional), dice, class supply of sticky notes, student books

DIRECTIONS

Bell-Ringer Activity

1. Write the following task on the board: *Observe your breathing. Then describe it. Tell what you hear, see, and feel.*
2. Have each child write his or her response to the task on a sheet of paper or in a bell-ringer notebook.

Whole-Group Instruction

1. Begin by telling students that breathing is something the body does automatically and that they probably don't give it much thought. Then explain that *intentional breathing* is when a person thinks about how he or she is breathing and uses the belly to breathe deeply. Direct students to put their hands

on their bellies to feel their breathing. Tell them intentional breathing can help a person feel calm, handle his or her feelings, and get focused.

2. Explain to students that one way to think about intentional breathing is to imagine filling a balloon with air. Sit on a chair with your hands on your stomach. Breathe in and fill your belly with air so it looks like an inflated balloon. Then breathe out. Explain that as you release air from your belly and push your belly toward your back the balloon deflates. Direct students to put their hands on their bellies as you model these actions again; then have students model the actions at their seats.

3. Guide students to understand that intentional breathing uses more air and more concentration than regular, everyday breathing. Encourage students to think about the balloon analogy as they breathe intentionally.

Partner and Whole-Group Practice

1. Assign each student a partner and give each pair a yoga mat or towel (optional). Provide time for students to discuss what they've learned about intentional breathing so far and think about times when intentional breathing could be helpful.
2. Tell students they will practice intentional breathing with their partners and that you want them to pay close attention to how they are breathing during each task. Ask students what body parts they'll rely on as they practice intentional breathing (*their bellies and lungs*).
3. Instruct one student in each pair to lie on the floor with a small book on his or her belly. Direct the other student to say "breathe in" as the first student inhales and "breathe out" as the student exhales. Remind students to think about the balloon analogy as they breathe. Then have students switch roles. Ask students whether using the book made them more aware of using their bellies to breathe; then have students place their hands on their stomachs and say, "I should use my belly to breathe deeply."
4. Direct students to stand, facing their partners. Tell them they will practice Volcano Breath, another breathing technique. First, have them place their palms on their chests. Instruct them to breathe in and lift their palms above their heads before exhaling and letting their arms fall to their sides. Have students repeat the name of the technique before repeating the actions.
5. For an individual activity, have students sit tall on the floor with the soles of their feet pressed together. Have them slide their arms under their knees, touching their elbows to the floor. Instruct them to hold onto the sides of their feet as they slowly breathe, and pull themselves forward toward their toes. Have students listen to how the pose affects their breathing. (Carefully gauge students' physical abilities before incorporating this pose.)
6. Lead students to discuss the breathing tasks they performed and what they noticed about their bodies during the tasks. Also invite students to share how they felt after the breathing exercises. Remind students that intentional breathing can make people feel better and more focused. Encourage students to use this kind of breathing when they feel stressed or distracted and when they participate in yoga activities.

Progress Check

1. Project a copy of the sentence starters on the board and invite a student to roll a die. Read aloud the corresponding sentence starter.
2. Direct each student to complete the sentence on a sticky note.

Homework

Encourage students to demonstrate an example of intentional breathing to two or more people before returning to school the next day.

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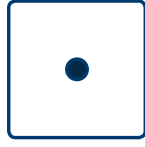
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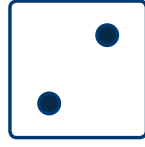
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MY NOTES

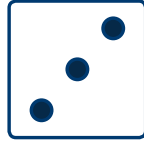
Sentence Starters



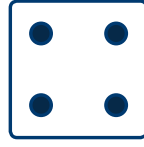
Today I learned...



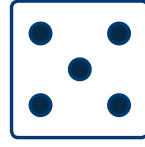
I can use what I learned today to...



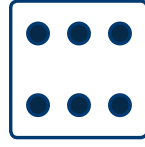
I am still unsure about...



Something that is important to remember is...



I would like to learn more about...



Today's lesson will help me...