



OSKAR & THE LAST STRAW How We Change

Grade Levels: 4-5

This lesson is adapted from Sanford Harmony. For more information on Sanford Harmony's free classroom resources that align with CASEL SEL competencies, visit sanfordharmony.org.

Growth Mindset: the belief that you can become better at something with hard work and practice

Fixed Mindset: the belief that you are good or bad at something and can't get better at it

OBJECTIVE

- Students will explore the perspective that human nature and abilities can change.
- Students will reflect on their own personal change and observe how others have changed.

MATERIALS

- Black or white board; chalk or dry erase markers
- "How We Change" worksheet (attached)

PROCEDURE

1. Tomorrow, the class will discuss thoughts about how people change. To prepare for this activity, students should complete the attached worksheet as a homework assignment. If you wish not to assign homework, students may just complete the first part of the worksheet and interview a classmate at school instead of a family member.

Hand out the "How We Change" worksheet to students. Instruct students to fill out the first three questions by themselves. Then, they should interview a family member for the second part of the assignment. Students should record their responses in the spaces provided on the worksheet. They may interview anyone in their family that is older than them—a parent, a sibling, a grandparent, etc.

2. After students have completed the worksheet, tell them the class will now discuss how people think about themselves and others. Write the following statements on the board.
 - I'm just not a math person.
 - She's a shy person, so she'll always be that way.
 - I'm not that smart, so I'll never get a good grade on this test.
 - Let's not ask him to play ball with us because boys always play too rough.

Ask students to identify what these statements have in common. (Examples: People

can't change. They make strong judgments. People stay the same. They are negative statements. People can't improve.)

Sometimes, people think these things about themselves and others. A different possibility is to think that people do change. Ask students why it is important to recognize that people can change abilities or personalities. (Examples: We give people a chance. We push ourselves to get better at things. We don't give up. We try to help other people. We don't judge people for things they did in the past. We work hard to improve.)

3. Invite students to share their responses from the "How We Change" worksheet with the following prompts.
 - What did you think of the assignment?
 - What did you learn about yourself?
 - What did you learn about your family member?
 - What were some of the things you learned to do? How about your family member?
 - How has your personality changed? How has your family member's personality changed?
 - Did you and your family member have similar responses?
 - Why do people do or say things that surprise us sometimes?
 - Why is it sometimes difficult to have an open mind about people?
 - Why would it be boring if people didn't change their abilities or personality?

4. Students have discussed the importance of recognizing change in themselves and others. This belief is called **growth mindset**—the belief that people can become better at something with hard work and practice. When people think they cannot change, they have a **fixed mindset**. (For a more in-depth, in-class exploration of how mindset influences thoughts and actions, see the "Think Like a Caterpillar" activity on the "Classroom Activities" page for *The Last Straw*. This activity is geared toward 2nd- to 3rd-grade students but can easily be adjusted for older students.)

Ask students why it is important to remember that people can change. How can they remind themselves to practice having a growth mindset instead of a fixed mindset? How will they know if they are thinking with a growth mindset or a fixed mindset? What can a person do if they see someone thinking with a fixed mindset?

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

HOW WE CHANGE

Think about the changes you've made and seen in other people when answering the following questions.

About Me

Name something you learned how to do over time. What is something you did not do well at first but are now able to do well? How were you able to change your ability?

Name an aspect of your personality that has changed. What's something that's different about you now? Why do you think your personality has changed in this way?

Write about a time when you observed someone doing something or acting in a way that surprised you. Why were you surprised?

Interview with a Family Member

Tell me something you learned to do over time. What is something you did not do well at first but are now able to do well? How were you able to change your ability?

Tell me an aspect of your personality that has changed. What is something that's different about you now? Why do you think your personality has changed in this way?

Tell me about a time when you observed someone doing something or acting in a way that surprised you. Why were you surprised?
