



**Second Step® Community Rebuilding Unit**  
**Grades 4 & 5 Lessons**

UPDATED JUNE 2021

Welcome to the Second Step® Community Rebuilding Unit.

This unit is designed to support schools as they re-open after extended school closures. It aligns with the Second Step program, but can also be used by any educator looking to foster a positive school or classroom community.

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## SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

# Second Step<sup>®</sup> Community Rebuilding Unit Grades 4 & 5 Lessons

Lesson	Objectives	Overview
<b>Lesson 1:</b> Meet the Class	Recall the names and interests of 3 students in the class	This lesson can help students reacquaint themselves with their school community and get to know other students. Having a strong sense of community will help students feel comfortable and confident at school so that they are ready to learn.
<b>Lesson 2:</b> Our Classroom Community	Create shared classroom expectations	Co-constructing new rules and routines can help reduce students' fear and uncertainty and help them feel empowered to keep their classroom community safe and respectful.
<b>Lesson 3:</b> Let's Talk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Name one thing they are looking forward to this year</li><li>Name one thing they feel worried about</li><li>Say one question they have about school this year</li></ul>	Students' sense of belonging at school is critical to their success as they reenter the classroom after an extended closure. Many, if not most, students are anxious about the challenges they might encounter. This lesson serves to counter those fears, reassure them their concerns are normal, and help them create a positive mindset that can increase their sense of belonging.
<b>Lesson 4:</b> Learning About My Classmates	Name one way they are the same and one way they are different from others in their classroom community	This lesson encourages students to learn more about what they have in common with each other and what's unique. Getting to know more about themselves and others through art or writing helps students build a classroom community that provides them with a sense of safety and support.
<b>Lesson 5:</b> Classroom Connections	Name one thing they have in common with at least two people	In this lesson, students will answer questions and listen to their classmates' answers to get to know each other. Asking questions can help students learn about each other, find things in common, and help them feel like part of their class community. This increased sense of belonging will provide students with a sense of stability and comfort.

## Unit Description

The goal of the Community Rebuilding Unit is to help foster a sense of community among students and staff as they return to school after extended school closures or time away.

To achieve this goal, the Community Rebuilding Unit will have students engage in a variety of activities designed to help them build connections with their peers and school staff. Students will also have opportunities to express what's on their minds, ask questions, and identify what they have in common with each other.

Staff will also receive guidance on how they can help foster a positive school community and provide meaningful support to their students.

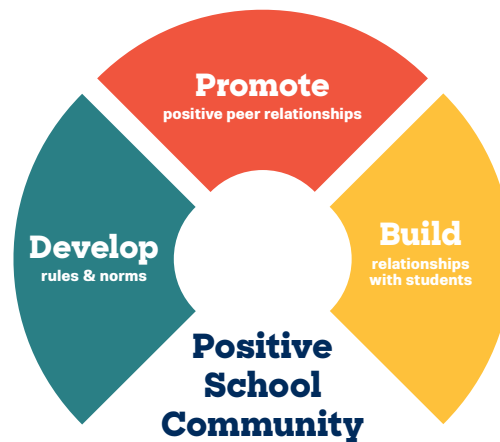
## Why This Unit Matters

After long breaks from school or in-person learning, students can often feel isolated or disconnected from their school community or peers. Rebuilding community after long breaks can help students feel welcomed and supported, and can create a sense of belonging that can positively affect their overall well-being.

## Building a Positive School and Classroom Community

A positive school community feels safe, respectful, welcoming, supportive, and affirming of their own identities, perspectives, and lived experiences.<sup>1</sup> Some ways to build a positive school community:

- Develop clear, fair rules and norms that support respectful behavior
- Promote positive peer relationships
  - **Teach the lessons in this unit**
  - Notice and reinforce positive interactions between peers
- Build positive relationships with all students
  - **Check in regularly with students using the class check-in/check-out templates below**
  - Get to know students and what's happening in their lives outside of school
  - Demonstrate kindness and inclusiveness in your interactions with students
  - Connect with students about their academic progress in a supportive and understanding way
  - Offer additional emotional support to students in need



1. Committee for Children. (2013). *Second Step Bullying Prevention Unit*. [Kit]. Seattle, WA: Committee for Children.

- Respond to behaviors in a supportive way
  - Understand that students who have experienced trauma or toxic stress may act out with disruptive behaviors, and that recognizing these behaviors as symptoms of trauma and stress is critical to building a positive school culture
  - Use the steps in "Safe Supportive Learning" on page 20 to help you respond appropriately

## **Check-Ins and Check-Outs**

### **Overview**

Making sure a caring adult connects with every student every day is an effective way to build strong student-staff relationships and a positive school environment. Daily check-ins are a practical strategy for facilitating these connections schoolwide. They also serve to identify students who may need more personalized social-emotional support. The weekly check-out provides students with an opportunity to reflect on and process the week.

## **Daily Check-In**

### **Objectives**

By the end of this activity, students will be better able to:

- Identify how they're feeling
- Ask for help with concerns and problems

### **Prep/Materials**

- Paper and pencil

### **Lesson Note**

Consider participating in the conversation yourself. When you share how you're feeling, you can help normalize these conversations for students.

If you're able to host digital polls in your classroom, consider adding a second individual check-in as an anonymous poll. It can be very affirming for students to visually see how their peers are responding.

### Group Check-In (10 min.)

1. Set the purpose of the lesson: **Let's check in on how we're doing.**
2. Have students take turns answering the following questions:
  - **How are you feeling today?** *Happy. Sad. Tired. Excited. Hungry.*
  - **What's something you're looking forward to today?** *Seeing friends. Playing. Learning. Lunch.*
  - **What's something you're not looking forward to today?** *Sitting at a desk all day. Being away from home.*
3. Observe students as they answer. If you're concerned that a student may need extra support, use the Individual Check-In to follow up with them later in the day.



**Bold**—Teacher's script  
*Italics*—Anticipated student responses

### Individual Check-In (5 min.)

1. Find a time when you can talk with the student privately and ask the following questions:
  - **How are you feeling today?**
  - **Is there anything you'd like me to know?**
  - **Is there anything you need help with?**
2. Acknowledge and affirm students' feelings. Give them space to talk, but do not pry. Contact your school counselor or administrator if you're concerned that the student may need additional support.

## Weekly Check-Out

### Objective

By the end of this activity, students will be able to reflect on their experiences over the last week.

### Lesson Note

As with check-in, consider participating in the conversation yourself. When you share how you're feeling, you can help normalize these conversations for students.

### Group Check-Out (10 min.)

1. Set the purpose of the lesson: **Let's reflect on how this week went for us.**
2. Have everyone in the class (including you!) briefly answer the following question: **What was the best part of this week?** *I got to see my friends. We celebrated my friend's birthday.*
3. **What's one thing that was hard?** *Waking up early. Remembering to wash hands.*
4. **What's one thing you want to do this weekend?** *Sleep. See my grandma. Play with my dog.*

## Remote Adaptations

The best adaptations for a lesson will depend on the technology tools available to you and your students, and on your knowledge of what works best for your kids. The following are suggested ways of delivering the lessons remotely. Choose what works best for you and your students.

### Partner Work (Including Turn and Talk)

- Use breakout rooms. Your remote-delivery platform may allow you to create smaller groups for discussion or collaboration. It may be easier to create small groups instead of pairs. To increase effectiveness, keep breakout time fairly short, make sure students are clear on the task before sending them into groups, and consider assigning roles to group members or assigning one student to be the group facilitator.
- Make it a whole-class discussion. Give think-time, then call on volunteers. Encourage all students to participate by having them indicate when they agree or have the same idea.
- Use the chat window with the whole class. Call on a volunteer to type a response or allow all students to respond.
- Use online discussion boards or other collaborative tools.
- Have students write or draw on paper and share their responses by holding them up to the camera.
- For Kindergarten through Grade 2, have students turn and talk with a stuffed animal, doll, or action figure, or with a family member.

### Whole-Class Discussion

- Establish guidelines for muting and unmuting microphones and for indicating when someone wants to speak.
- Call on a volunteer to respond while other students indicate when they agree or have the same idea.
- Consider having students use nonverbal response methods, such as hand signals or sticky notes, to show when they agree with the speaker or have a different response.
- Encourage students to add on to or make connections with others' ideas. For example, after a student shares an experience, ask the rest of the class to indicate whether they've had the same experience.
- Use online discussion boards or other collaborative tools.
- Have students write or draw on paper and share their responses by holding them up to the camera.

### Physical Movement

- Some lesson activities include hand motions or movements while standing in place. If students have room, these can be done remotely without modification.
- Some lessons ask students to move around the classroom to find a partner. Modify these lessons by assigning partners instead or using the tips in the Small-Group or Partner Work section.

### Lesson Visuals

- Some activities may require students to reference a lesson visual. Display the visual using the screen sharing function of your remote-delivery platform. You may also choose to read prompts to students or post them for students to see.

# Lesson 1: Meet the Class

## Getting Started

### Overview

This lesson can help students reacquaint themselves with their school community and get to know other students. Having a strong sense of community will help students feel comfortable and confident at school so that they are ready to learn.



**Bold**—Teacher's script

*Italics*—Anticipated student responses

### Objective

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

- Recall the names and interests of 3 students in the class

### Prep

- Find a timer to use for this activity

### Lesson Note

If your students speak languages other than English, consider having them introduce themselves in both their home language and in English.

### Warm-Up (8 min.)

- 1. How does it feel when you walk into a room and don't know anyone?** *Stressful. Uncomfortable. How does that feeling change once you've been introduced?* *More comfortable. It stays the same.*
- 2. When you know someone's name, it can feel easier to talk to them. And when you learn someone's interests, you can talk to them about those things to get to know them better.**
- 3. Tell students the purpose:** **Today, you'll play a game to learn each other's names and interests. Then you'll try to remember what you learned.**
- 4. During the game, listen carefully to what other students say. How does it feel when someone listens carefully to you?** Call on students to answer. **Listening carefully can help you remember what people said. It also shows them that you care about them and what they're saying.**
- 5. In this game, you'll take turns saying your name and your favorite thing to do after school. I'll ask you what other people said later, so listen carefully!**
- 6. Let's practice.** Say your name and something you like to do. Go around the room and have each student do the same.
- 7. Once each student has had a turn, introduce the game: Now you'll play the game. By the time you're done, you'll have heard each other's names and interests a few times.**



## Activity Instructions

### Activity (12 min.)

- 1. For this round, you'll take turns saying as fast as you can your name and what you like to do after school. I'll time us. Listen to the other names and try to remember at least three.**  
Determine an order for students to take their turn. For example, they could share from one side of the classroom to the other, or by table group. Start the timer and have students begin. Stop the timer when the last student has had a turn.
- 2. Tell students how long the round took. Let's try to beat that! Ready?** Let students respond. Play again. Tell students their time. **You've heard each name and interest a few times. Raise your hand if you remember at least three.** Call on students to tell what they remember.  
*Tip:* Remind students that if they forget someone's name, it's okay to ask. Check to make sure students are pronouncing each other's names correctly.
- 3. Let's play again. This time we'll take turns going in the opposite direction around the classroom. Make sure to say your name and the same interest you said in the previous rounds. Ready?** Start the timer and have the students take turns in the opposite order. Tell students their time. **Raise your hand if you remember five names and interests.** Call on students to tell what they remember.
- 4. Let's mix things up for the next round! I'll take a turn, then the first and last student will take theirs, and so on through the class. The game will go in both directions. The round is over when someone says their name the second time.**
- 5. Ready?** Start the game by saying your name and something you like to do. **That was a close race!**

### Wrap-Up (5 min.)

- 1. Can anyone say all the names? How about a name and an interest?** Call on students.
- 2. How does our community feel now that we know each other's names and interests?** *Friendly. Comfortable.* **This week, try to use each other's names and learn one new thing about each student in our class.**



# Lesson 2: Our Classroom Community

## Getting Started

### Overview

Co-constructing new rules and routines can help reduce students' fear and uncertainty and help them feel empowered to keep their classroom community safe and respectful.



**Bold**—Teacher's script

*Italics*—Anticipated student responses

### Objective

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

- Create shared classroom expectations

### Prep

- On a piece of chart paper, make two columns labeled "Feel" and "Do."

### Lesson Note

Throughout this lesson, reinforce that students' ideas and opinions truly matter. Remind them that this is their chance to contribute to creating the classroom community they want to be in.

### Warm-Up (3 min.)

1. Tell students the purpose: **Today, we're going to decide how we want our classroom community to be. We're going to talk about how we want to feel in our classroom and what we can do to help each other feel that way.**



## Activity Instructions

### Activity (5 min.)

1. **Think about your idea of a perfect class. What would it feel like to be part of that class?**  
*Respected. Relaxed. Safe. Like I'm having fun.*
2. Write responses on the paper in the "Feel" column.  
**Tip:** Avoid leading kids to certain responses. When kids know that their ideas and opinions truly matter, they're more likely to take more ownership over the classroom norms and expectations.
3. Point to the "Feel" column on the paper. **What could someone do to help you feel like this?** *Listen to each other. Help each other. Encourage each other.*
4. Summarize students' responses on the paper in the "Do" column.

### Discuss (5 min.)

1. **People in our classroom community want to feel like this.** Call on students to read the responses in the "Feel" column.
2. **We can help everyone feel that way by doing these things.** Call on students to read the responses in the "Do" column.

### Wrap-Up (4 min.)

1. **This poster represents how we want to feel in our classroom community—and what we can do so everyone feels this way. If you agree to do these things, you can sign your name on the poster.**
2. Ask students to come up one at a time to sign the poster.
3. Hang the poster up in the classroom as a reminder for students.

## Getting Started

### Overview

Students' sense of belonging at school is critical to their success as they reenter the classroom after an extended closure. Many, if not most, students are anxious about the challenges they might encounter. This lesson serves to counter those fears, reassure them their concerns are normal, and help them create a positive mindset that can increase their sense of belonging.



**Bold**—Teacher's script

*Italics*—Anticipated student responses

### Objectives

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

- Name one thing they are looking forward to this year
- Name one thing they feel worried about
- Say one question they have about school this year

### Prep

- For each student, gather 1 pencil and 3 sticky notes
- On the board, or on separate sheets of chart paper, write three headings:
  - I'm Excited About ...
  - I'm Worried About ...
  - I'm Wondering ...

Students will stick their sticky notes under these headings for discussion.

### Lesson Note

Before teaching this lesson, determine and gather support resources for your students. These resources might include things like: a list of staff members that students can go to for help; a place in your classroom where students can take a break; or a question box students can use to ask anonymous questions.

**Warm-Up (3 min.)**

1. Tell students the purpose: **Today we're going to talk about being back at school, and how you feel about this year.**
2. **You might feel a lot of different emotions coming back to school this year. Maybe you're excited to see your friends, or worried about our new school rules. Maybe you feel a few different emotions at the same time.**
3. Ask: **What are some other emotions students might be feeling?** *Happy. Thankful. Nervous.* **All of these emotions are okay.**
4. **This school year might feel different from other years. But remember that you are not alone: you can always talk to me, other teachers, and your friends about how you feel. We're a community, and we're going to support each other all year.**

**Activity Instructions****Activity (8 min.)**

1. **You're going to write how you're feeling this year on sticky notes. You'll put all of the sticky notes up on the board, and I'll read them aloud. If you don't want me to read your sticky note aloud, you can keep it or give it to me later.**
2. **Pass out sticky notes. On your first sticky note, write down one thing you're excited about this year. It might be seeing your friends, learning new things, or anything else that you are looking forward to. You don't need to write your name.** Give students time to write.
3. **When you're done, put your pencil down and put your thumb up.** Call on students with their thumbs up to put their note on the board under the "I'm excited about ..." column.
4. **On your second sticky note, write down one thing you feel worried about. It could be the new rules, staying safe or healthy, or something else. Please include your name on this sticky note.** Give students time to write.
5. **When you're done, put your pencil down and your thumb up.** Call on students with their thumbs up to add their note to the board under the "I'm worried about ..." column.
6. **On your last sticky note, write down one question you have about school this year. Remember, you don't need to write your name.** Give students time to write.
7. **When you're done, put your pencil down and your thumb up.** Call on students with their thumbs up to add their note to the board under, "I'm wondering ..."



**Discuss (8 min.)**

1. Take a minute to group the sticky notes in each column by similar answers.

**First, I am going to read some of the things students in our class are excited about. If I read something that you are excited about too, clap once.** Read what students feel excited about for the school year. **There are a lot of things to look forward to this year!**

2. **Now I'll read some of the things you are worried about. If you feel worried about the same thing, put your thumb up. If I see a note that's a very personal worry, I won't read it out loud to the class. I'll talk to you about it later.** Read students' notes aloud. If a note seems personal or names people, skip it and check in with that student later.
3. **Everyone feels worried sometimes. Remember, you can always talk to me about your worries.**
4. **Now I'll read the questions you have about this year. If I can tell you the answer, I will. If I don't have the answer, I'll try to find it out.** Read and answer questions as you can. Look for answers to students' remaining questions after class, and update them on what you find.

**Wrap-Up (4 min.)**

1. **This school year might feel a little different. We have new rules, new routines, and new ways of doing things.**
2. **A lot of you are excited and worried about the same things, and have the same kinds of questions. Who can you talk to when you feel worried or have questions?** Give think-time. Call on a few students. Tell students about other resources that are available to them, like the school counselor.
3. **Our new rules and routines are meant to keep us safe and healthy. You can always talk to me when you have questions or need help. We're a community and we can support each other all year.**

# Lesson 4: Learning About My Classmates

## Getting Started

### Overview

This lesson encourages students to learn more about what they have in common with each other and what's unique. Getting to know more about themselves and others through art or writing helps students build a classroom community that provides them with a sense of safety and support.



**Bold**—Teacher's script

*Italics*—Anticipated student responses

### Objective

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

- Name one way they are like others and one way they are different from others in their classroom community

### Prep

- Gather paper and art supplies for each student
- Write these questions on the board:
  - What are some things you have in common with other students in our class?
  - What are some ways you are different from other students in our class?

### Lesson Note

Students can also create collages from pictures cut out of magazines.

### Warm-Up (4 min.)

1. Tell students two things they might not know about you—for example, where you grew up and how many siblings you have.
2. Tell students the purpose. **We each bring unique interests and experiences to our classroom community. Today you'll draw or write about a few things your classroom community might not know about you. Then you'll talk about what you learned. Talking to each other about ourselves can help us feel more comfortable here.**



## Activity Instructions

### Activity (10 min.)

1. Think of a few things we might not know about you that you want to draw or write about. Once you have the materials, you can begin. I'll let you know when there are two minutes left. When you're finished, you'll show each other what you wrote or drew.
2. Hand out materials and have students write or draw. Walk around and check in with students. Let them know when there are two minutes left to work. Have students write their names on their papers if their names are not prominently displayed on their desks.

### Discuss (10 min.)

1. Now, you'll walk around the room and look at each other's art or writing. Leave it on your desk so that other students can see it. Point to the list of questions on the board. As you look at other students' work, think about these questions: What are some things you have in common with other students in our class? What are some ways you are different from other students in our class? Have students walk slowly around the room and look at the art or writing on each desk, then sit down when they reach their desk again.
2. Let's talk about what you noticed. What do you have in common with other students in our class? Call on a few students to answer. It's great to find out what we have in common!
3. What are some ways you are different from other students in our class? Call on a few students to answer. In this class, we respect and celebrate our differences. They make us unique!

### Wrap-Up (1 min.)

Thanks for sharing more about yourself with our classroom community. Over the next few days, try to talk to at least one person you don't know very well about something they wrote or drew. Post papers where students can see them.

# Lesson 5: Classroom Connections

## Getting Started

### Overview

In this lesson, students will answer questions and listen to their classmates' answers to get to know each other. Asking questions can help students learn about each other, find things in common, and help them feel like part of their class community. This increased sense of belonging will provide students with a sense of stability and comfort.



**Bold**—Teacher's script

*Italics*—Anticipated student responses

### Objective

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

- Name one thing they have in common with at least two people

### Prep

- For this lesson, gather one piece of paper, one pencil, and one marker for each student. You will also need one piece of chart paper.
- Write the following three questions on the board for students to answer.
  - What is something that you like to do after school?
  - What is one book/movie/game that you like?
  - What is one thing you like to learn about?

### Lesson Note

During the lesson, students will need to pay attention to their classmates' answers. Students can take notes during the lesson to remember with whom they have things in common.



**Warm-Up (3 min.)**

1. Tell students the purpose: **Today, we're going to create a visual of how everyone in our class is connected. We'll do this by answering questions and finding things we have in common. We'll see how the connections between us grow as we learn more about each other.**
2. Give each student a marker. **Each of you will have a turn to answer one of these questions.** Review the questions written on the board.
3. Tell students the activity: **After you answer a question, you'll write your name on the chart paper. Then we'll see if anyone in our class has the same answer. If someone has the same answer, they'll write their name on the board and draw a line connecting their name to your name. Then they'll answer a different question, and we'll repeat.**
4. **As we play, take notes about things you have in common with other students in our class. If you remember something you have in common with other students, you can draw lines from your name to their names, too.**

**Activity Instructions****Activity (15 min.)**

1. **I'll go first.** Write your name on the chart paper. **I'll answer question 1. What's my favorite hobby? My favorite hobby is \_\_\_\_\_.** Choose something that students might relate to, like reading, playing a sport, or photography.
2. Ask if any students have the same hobby. **Does anyone else like to \_\_\_\_\_?** Choose a student to add their name to the paper and draw a line connecting your names.
3. **Now you get to answer one of the questions.** Have the student choose a question to answer, then answer it.
4. Ask the rest of class: **Does anyone share this in common?** Have a student who answers 'yes' come up, write their name, and draw a line connecting their name to the previous student's name.
5. Have that student now choose and answer a question. Repeat until all students have added their name and a line to the paper. If students know things they have in common with other students who've had their turns, let them draw lines to show those connections, too.

**Discuss (5 min.)**

1. **Clap once if you have something in common with at least two people.** Students clap.
2. **Clap twice if you learned something new about someone in our class.** Invite students to tell what they learned about others.

**Wrap-Up (4 min.)**

1. **As we answered questions and listened to others' answers, we made connections between names on the paper. This is a visual representation of what we have in common with each other. Having things in common can help us feel connected and make new friends.**
2. **Now that we have these connections, we can use them to start conversations, invite others to join in, and ask even more questions to learn about each other.**

# Next Steps

Completing this unit is just the first step to building community with your students. Here are some steps to continue building a safe and supportive classroom community:

- 1. Continue Check-Ins.** Checking in with your students lets them know you care about their lives in and outside of school, and can help them feel valued and supported.
- 2. Review and revise your classroom rules or norms.** Taking time to review the agreed upon rules or norms can help remind students how they want their community to run and feel. Any time new problems arise in the classroom, have a discussion about the rules or norms and revise them as needed.
- 3. Revisit activities.** Your students' interests, hobbies, values, thoughts, and feelings can change over time. Revisit activities after a long break from school or to help introduce new students to your classroom community.
- 4. Reinforce connections.** Look for opportunities to remind students what they've learned about each other and notice when students are using new skills they've learned in this unit. Skills like asking questions, being curious about others' interests and values, and recalling new things they've learned about others can help students continue to grow their classroom community.
- 5. Implement the Second Step Elementary and Middle School programs.** The skills and concepts taught throughout the Second Step program will provide students with valuable social-emotional support throughout the year.



# Safe Supportive Learning

When students are coming back after a long period of time, they may struggle to follow the class rules. It can be difficult to know the right thing to do, especially when you're trying to model social-emotional skills. Follow these steps to respond appropriately.

## Self-Check

It's important to feel calm so that you can respond to a student's behavior in a supportive way. Choose an emotion-management strategy that works for you, like slow breathing and relaxing your body, so that you can feel calm. When students see you using social-emotional skills and emotion-management strategies, they will learn to value these skills.

## Student Check

Do a Student Check to help you reframe a student's behavior so you can understand what the behavior is telling you. Thinking of the behavior through a supportive frame rather than a corrective frame can help you respond appropriately and avoid blaming or punishing students for their behavior.

### Corrective Frame

This student is a problem.  
What's wrong with this student?  
I need to correct this student's behavior.

### Supportive Frame

What is this student experiencing in his or her life?  
What is this student trying to say with his or her behavior?  
I need to support this student.

## Respond

Once you've done the **Self-Check** and **Student Check**, you're ready to **respond** to a student's behavior in a supportive way by:

- Listening
- Showing empathy
- Providing support



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