

Lesson Plan: Weekly Strengths-Spotting Seeing the Good in Each Other

Grade band: 1st – 5th

Subject: SEL/ELA

Duration: 60 minutes (Initial Lesson)

Montana ELA Content Standards

During the lesson, students will:

- **W.1-5.5.** With guidance and support from adults, focus on a topic, respond to questions and suggestions from peers, and add details to strengthen writing as needed.
- **W.1-5.8.** With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided resources to answer a question, including sources by and about American Indians.
- **W.3-5.4.** With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose.
- **RL.1-5.1.** Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
- **SL.1-5.4.** Describe people, places, things, and events with relevant details, expressing ideas and feelings clearly.
- **SL.1-5.5.** Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings.

Montana Whole Child Development Competencies

- **MTSEL.K-2.3.d** Describe strengths and positive qualities in others
- **MTSEL.3-5.4.c** Build healthy relationships by recognizing the strengths and points of view of others

Learning Objectives:

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

- Identify and describe character strengths using age-appropriate language.
- Recognize strengths demonstrated by peers.
- Provide specific evidence of a peer demonstrating a character strength.
- Express appreciation for a peer's strength and explain why it mattered to them.
- Contribute to a classroom culture focused on recognizing and celebrating the strengths of others.

Materials:

- VIA Character Strengths list
- Weekly Strengths Spotting worksheet (one per student)

- Crayons or colored pencils
- Read-aloud (teacher's choice)
 - *ABC That Sounds Like Me*
 - *The Little Book of Character Strengths*
 - *Rosie Revere, Engineer*
- Optional: A designated "Strengths Spotlight" chair, name tag, or bulletin board space to display who is being honored each week.

Lesson Outline:

1. Initial Engagement: (10-15 minutes)

Begin by gathering students for a read-aloud. Teachers may choose one of the recommended books that highlights positive character traits and strengths. While reading, facilitate a class discussion using questions such as:

- What strengths did you notice in the characters?
- What did those strengths look like?
- How did those strengths help others?
- Have you ever seen someone in our class demonstrate one of these strengths?

Introduce the idea that every person has unique strengths that make the classroom stronger. Explain that throughout the year the class will practice becoming "strength spotters" by intentionally noticing the good qualities in one another.

Tell students that one classmate will be randomly selected each week to receive a collection of strengths noticed by their classmates.

2. Explicit Instruction: (10-15 minutes)

Introduce the concept of character strengths using the VIA Character Strengths. Select several strengths that are developmentally appropriate for your students (examples include kindness, curiosity, teamwork, bravery, perseverance, creativity, honesty, gratitude, and love of learning).

For each strength:

- Define it using student-friendly language.
- Discuss what the strength looks like at school.
- Brainstorm examples students have observed.
- Clarify the difference between compliments ("You're nice.") and strengths-based observations ("You showed kindness when you helped someone who was upset.")

Display the weekly worksheet and model each section.

Example:

The strength I notice in Maya is kindness.

I saw this strength in action when Maya helped another student clean up spilled markers.

I appreciated Maya's use of this strength because it made our classroom feel caring and welcoming.

Discuss how specific examples help others recognize their strengths and make the message more meaningful.

3. Guided Practice: (10-15 minutes)

As a class, practice completing a sample worksheet together about a fictional character, so students feel confident with the sentence structure before working independently.

Work together to answer each section of the worksheet. Invite students to contribute examples of the character's strengths. Model drawing a simple illustration that matches the written example.

Note: Reading *Rosie Revere, Engineer* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EKOjBBRpzSk>) would be a great connection for this section.

4. Independent Application: (15-20 minutes)

Before students begin independently, remind them that:

- Everyone has strengths.
- We focus on genuine observations.
- We use kind and respectful language.
- We think about actions we've actually seen.
- The student that is honored will complete the same worksheet and write about his/her strengths.

Students independently complete their Strengths-Spotting worksheet. Teachers circulate, helping students:

- Identify appropriate strengths,
- Provide specific evidence,
- Elaborate on their appreciation,
- Connect drawings to their written responses.

Differentiate by providing sentence stems, visual supports, or allowing students to dictate responses if needed.

Collect the completed pages and assemble them into the selected student's personal Strengths Book. By the end of the school year, every student will receive a book filled with authentic observations from their classmates.

Note: This section can be completed throughout the week.

5. Closing: (5 minutes)

Invite several volunteers to share one strength they noticed and the evidence that supported it if the student receiving the praise is comfortable with it.

Lead a brief reflection:

- How did it feel to notice someone's strengths?
- How might it feel to receive a book filled with strengths noticed by classmates?
- Why is it important to notice what is strong in people instead of focusing on mistakes?

Conclude by reminding students that everyone possesses unique strengths and that recognizing those strengths helps create a classroom where everyone feels valued, connected, and supported.