

# Lesson Plan: What is Character Development?

## Materials:

- Worksheet (provided at the end of the lesson plan)
  - Chart paper and markers (optional; 1 per student group)
  - Access to the internet (optional)
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## Brainstorm

1. Ask Students: "What do you know about character development?"
  2. List student responses on the board as they are volunteered.
    - If students are unsure, provide prompts such as:
      - "What makes someone a 'good person'?"
      - "Do you think character traits like honesty, perseverance, or kindness are learned or natural?"
      - "How do people grow and improve in areas of their character?"
  3. Discuss the importance of character development in everyday life, relationships, and future success.
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## Discuss

1. Transition into a discussion: "High school is a time when you begin to make choices that shape your future. What are some challenges you face in making decisions about your character and values?"
  - Accept student responses.
  - If no volunteers, provide examples such as:
    - Peer pressure
    - Deciding what is right or wrong in tough situations
    - Choosing between short-term rewards and long-term goals



- Learning responsibility and independence
2. Introduce the Concept:  
"Developing character is a lifelong process. Throughout history, philosophers and psychologists have studied how people cultivate virtues—positive character traits—and how they develop into the best versions of themselves."
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## Dive In!

### What is Character Development?

- Character development is the process of building positive qualities and virtues that shape a person's moral and ethical behavior.
- It includes seven key strategies identified by researchers (Lamb, Brant, & Brooks, 2021) that help people grow in their character.

### The Seven Strategies of Character Development

1. Habituation through Practice – Building good habits by practicing virtues in daily life.
2. Reflection on Personal Experience – Thinking critically about past actions and decisions.
3. Engagement with Virtuous Exemplars – Learning from role models and inspiring figures.
4. Dialogue that Increases Virtue Literacy – Talking about moral issues and virtues to understand them better.
5. Awareness of Situational Variables – Understanding how environments influence decisions.
6. Moral Reminders – Using symbols, quotes, or routines to stay focused on character growth.
7. Friendships of Mutual Accountability – Surrounding yourself with peers who encourage good choices.

Explain: "Today, you are going to become the teachers. Each group will be assigned one of these strategies, learn about it, and present your findings to the class."

Teacher script:

"Now that we've talked about some of the challenges you face in high school and the importance of personal growth, let's take a closer look at Character Development—what it is



and how we can actively work on it.”

“Character development is the process of building positive personal qualities that help us navigate life successfully. It’s about becoming the best version of yourself—someone who is honest, responsible, kind, and resilient. But here’s the thing: strong character isn’t something you’re just born with. It’s something you develop through your actions, decisions, and habits.”

“Think about an athlete training for a sport or a musician learning to play an instrument. They don’t just wake up one day and perform at their best. They practice, reflect on what they need to improve, and learn from coaches and role models. Character works the same way! The choices you make every day shape who you are and who you will become.”

“To help us understand how to build strong character, researchers have identified seven key strategies that people can use to grow and improve. These strategies help us form good habits, learn from experiences, and surround ourselves with positive influences. Let’s go through them together.”

(Write or display the list on the board.)

1. Habituation through Practice – Developing good habits by consistently making good choices.
2. Reflection on Personal Experience – Thinking about past decisions to learn from them.
3. Engagement with Virtuous Exemplars – Learning from role models who demonstrate strong character.
4. Dialogue that Increases Virtue Literacy – Talking about moral issues and ethical choices with others.
5. Awareness of Situational Variables – Understanding how our surroundings influence our actions.
6. Moral Reminders – Using quotes, symbols, or routines to reinforce good behavior.
7. Friendships of Mutual Accountability – Surrounding ourselves with people who encourage good decisions.

“These aren’t just abstract ideas—each of these strategies can be used in real life to help you become the person you want to be.(Give students time to begin their work and circulate the room to support their discussions.)



## Activity

“Today, you’re going to become the teachers! Each group will be assigned one of these strategies. Your job is to learn as much as you can about it, come up with real-life examples, and explain it to the rest of the class.”

(Pass out worksheets and divide students into groups.)

Teacher:

“You’ll have about 10-15 minutes to research and prepare your explanation. If you need help, I’ll be walking around to answer questions. Once time is up, each group will present their strategy to the class. Let’s dive in!”

1. Divide students into 7 groups (or adjust based on class size).
  2. Assign each group one of the Seven Strategies of Character Development.
  3. Provide each group with a worksheet (included at the end of the lesson).
  4. Students Research and Discuss:
    - Define their assigned strategy in their own words.
    - Find real-life examples (from history, famous figures, personal experiences, or stories).
    - Prepare a brief explanation and visual representation on chart paper (if available).
  5. After 10-15 minutes, groups present their strategy to the class.
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## Reflect

- Ask students:

“Which of these seven strategies do you think would help you the most? Why?”
  - Have students write a short reflection (on the worksheet) about which character development strategy they would like to focus on in their own lives.
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## Professional Development

Take 5 minutes and reflect on your knowledge of character development. Where would you rate yourself on a scale of 1-5 (1: lowest, 5: highest)? In which areas would you like to improve?

## Extend and Enrich

For deeper engagement:

- Character Spotlight Project: Students choose a historical or modern figure who embodies strong character traits and research their life and challenges.
  - Video Project: Groups create short videos explaining the seven strategies and how they can be applied to everyday life.
  - School Newspaper Article: Students write an article on why character development matters for success in school and beyond.
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