

Responsibility Domino Effect

This lesson gives students an opportunity to consider how their responsibilities impact others and what can happen if we don't do what we need to do.

Kindness Sub-Concept(s)

Self-Discipline

Lesson Timeframe

35-40 minutes

Required Materials

- ❑ Set of dominoes - or enough for one domino per student

Standards Map

This lesson aligns with CASEL Competencies, National Health Education Standards, and Common Core State Standards. Please refer to the [Standards Map](#) for more information.

Lesson Objective

Students will:

- Examine the cause and effect relationship between fulfilling or neglecting our responsibilities.

Teacher Connection/Self-Care

Being responsible is often equated with being perfect. Each one of us will drop the ball at some point. How you choose to handle those moments says a great deal about how you view your responsibilities. Take some time this week to examine your response to natural human error. Be kind to yourself and move forward.

Tips for Diverse Learners

- Students can draw their responsibilities and cause/effect consequences.
- If think, pair, share is not ideal for your group, keep the discussion in large or small groups.

**Share**

5-7 minutes

Begin by reviewing the definitions of **responsibility** and **perseverance**. See if students can remember the definitions without help. If this is the first lesson you are doing in this unit, you can introduce these terms and definitions now:

Responsibility means *being reliable to do the things that are expected or required of us*.

Perseverance means *trying our best, even when it gets hard, until we reach our goal*.

Ask:

- How does it feel when you persevere through a challenge and reach a goal?
- How does it feel when you try your best but don't reach your goal?
- Have you ever had an experience where someone else was not being responsible and it had a negative impact or consequence for you. (Consider having a sample answer for this one as a model for students.)



Inspire

7-10 minutes

The focus of today's lesson is thinking about how our actions can impact others' ability to fulfil their responsibilities or reach goals.

Explain: *We might think it's "no big deal" if we forget to do something (like feed your pet) or are not prepared for something (like forgetting to bring your baseball glove to practice), but if we don't feed our pet, they get hungry and feel weak. If we don't bring our glove, we can't do our best at practice, and the entire team suffers. Even if we don't mean to forget things (and, let's face it, everyone forgets sometimes!), not following through on our responsibilities can have consequences. It is important to try and take our responsibilities seriously or ask for help remembering things when we forget. But what if we choose to skip out on our responsibilities? What then?*

*Transition into the next activity.

Instructions:

You will read the following two scenarios, and students will think, pair, share with their neighbor, discussing how David and Jackson's lack of responsibility in the scenarios impacts the other people around them. You can call on people to share their thoughts once everyone has had a few minutes to discuss:

Scenario 1: David is working with Malia and Sasha on a group project for social studies. They are presenting on ancient Rome. They are supposed to finish their poster today and present it tomorrow, but David, who was in charge of bringing pictures of Ancient Rome for their poster, forgot to print any off at home the night before. He thought about it, but then decided to play video games instead. HE figured he would remember when he was done, but he didn't. How does this impact Malia and Sasha?

Scenario 2: Every 5th grader has to help out in the school cafeteria for one week during the school year. This week, Jackson, Sarah, Maizy, and Juan are assigned to help. Each one has a different job. Sarah is helping hand out milk; Maizy is helping the cooks put food on trays; Jackson is supposed to help kids scrape any leftover food on their trays into the waste bins before they stack their trays for washing; and Juan is going to clean up any napkins or utensils that fall to the floor and that students don't pick up, and bring the utensils and the trays that Jackson is stacking back to the commercial washer for cleaning. However, Jackson is grossed out with scraping food into the garbage, so he decides to skip his duty and go outside with his friends instead. How does this impact his group members and other people at school?



Empower

10-15 minutes

Responsibility Dominoes

This activity will showcase what happens when someone is not responsible; their lack of responsibility impacts those around them and stops the dominoes from falling properly.

Instructions:

1. Give every student at least one domino (two per student would work best). Clear a large spot on the floor or use the top of a large, cleared-off table.
2. Ask students to state one of their responsibilities - it could be a responsibility they have at home, at school, in a club/sport/program/group they are part of, etc.
3. After they state their responsibility, they line one domino up on the floor or table (behind whoever lined their domino up before them). The goal is to have one long line of dominos that can fall together once pushed.
 - a. *Remind students that it is ok if the dominoes fall a bit as they are lining them up; this can represent obstacles that they need to persevere through in order to fulfill their responsibility. In other words, have students pick up their domino and line it up again.*
4. When the line is complete, have a student tip the first domino and watch the entire line fall. Explain that this is like our responsibilities - when we all fulfill our responsibilities, things go like they are supposed to.
5. **Then** - line the dominoes back up, but this time take out 3 or 4 dominoes. As you remove a domino, explain that it represents someone not fulfilling their responsibility.
6. Tip the dominoes again and watch what happens. The dominoes (should) stop falling once they hit the vacant space where you removed a domino. Explain that this is what happens when someone is not responsible - it can stop everything in its tracks. Tip the next standing domino. The line should, again, fall until the next vacancy and then top.
7. **Finally** - ask students what they should do to make the line work again. (The answer is fill in the remaining vacancies with dominos). Have students do that and then tip the line again. Explain when you restore responsibility, even if there was a gap, things work again.



Reflect

5-7 minutes

Have students think about the responsibilities of others at school, at home, and in the community. Have them think about how it would impact them personally if those people did not complete their responsibilities. For example, what would happen if their teacher simply didn't show up for school? What would happen if the city didn't maintain the electrical grid or water mains? What would happen if your bus driver decided to skip work one morning?



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AS A RECOMMENDED
PROGRAM FOR SOCIAL
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The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has been reviewing evidence-based SEL programs since 2003. Kindness in the Classroom® meets CASEL's SElect Program and is included in the CASEL Guide to Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs.

Kindness in the Classroom® met or exceeded all of CASEL's criteria for high-quality SEL programming. Kindness in the Classroom® received CASEL's highest designation for high-quality SEL programming.

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