



## Apologies and Forgiveness

### Materials:

- Worksheet

### Brainstorm

Ask students to think about a time when someone hurt them. What happened? What was the result? What, if anything, could have changed the outcome?

### Discuss

We've all been in situations where someone has hurt us (or we hurt someone else). When that happens, it can go one of two ways: We can forgive the person, or we can hold onto the pain. When we forgive, we can start to heal. Studies show that people who forgive have better mental health and are happier overall. But forgiving isn't easy. Are there some things that are unforgivable? What does it mean to forgive? Is forgiveness a process? Is it easier to forgive others than it is yourself? What has to happen in order for you to forgive someone? There are no right or wrong answers to these questions, so engage students in the topic as long as it's productive. If the subject doesn't come up naturally, introduce the idea of accountability and apologizing as a way to move forward when there has been hurt.

### Dive in!

One way to move forward in a relationship when feelings have been hurt is by being accountable for the actions. To help with this challenging task, think of these three A's: **admit, apologize, amend**. To show accountability for the actions the first step is to admit what was done. This could sound like, "I can tell that what I said really hurt your feelings." Next, comes an apology. "I'm sorry that what I said hurt you." The apology must be sincere. A sarcastic "Sorry!" isn't enough. Finally, think about what amends can be made to heal the harm. Making amends means taking steps to correct a mistake or right a bad situation. For example: "In the future I will think about what I'm going to say before I say it so I won't use hurtful words." It's important to remember that just like forgiving isn't always easy, apologizing doesn't come easy for some people. Also, forgiveness is a process, and when someone's feelings have been hurt, making amends doesn't always happen quickly. It can take time to repair the relationship and rebuild the trust between two people.



## High School

### Activity

For this task, students should work independently. Have them read the prompts on the Worksheet and choose one to respond to in writing. Provide students with as much time as possible to complete the activity. Students should not be asked to share what they've written.

### Reflect

To wrap up the lesson, ask students the following question verbally: Do you think it's easier to apologize or to forgive? Why?

### Professional Development

Take 5 minutes and reflect on your ability to apologize and forgive. Is this an area in which you'd like to improve?

### For Further Study:

- Edutopia: *The Value of a Real Apology*: [The Value of a Real Apology | Edutopia](#)
- Forgiveness Project: Educator Resources:  
<https://www.theforgivenessproject.com/education-resources/>
- Greater Good Magazine: *8 Keys to Forgiveness*:  
[https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/eight\\_keys\\_to\\_forgiveness](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/eight_keys_to_forgiveness)