

**BACK  
TO**



**SCHOOL  
KIT**



**EMPOWERED™**

# Empowered’s Blueprint for Building Classroom Community and Culture



Teachers,

As we get ready for the new school year, we want to send a big thank you to each of you. Your dedication to changing students’ lives, one kid at a time, is what keeps us going. We know your time is limited, so we have curated this easy-to-use resource to build classroom community and culture in your first few days of school. No additional prep is needed; simply pick one or all of the activities from each section below.

1. **Engaging Activities to Get to Know Your Students**

Create a sense of belonging through activities that encourage creativity and communication, while celebrating the unique skills each student brings to the classroom.

▪ [Human Treasure Hunt Activity](#).....

▪ [Pit With Name Cards Activity](#).....

2. **Foster Community and Collaboration with Team Building Activities**

Your students will be having so much fun, they won’t realize they’re building relationships and discovering the hidden talents of their classmates.

▪ [7 Quick Classroom Energizer Activities](#).....

▪ [Deserted Island Activity](#).....

3. **Shared Goals, Stronger Class: Building Classroom Culture**

Use the tools that have helped Empowered educators go from a culture of Compliance to Commitment with these Student-Led activities.

▪ [Classroom Vision: A Win-Win Activity](#).....

▪ [Foundational Principles Walkabout Activity](#) .....

4. **Bring Life to More Lessons Without Working Overtime**

▪ [Use our FREE Activity Creator AI Tool](#).....

▪ [Explore more FREE ways to boost impact and engagement](#) .....

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As we start this journey together, remember that Empowered is here to support you every step of the way. We’re committed to helping you create a classroom that’s not just a place of learning but also a community where students feel valued, inspired, and motivated to succeed. [Find out how to join on page 23.](#)

Thank you for being part of this transformative journey. We can’t wait to see the incredible impact you’ll have on your students this fall and all school year long.



*Lindsay Schroeder*

**Lindsay Downing Schroeder**  
Chief Executive Officer, Empowered

Our learning strategy includes Empowered’s **Foundational Principles**. They are referenced throughout this booklet and can be found on **page 19**.



# 1

## Engaging Activities to Get to Know Your Students

The first step toward building a community of learners is making sure each student feels they belong.

These activities invite students to share their stories, celebrate their strengths, and connect with others—without putting anyone on the spot. Through creativity and conversation, your students will begin to feel safe expressing themselves, which is the foundation for growth, learning, and positive relationships in your classroom.



Most of our activities mention **Empowered Currency**, but you can do them without that extra motivator.

If you're curious to learn more, we have guides for starting your classroom economy available on **Empowered Hub**.

# Human Treasure Hunt

This is an activity to help your students get to know one another better and practice their employability and life skills.

## PREPARATION

- Review the handout and modify as needed so that it relates to your students.
- Print handouts (one per student).
- Determine if you want to limit the amount of time your students have to ask questions. You should consider your class schedule as well as class size.

## INTRODUCTION

What do you know about your classmates? Today, we are going to discover different things about our peers as you go on a Human Treasure Hunt.

## ACTIVITY STEPS

While we encourage you to customize this activity to best serve your students, the following is one suggested way to use this activity in your learning environment.

1. Give each student a copy of the handout. Explain that their task is to go around the room and find different people who each statement applies to. The goal is to be the first one to complete their handout.
2. When they find someone a statement applies to, that person will need to write the identified student's name or initials on the respective line.
3. Allow students time to complete the task. Award currency to the student who finished their handout first.

## ACTIVITY DEBRIEF

*Choose a few discussion questions from below to ask your students.*

- How do networking skills create a Win-Win?
- What knowledge do you have now that you didn't have before? When could you use this knowledge?
- What is the connection between this activity and conducting market research?
- (If doing the Market Day activity) Did you gain knowledge that you could use in your Market Day research?
- Did you see anyone taking advantage of this opportunity? Why or why not?
- How did it feel to talk to others that you had not talked to before and get to know them?
- Why is having a Win-Win Focus important when networking?
- Why is Passion important to networking?
- How does Knowledge about others help you create more value in the market?
- How did it feel to talk to others that you had not talked to before and get to know them?
- What challenge did you overcome in this activity?
- When in your life do you feel like you will use your networking skills?
- What motivated you in this activity? Passion? Responsibility? Win-Win Focus?

### ACTIVITY TIME

Bell Ringer / Closure,  
1-2 Class Periods

### FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

Knowledge; Opportunity;  
Win-Win Focus

### KEY CONCEPTS

Networking; Relationship Skills;  
Empathy; Communication

### MATERIALS NEEDED

**Needed:** Writing Utensil, Human  
Treasure Hunt Handout  
**Optional:** Timer, Empowered  
Currency

## Human Treasure Hunt (Grades 2-5)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Someone who is left-handed
- \_\_\_\_\_ Someone who is an only child
- \_\_\_\_\_ Someone who is the same height as you
- \_\_\_\_\_ Someone whose favorite color is blue
- \_\_\_\_\_ Someone who loves pepperoni pizza
- \_\_\_\_\_ Someone who likes to sing
- \_\_\_\_\_ Someone who has the same pet as you
- \_\_\_\_\_ Someone who has brown eyes
- \_\_\_\_\_ Someone who likes to draw
- \_\_\_\_\_ Someone who walks to school

## Human Treasure Hunt (Grades 6-8)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Someone who wants to be an entrepreneur
- \_\_\_\_\_ Someone who is left-handed
- \_\_\_\_\_ Someone who has been outside of the United States
- \_\_\_\_\_ Someone who is an only child
- \_\_\_\_\_ Someone who is the same height as you
- \_\_\_\_\_ Someone who loves football
- \_\_\_\_\_ Someone whose favorite color is blue
- \_\_\_\_\_ Someone who loves pepperoni pizza
- \_\_\_\_\_ Someone who can play a musical instrument
- \_\_\_\_\_ Someone who tells great jokes
- \_\_\_\_\_ Someone who has been out of the state
- \_\_\_\_\_ Someone who has seen all the Harry Potter movies
- \_\_\_\_\_ Someone who likes the same sports team as you
- \_\_\_\_\_ Someone who knows an entrepreneur
- \_\_\_\_\_ Someone who has the same pet as you

## Human Treasure Hunt (Grades 9-12)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Someone who wants to be an entrepreneur
- \_\_\_\_\_ Someone who is left-handed
- \_\_\_\_\_ Someone who has been outside of the United States
- \_\_\_\_\_ Someone who is an only child
- \_\_\_\_\_ Someone who is on the honor roll
- \_\_\_\_\_ Someone who loves football
- \_\_\_\_\_ Someone whose favorite color is blue
- \_\_\_\_\_ Someone who loves pepperoni pizza
- \_\_\_\_\_ Someone who wants to get married and have children
- \_\_\_\_\_ Someone who tells great jokes
- \_\_\_\_\_ Someone who is employed
- \_\_\_\_\_ Someone who has seen all the Harry Potter movies
- \_\_\_\_\_ Someone who loves to cook
- \_\_\_\_\_ Someone who knows an entrepreneur
- \_\_\_\_\_ Someone who has met a celebrity
- \_\_\_\_\_ Someone who has the same zodiac sign as you

# Pit With Name Cards

In this variation of the traditional game Pit, we use the concept of trade from the game, but not the cards. Additionally, there is no buyer or seller needed. The purpose of this variation is to give your students the opportunity to practice the art of collaboration and trade while also getting to know their peers.

## PREPARATION

- Set up to provide a “trading pit” to form in the middle. You can use masking tape to create an official “trading pit” for students to stay within.
- Make sure you have enough note cards for each student to receive 7 blank note cards when they enter your classroom.

## INTRODUCTION

Today’s activity will help you get to know your classmates, as well as helping you practice your negotiation skills. Are you up to the task?

## ACTIVITY STEPS

As students enter your classroom, give each 7 blank note cards. Instruct them to print their first and last name on each note card.

1. Have them return their note cards to you when they have finished writing their name on all 7 note cards. As you collect the completed note cards, shuffle them so they are mixed up really well.
2. Once all note cards are collected and shuffled, redistribute them to your students in stacks of 7.
3. Prompt students to keep their note cards face down until instructed to look at them. Once each student has 7 random note cards face down, share with students that their goal is to collect ALL 7 of the note cards with their name on them. When they have collected ALL 7 of their name cards you will pay them Empowered Currency. *You can choose to only pay the first person, the first 3 or 5, all of them, or only those who did it in a certain amount of time, like 3 minutes.*
4. Ask for questions. If there are no questions let them begin trading. As students “win,” pay them 3 Empowered dollars and ask them to sit. Keep the instructions/tips minimal to encourage creative problem solving.
5. POSSIBLE VARIATIONS You can continue to use note cards to encourage students to trade and interact by having students write the following on their note cards: **Name and Grade; Favorites: color, food, book, class, movie, music, candy, snack; List extracurricular activities; Places they have visited.** *With these variations, you might choose to have students find cards that are the same, not necessarily find their own cards.*

### ACTIVITY TIME

10 Minutes

### FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

Knowledge; Integrity; Passion; Freedom; Sound Judgment

### KEY CONCEPTS

Trade; Market; Scarcity; Sunk Costs; Self-Interest; Wealth; Comparative Advantage; Freedom to Enter and Compete; Virtuous Cycles of Mutual Benefit

### MATERIALS NEEDED

**Needed:** 7 blank note cards (per student), Writing Utensils  
**Optional:** Masking Tape, Empowered Currency



## ACTIVITY DEBRIEF

*Choose a few discussion questions from below to ask your students.*

- Can you think of any examples of a time when you traded something other than money for a good or a service? (Share with students that trade does not always include money in exchange for goods or services.)
- What were you sharing with one another when you traded? Try to get your students to realize they were trading Knowledge. They were asking what one another's names were and sharing their own names to collect all of their name cards.
- Was every student principled? Were they respectful? Tolerant? If so, how were they? If not, how so or why? (Integrity)
- What strategies did you notice worked well to make the trades you needed? Were there times that you traded cards you wanted to hold onto but the ones you gained were more valuable? (Sunk Cost)
- In what ways did you observe and experience that trade is completely voluntary? Were there situations that you participated in or witnessed where someone tried to coerce another to trade? What are the long-term impacts of coercion on relationships and future exchange potential?
- What is the relationship between being culturally aware and being principled? How are they connected?
- In this activity, how did acting in your own self-interest lead to creating value for others? Was Passion (finding fulfillment in your life by improving the lives of others), demonstrated during this activity? Explain.
- What is the connection between trading in this activity and creating virtuous cycles of mutual benefit? (Virtuous cycles of mutual benefit occur when we develop capabilities within each of us that create value for others. The outcome is a society of mutual benefit. Frederick Douglas once said, "partner with anyone to do right, and no one to do wrong.")
- Did all the students choose to participate? Did all students increase their wealth by participating? Why or why not?
- Pit with Name Cards is an opportunity to gain wealth. Did anyone in the class have an advantage over other students in the class? How? Did that advantage help that student win? What is the relationship between sunk costs and a decision to participate where the participant did not increase their satisfaction or gain?
- Success in this activity occurs when others realize your value to them and vice versa. How long did it take you to recognize this and collect the cards you needed more quickly? What strategies did you exercise to help others recognize your value?

# 2

## Foster Community and Collaboration with Team Building Activities

When students work together to solve problems, make decisions, and have fun, something powerful happens—they begin to see themselves as part of something bigger.

The team-building activities in this section are designed to be lighthearted and energizing, but they also lay the groundwork for trust, collaboration, and shared purpose. Students will begin to discover the unique value their classmates bring to the table, and how much more they can achieve when they work together.



HUB

Find more *free* ideas and resources to boost student engagement on [Empowered Hub](https://EmpoweredHub.org) (EmpoweredHub.org).

It's *free* to register and *free* to use 24/7/365.

# 7 Quick Classroom Energizers

If your class needs an energetic pick-me-up, try one of these Energizers.

## PREPARATION

You can use energizers with little prep. Start an energizer when you feel energy is low or you feel like you're losing students' attention. You can stop the energizer as soon as you hear laughter or sense the group morale rising if you want/need to.

## INTRODUCTION

Below are listed several popular energizers with their specific instructions.

## ACTIVITY STEPS

### YEEHAW

*The Moves:*

- YeeHaw—slap your right leg with your right hand, yell “YeeHaw” towards the person on your left. This starts the game and keeps it going.
- Hoe Down—jump to the side with both hands up facing the person on that side and yell “Hoe Down.” This reverses the direction of the movement.
- Rope ‘Em—while making a lasso motion above your head, say “Rope ‘em” and point at a person. This sends the move across the circle to whomever is being pointed at.

*The Steps:*

- One person is selected to start the game. The game starts when that person slaps their right leg with their right hand and yells “YeeHaw.” The person to their left must immediately do the same, the person to their left must do the same, and so on. The game continues. The players may do any of the moves at any time.
- They **MUST** not hesitate. If anyone does hesitate, they are out and must step out of the circle.
- You can play until you are down to two people, or you run out of time.

### ABSURD INTERVIEWS

- In groups of three students, each student will choose to be either A, B, or C.
- For two minutes, person C will be interviewed by persons A and B. Person C is to role play as an expert at making parachutes for elephants (or something else equally as crazy).
- For two minutes, Person B will be interviewed by Persons A and C. Person B is a famous designer of invisible clothing.
- For two minutes, Person A will be interviewed. Person A is a fitness expert for bees.
- This energizer not only gets students laughing, but it also gets them to be silly and step out of their normal role. They will also be networking, asking, and answering questions.

### FAVORITE TOY

- Each student has 30 seconds to draw their favorite toy on a sheet of paper.
- Each student will share their name, the toy they drew, and why it is their favorite.
- Students can then discuss how the toys shared reflect our creativity as some shared items may not be “toys.”

### ACTIVITY TIME

15 minutes

### FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

Integrity; Knowledge; Passion

### KEY CONCEPTS

Rapport Building; Networking; Energy; Relationship Skills

### MATERIALS NEEDED

**Needed:** Copy paper (enough for each student to have one sheet per activity that requires it), Energizers Instruction Guide  
**Optional:** Empowered Currency

## **SWEDISH STORY—IMPROV STORYTELLING**

- Line all students up in a line facing you. Tell them the following.
  - “You will volunteer, one at a time, to add to a story.”
  - The first volunteer will raise their hand, walk to the new line, and state their one line of the story.
  - The second volunteer raises their hand, takes their chosen place in the story line, and states their one line of the story. Then both lines of the story are spoken in order.
  - Then the third volunteer raises their hand, takes their chosen place in the story line, states their one line. Then all three lines are spoken in order.
  - “Who is my first volunteer?”
- This continues until you decide the story should end. You do not have to allow every student to participate. Some will not want to do it. When you have decided it is the final volunteer, have them take their place on the line, then have all volunteers tell the story in order.
- The volunteers do not need to stand right next to one another on the story line. The first volunteer does not need to be the first line of the story.

## **PAPER ROCK SCISSORS**

- Those chosen will play a best-of-three game of Paper Rock Scissors (1-2-3-SHOOT).
- The “loser” must follow the winner from their match—cheering for them to win in their next matchup.
- Repeat this until both sides of the room have one player left with the rest of their half cheering for them.
- Have those two finalists face off for the ultimate winner.

## **TEAR YOUR FAVORITE CARTOON**

- Each student will have one blank sheet of paper. They stand in a circle facing one another.
- Tell your class that they will tear their piece of paper into their favorite cartoon character.
- They will have 30 seconds, and they must do it behind their back.
- After the 30 seconds, each student must show their paper and say what cartoon character it is supposed to be.

## **MAKE A MONSTER**

- Students will pair up, and each pair needs a blank sheet of paper. In pairs, each person draws one line at a time taking turns.
- When time is up (30 seconds), name the monster using parts of each person’s name. It can be either first or last names. Now, give the monster a superpower. Each pair will share their monster with the group.

## **ACTIVITY DEBRIEF**

*Choose a few discussion questions from below to ask your students.*

- Which Foundational Principle do you feel like you demonstrated the most? The least? Why?
- Have you employed your own Opportunity before and created a game or activity that would be considered an Energizer? How do you play?
- What did you learn about your peers?
- Was this activity more fun with free and open exchange of play and ideas? How might more restrictive rules and regulations have changed your engagement?
- How does sharing Knowledge create value?
- What challenged you about this energizer?
- When during this activity did you feel you and your peers had full decision rights/could impact the game’s outcome?
- How were you able to demonstrate trust and mutual respect with your peers? How were your peers able to do the same with you?

*Access this and 180+ more activities and tons more classroom resources—all for free—on the Hub: [www.EmpoweredHub.org](http://www.EmpoweredHub.org)*

# Deserted Island

Using decision-making skills, students will work together to evaluate a list of resources that could help people when they are stranded on a deserted island. The catch is the whole group must agree which items would be most useful.

## PREPARATION

- Decide how you will group your students.
- Print off the List of Items handout for each group.

## INTRODUCTION

You are on a boat far out in the ocean with the members of your group. Suddenly, the wind picks up, dark thunder clouds move in, and waves toss the boat back and forth. There is a deserted island in the distance. The waves are pushing your boat ever closer to the rocky shores. You realize that your group is going to be stranded on the deserted island. Your group has time to grab four items total from your sinking ship. They must all fit in one duffel bag. Which four items will you take with you to survive until help arrives...  
if it arrives?

## ACTIVITY STEPS

While we encourage you to customize this activity to best serve your students, the following is one suggested way to use this activity in your learning environment.

1. After students are in groups, hand out the List of Items handout. Explain that they will have to choose 4 items, and only 4 items. Groups must work within the following parameters:
  - All group members must agree on the items you choose.
  - There is no cellphone or satellite reception available on the island.
  - The group should be able to explain why they picked the items.
3. Set a time for students to decide which items they will choose in their groups. Let the groups debate.
4. When each group has picked their items, have each group pitch their choices to the class and justify their choices.

### ACTIVITY TIME

50 Minutes

### FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

Freedom; Integrity;  
Responsibility; Sound Judgment

### KEY CONCEPTS

Contribution motivation;  
Collaboration; Shared vision;  
Learning styles; Everyone has  
a gift

### MATERIALS NEEDED

**Needed:** Poster board (or equivalent), Markers, Post-it notes, CODEC  
**Optional:** Dot Stickers, Empowered Currency



## ACTIVITY DEBRIEF

*Choose a few discussion questions from below to ask your students.*

- What Foundational Principles did you use to make your decision?
  - Was the principle of Freedom evident? Integrity? Responsibility?
- How would you rate your group regarding your use of sound judgment when making item decisions?
- How did scarcity affect what items you chose?
- Choosing only 4 items was a challenging task. What was the opportunity cost of one of your decisions?
- Personal Choice is defined as, our individual preferences drive our decisions and behaviors. No one else can decide for you.
  - How did your group work through the challenge presented as you encountered team members who were driven by their own personal choice?
  - Why is it important for each of us to understand personal choice? Do others have the responsibility of personal choice for themselves? If we understand personal choice, are we better able to let go of our need to control other people or situations? Is this understanding important to creating Win-Win?
- Dignity is the deep belief in, and respect for, the inherent worth of every person - as articulated in the Declaration of Independence - that enables people to live their lives as they see fit with regard for the equal rights of others.
  - Share about one disagreement that occurred in your group.
  - As your group made your decisions on the 4 items. How did you approach the challenge with dignity?
- The concept of Rule of Law states that “all rules apply equally to all people, all of the time. No matter what.” Describe how your group worked within the rules provided.
- Did the Rule of Law allow your group to put resources into creating value and solving this problem, instead of protecting yourself (your ideas)?
- How did this activity affect how you will work in groups in the future?
- How did your group respectfully challenge each other while moving towards the best solution?
- Why is collaboration key in a group setting?
- After listening to the pitches of the other groups, would you change any of your items? Why or why not?
- What leadership styles emerged in your group as you chose your items?
- Next time you work with a group to make a decision, what will you do differently?



## Deserted Island List of Items

Your group is in a boat far out in the ocean. Suddenly, the wind picks up, dark thunder clouds move in, and waves toss the boat back and forth. You look and see that there is a deserted island in the distance. The waves are pushing your boat ever closer to the rocky shores. You realize that your group is going to be stranded on the deserted island. Your group has time to grab four items from your sinking ship, and they must all fit in **one duffel bag**. Which **four items** will you take with you to survive until help arrives...if help ever does?

|                  |               |                 |
|------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Axe              | Compass       | Cooking Pot/Pan |
| Fishing Rod      | First Aid Kit | Flare Gun       |
| Hiking Boots     | Hammock       | Inflatable Raft |
| Insect Repellent | Knife         | Lamp            |
| Lighter          | Mirror        | Rifle           |
| Rope             | Sunscreen     | Tent            |
| Tissues          | Toilet Paper  | Water Filter    |

# 3

## Shared Goals, Stronger Class: Building Classroom Culture

Want to move from a classroom that runs on compliance to one built on commitment?

These student-led activities are designed to help you do just that.

By co-creating classroom norms and exploring the Empowered Principles together, your students will begin to take ownership of the learning environment.

When students help set the goals, they show up differently. They see that this classroom doesn't just belong to the teacher—it belongs to everyone in the room.

### IDEAS:

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# Classroom Vision: A Win-Win

A shared vision is imperative to seeing the path towards success for a group. The classroom should be a place where all feel safe and welcome to learn and grow. As a group, collaborate to draft a set of classroom expectations with an aligned vision rooted in Foundational Principles and Market Concepts that allow students and the facilitator alike to flourish in their learning journey during their time together.

## PREPARATION

- Decide in which way you'd like to display your shared vision and expectations after the activity is complete.

## INTRODUCTION

No matter how you go about creating your shared classroom vision, it is important to produce some sort of visual or document for your students, so they can be reminded of the expectations and vision throughout the year.

Share that in your classroom, this is a collaborative learning environment. You as the educator aren't the only person in the room with knowledge, skills, and talents—everyone is. As a group, you will draft a classroom vision that will create a Win-Win for all involved by figuring out what the expectations and norms look like for your whole group. The goal is to have a classroom where everyone feels capable of learning and achieving their version of success.

## ACTIVITY STEPS

While we encourage you to customize this activity to best serve your students, the following is one suggested way to use this activity in your learning environment.

- Individually, ask students to think about the following questions. Write each answer on an individual Post-It note. When they are finished, discuss the questions as a class or in small groups.
  - What would the ideal classroom look, feel, and sound like?
  - What are my ideal learning styles? How do I work and learn best?
  - How do I expect to be treated by others? How will I treat others?
  - What does it mean to be an active participant in the learning to me?
- Organize the notes into different categories based on the Foundational Principles, as seen on the CODEC. Write the name of the category on one of the poster board papers and hang up around the room.
  - Pro-tip: A category is not needed for all, so maybe start with 4-6.
- Ask students to place their post-its on the poster that they think best fits the category.
  - For example, a note that reads, "I don't want people to cheat off my work" could go on the poster for Integrity.
- Group students up and give each group a poster. Allow time to review and discuss the notes stuck on their poster. Consolidate similar answers, and compile a grand list based on the notes by removing all the notes from the poster board and writing down the ideas presented.

### ACTIVITY TIME

60 Minutes

### FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

Win-Win Focus; Integrity; Freedom; Responsibility

### KEY CONCEPTS

Contribution motivation; Collaboration; Shared vision; Learning styles; Everyone has a gift

### MATERIALS NEEDED

**Needed:** Poster board (or equivalent), Markers, Post-it notes, Empowered CODEC  
**Optional:** Dot Stickers, Empowered Currency

5. (OPTIONAL) Allow time for groups to gallery walk through the posters and use a dot sticker or marker to identify the top 6-8 ideas they see around the room that they believe would help contribute to a successful learning environment.
6. Review the top vote getters and discuss as a class what these ideas look like in practice. Do they create a Win-Win environment? Are they respectful? Do they allow everyone to flourish? Is it a welcoming space?
7. When you have arrived at your statements, use a sentence starter to redraft the statements, such as “In this classroom, we...” or “As a class, we will...” Once again, challenge students to think about the Foundational Principles on their CODEC while drafting the statement. You might want to also consider how your class will hold others accountable for staying within this shared vision in the class.
  - An example could be, “In this class, we understand the freedom to speak up when we feel we can contribute to the learning in a positive way.”
8. As a class, create a visual display of this shared class vision and choose how to display it around your classroom. Refer to this shared vision and expectation list throughout your school year to remind students it was a collaborative effort and to hold one another accountable to the norms that were established.

## ACTIVITY DEBRIEF

*Choose a few discussion questions from below to ask your students.*

- What did it feel like to have input into the classroom vision?
- Explain how the collaboration went between your classmates, your teacher, and yourself.
- What new Knowledge did you learn about others in this activity? What about yourself?
- How did creating this shared vision create a Win-Win Focus for your class?
- How much Freedom did you have in your ideas? Were there barriers to your Freedom? In a school setting, are there times and reasons as to why barriers to complete Freedom exist?
- As you were working with others, how did you act with Integrity?
- How does it help us recognize the dignity of every individual when our class has shared vision and expectations?
- Do you think helping set the classroom vision will help you understand your course material better than you would have before?
- How were you motivated to contribute to this activity?
- What did it feel like to work as a team to complete this task?
- How will you be able to thrive in this learning environment based on this shared vision?
- What will the concept of trial and error (failure) look like in our classroom? Is this concept important to helping each of us succeed?



# Empowered's Foundational Principles

## (Empowered CODEC)

These 8 principles are your blueprint for building the kind of classroom (and life) you want. Use them to make better decisions, take ownership, and contribute to the classroom and community with your time and talents.

### **INTEGRITY**

Always act with courage, respect, and toleration.

### **OPPORTUNITY**

Approach everything in life as a reason to improve; recognize and seize what life has to offer.

### **WIN-WIN FOCUS**

Cooperation creates real value in society—for yourself and others.

### **SOUND JUDGMENT**

Use economic thinking to create the greatest benefit while using the least resources.

### **KNOWLEDGE**

Seek and use the best knowledge, drive change that benefits others, and exemplify humility and intellectual honesty.

### **PASSION**

Find fulfillment in your life by improving the lives of others.

### **FREEDOM**

Respect the rights of others and study the links between freedom, entrepreneurship, and societal well-being.

### **RESPONSIBILITY**

Take ownership of your own life. No one will ever be as concerned about your success as you.

# Foundational Principles Walkabout

Empowered's Foundational Principles (Principles) create a shared language and understanding of what creates value in our lives. Students will be asked to share their thoughts about a Principle and give feedback on their classmates' thoughts. This activity will spur a conversation amongst your students about what these values mean to each individual, what they mean to the classroom, and what they mean to the market outside the classroom.

## PREPARATION

- Decide how you will assign students to eight teams, noting that each team will be asked to discuss/share on one Principle.
- Prepare materials for each team (1 sheet of large paper, a pad of smaller sticky notes, dots of both colors, markers)

## INTRODUCTION

The idea of this activity is to move beyond simply knowing the definitions of Empowered's 8 Principles. We want students to discuss what these principles mean to them, what they mean to the Empowered classroom, and what they mean in the real world outside the classroom.

The goal of this activity is to develop a shared language about these 8 principles and why they are important.

## ACTIVITY STEPS

*Choose a few discussion questions from below to ask your students.*

1. Divide students into eight teams, assign each team a different Principle and give them their materials.
2. Briefly discuss the Foundational Principles and why you are focusing on these principles.
3. Give teams 7 minutes to decide on and write their answers to questions on their large paper. As the educator, choose 3 of the questions below to use for this activity or write your own, but not all of them. Modify the questions based on your age group.
4. When time is up, ask teams to hang their posters where everyone can see them.
5. Then, give everyone 5-7 minutes to walk about the classroom with the following instructions:
  - Place a dot (color 1:2) if they agree with what was written.
  - Place a dot (color 2:2) if they have some reservations about what was written.
  - Place a Post-It sticky if they disagree with what was written AND to clarify why they disagree.
6. Once time expires, have teams retrieve their posters and return to their tables in their original groups. Give teams another 5-7 minutes to, as a group, review poster feedback and prepare a 1-minute recap based on the surprises/learnings/a-ha moments from the feedback (agreements, partial agreements, disagreements, etc.).
7. Have each team share their 1-minute pitch with the class with time for discussion after each presentation.

### ACTIVITY TIME

45 Minutes

### FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

Responsibility; Passion; Integrity; Knowledge; Opportunity; Freedom; Sound Judgment; Win-Win Focus

### KEY CONCEPTS

Cooperation; Economic Thinking; Respect; Toleration

### MATERIALS NEEDED

**Needed:** Empowered CODEC, 8 large sheets of paper/poster board, Post-it notes, dot stickers (2 colors NOT the same color as Post-it notes), writing utensils  
**Optional:** Empowered Currency

## ACTIVITY DEBRIEF

*Choose a few discussion questions from below to ask your students.*

- Which Principles did your team exhibit while designing your poster?
- Think about the entire activity from designing your poster, to commenting on the posters of other teams, to considering the feedback your team received about its poster. Which Principles might have been applied more effectively to improve the learning process and outcome for you?
- How could (or did) currency motivate your group when creating posters?
- How did the sticky notes and dots left by classmates impact you and your team's feelings about your poster? How do these feelings relate to the idea of incentives?
- Why was it important to hear other teams share about their Principle verbally vs. just reading ideas on a poster? What else is exchanged when someone is speaking?
- What did you learn about yourself during this activity?
- What do you feel was the comparative advantage you brought to your team?
- What comparative advantages do you think your teammates brought to the activity?
- How might others' understandings of the Principles impact your considerations for future decisions?
- Did your idea of what that Principle meant to you change as you heard other perspectives throughout the activity?

# 4

## Bring Life to More Lessons Without Working Overtime

Empowered's [Activity Creator AI](#) tool shortcuts hours of research and preparation giving you a starting point for both meeting content goals and giving students learning experiences they will love.

### PRO TIPS FOR USING THE TOOL:

- It's all about the prompt. The more detail you add around your **content goals, grade level, and class length and size**, the less back and forth you'll need with the chatbot to get an activity that works for you.
- Add your **state standard** into the prompt for alignment. You might just find an innovative way to get better results than you've seen in the past.
- **Upload lesson plans or other resources** you've already created and see how it could be more experiential. The tool is a great brainstorming partner.
- Upload an existing Empowered activity or example you've seen from another class and **ask for ideas to modify it for your grade level, class size, or subject area**.



Scan this QR code to learn more about our *free* tool, watch our how-to video, and try the tool for yourself.



# Get More From Empowered

**Empowered offers you a blueprint** for building community and culture in your classroom, because students need to feel safe and supported, and need to have fun, in order to be able to learn.

Empowered's blueprint is designed to be flexible. We invite and encourage you to use it - as a whole or as individual pieces - in the way that works best for you and your students.


Our blueprint has three key components:

- **Student-centered, experiential, collaborative activities** that get students doing first, and talking about what they learned second, for every subject matter, curriculum type, and learning environment.
- **Foundational Principles of good citizenship** that help students recognize and practice soft skills in their classroom work and in their personal interactions.
- **Incentives and motivators** that reinforce the value each student creates by contributing his or her unique abilities, and by how they treat their classmates.

Empowered is also a place where you can find community by connecting with like-minded teachers around the country who are constantly seeking and creating new ways to help their students love to learn.

Access all of our **free** materials including our activity library, AI tool, classroom resources, training and how-to content, teacher community and events, and more. Start at **[TeachEmpowered.org/GetEmpowered](https://TeachEmpowered.org/GetEmpowered)**.

Our team would love to help you get started and keep going.

 **866.999.3921** (call or text)  
 **[hello@empoweredhq.org](mailto:hello@empoweredhq.org)**  
 **[TeachEmpowered.org](https://TeachEmpowered.org)**





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BRING ***LIFE*** TO THE CLASSROOM