

# Curriculum Guide

## COURSE MISSION

Provide the tools and strategies to build the social and emotional foundation for future success and healthy relationships.

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Character Playbook is a digital social and emotional learning (SEL) course built upon the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)'s SEL framework to educate students on how to cultivate and maintain healthy relationships during their critical middle school years.

The course is composed of five modules that cover key concepts around positive character development, SEL, and building healthy relationships. Modules encourage students to interact with true-to-life scenarios where characters need some help in navigating challenging situations and provide them with constructive feedback which students can reflect upon. With instructional scaffolding, the course guides students on the five core competencies (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making).

**Fall of 2023 Update:** Embedded in three of the modules students will discover special character development content in the form of post-lesson videos and check for understanding questions. These mini learning experiences highlight that character is the *why* behind the *how* of SEL, and focus on integrity, commitment, and courage.

## COURSE OVERVIEW

TOPIC	DESCRIPTION
Modules	The course consists of five online modules, each lasting approximately 10–15 minutes. Each module is focused on each CASEL 5 competency, and the course guides students on the five core competencies with instructional scaffolding. While students are encouraged to complete each module in sequential order, each module is standalone and can be completed in any order.
Standard alignment	CASEL's SEL framework; National Health Education Standards (NHES)
Assessments	Each online module contains 5 pre- and 10 post-assessment questions (including 5 pre-assessment ones) to measure knowledge gains.

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**External resources**

You can extend the digital program with these additional lessons, discussion prompts, and activities.

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## DETAILED COURSE OUTLINE

### Lesson: Self-Awareness

Students learn how to recognize and analyze their internal motivations, social identities, and external influences to better understand who they are.

#### Learning Objectives

*Students will be able to...*

- Identify the relationship between feelings, values, and thoughts.
- Combine personal and social identities.

ACTIVITY TOPIC	ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION
Introduction	Students reflect on what it means to understand oneself.
Internal motivations	Students learn about their internal motivations including emotions, values, and thoughts.
Biology of emotions	Students explore characters' thoughts/emotions and the areas of the brain to learn where and how emotions are processed.
Social identities	Students learn social identities as another self-awareness factor.
Sense of belonging	Students explore how different characters feel a sense of belonging.
External influences	Students learn about their external influences including media, peers, and social media.
Social media influence	Students explore a social media feed—an advertisement, characters' reactions, and their interactions with each other.
Self-reflection	Students rank three internal motivation items and three external influence items in order of importance to them.
Summary	Students reflect on the importance of understanding themselves.

### Lesson: Self-Management

Students learn how to recognize complex emotions, how to regulate/manage their emotions, and how to set goals and take actions to manage themselves.

#### Learning Objectives

*Students will be able to...*

- Recognize complex emotions.
- Demonstrate personal and collective agency.
- Develop an approach to managing emotions.

ACTIVITY TOPIC	ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION
Introduction	Students reflect on recognizing and managing their emotions.
Scenario introduction	Briar re-shares a photo of her and Kai from last year's carnival with some passive-aggressive captions on her social media. Other posts including a picture of her and her ex (Emmett) from last year, a picture of now-back-to-single Emmett and his new friends, and a picture of Kai and Tomie having fun together also trigger various emotions.
Complex emotions	Students explore the feeling wheel and review various feeling words.
Briar's feelings	Briar names each of her feelings: surprise, fear, sadness, and anger.
Managing emotions	Students learn three ways to manage their emotions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Immediate coping mechanisms</li> <li>2. Short-term coping skills</li> <li>3. Long-term coping strategies</li> </ol>
Briar's self-management	Students choose what Briar should do to improve her situation long term.
Action plan	Briar thinks about what she wants to express to Kai.
Scenario closing	Students choose the best approach and timing for Briar to talk to Kai.
Self-reflection	Students evaluate their own self-management skills.
Summary	Students reflect on how their self-management skills can lead to healthier relationships.

## Lesson: Social Awareness

Students learn how to become more socially aware in different situations and how to respect others especially when there are disagreements or differences.

### Learning Objectives

*Students will be able to...*

- Understand situational demands and opportunities.
- Assess others' perspectives.

ACTIVITY TOPIC	ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION
Introduction	Students reflect on what it means to be socially aware.
Social signals	Students learn four types of social signals: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Facial expressions</li> <li>2. Posture and body language</li> <li>3. Voice tone and volume</li> <li>4. Physical boundaries</li> </ol>
Scenario introduction	Dayo enters the room and tries to figure out who would be the best person to have a conversation with by observing social signals.

ACTIVITY TOPIC	ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION
Active listening	Students learn four steps of active listening: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Focus</li> <li>2. Wait</li> <li>3. Ask</li> <li>4. Respond</li> </ol>
Dayo's active listening	Dayo practices active listening skills while listening to Alejandro speak.
Respecting differences	Students learn four ways to navigate differences/disagreements: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Look inward</li> <li>2. Be curious</li> <li>3. Be open-minded</li> <li>4. Value differences</li> </ol>
Scenario closing	Students choose how Dayo should respond to show Alejandro he respects their differences.
Self-reflection	Students evaluate their own social awareness skills.
Summary	Students reflect on how their social skills can lead to healthier relationships.

## CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT LESSON: COURAGE

After completing the post-assessment in this lesson, students are automatically directed to a mini-lesson on the value of *courage*. The introductory text creates a bridge between the social awareness lesson and a two-minute video in which Ian is faced with a tough situation, standing up for a new kid in school to his good friend Sofia. Students then reflect on what they've watched in a brief check for understanding experience.

### Lesson: Relationship Skills

Students learn how to navigate positive/negative peer pressure, how to develop effective communication skills, and how to (help) resolve conflicts constructively.

### Learning Objectives

*Students will be able to...*

- Differentiate between positive and negative social pressures.
- Integrate effective communication skills.
- Develop constructive solutions.

ACTIVITY TOPIC	ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION
Introduction	Students reflect on relationships they have in their life.
Scenario introduction	Kai and Tomie find some barriers to their conversation including a lack of focus, stress, emotions, and a lack of clarity.

ACTIVITY TOPIC	ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION
Communication skills	Students learn what skills they need to communicate effectively: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Self-management</li> <li>2. Social awareness</li> <li>3. Active listening</li> </ol>
Peer pressure	Students explore influence and impact in communication, including positive and negative peer pressures.
Briar's influence on Kai	Students choose how Briar should respond to have a positive influence on Kai.
Conflicts in relationships	Students learn four types of conflicts in relationships: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Internal</li> <li>2. Between two people</li> <li>3. Within a group</li> <li>4. Between different groups</li> </ol>
Scenario progression 1	Kai witnesses the conflict between Briar and Tomie and decides not to be involved at all.
Types of bystanders	Students learn four types of bystanders: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assistant</li> <li>2. Reinforcer</li> <li>3. Outsider</li> <li>4. Defender</li> </ol>
Scenario progression 2	The conflict between Briar and Tomie escalates on social media. Students observe how characters react/interact and identify what types of bystanders they are.
How to resolve conflicts	Students learn three types of conflict resolution strategies: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Compromise</li> <li>2. Negotiation</li> <li>3. Mediation</li> </ol>
Scenario closing	Camilla seeks help for the conflict by talking to Mr. Jones, a trusted adult. Mr. Jones acts as a mediator and helps Briar and Tomie listen to each other and reach a resolution.
Self-reflection	Students evaluate their own relationship skills.
Summary	Students reflect on how to build and maintain healthy relationships.

## CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT LESSON: COMMITMENT

After completing the post-assessment in this lesson, students are automatically directed to a mini-lesson on the value of *commitment*. The introductory text creates a bridge between the relationships skills lesson and a two-minute video in which Lena must make a difficult decision around a commitment she made and another fun activity. Students then reflect on what they've watched in a brief check for understanding experience.

## Lesson: Responsible Decision-Making

Students learn what's important in the decision-making process and how to make responsible decisions that are aligned with their personal values.

### Learning Objectives

*Students will be able to...*

- Reflect on personal values.
- Evaluate the consequences of one's actions.
- Solve personal and social problems.

ACTIVITY TOPIC	ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION
Introduction	Students reflect on making decisions.
Challenges in decision-making	Students explore three challenges in decision-making: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Dilemma</li><li>2. Values</li><li>3. Responsibility</li></ol>
Scenario introduction	Camilla is faced with a dilemma: while she always goes to the carnival with her best friend Dayo, her new friends at school have just invited her to join them at the carnival.
How to make a decision	Students explore five steps in the decision-making process.
Step 1: Identify the problem	Students identify Camilla's problem clearly.
Step 2: List possible solutions	Students choose possible solutions that Camilla could consider.
Step 3: Review your options and values	Students choose and review one possible option by 1) weighing the pros and cons, and 2) reflecting on Camilla's values. In the end, students find out the best solution option.
Step 4: Make a decision and take action	Camilla talks to Dayo about her decision.
Step 5: Reflect on your decision	Camilla reflects on her decision and evaluates the impact her decision had.
Self-reflection	Students evaluate their own decision-making skills.
Summary	Students reflect on how making responsible decisions can lead to healthier relationships.

## CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT LESSON: INTEGRITY

After completing the post-assessment in this lesson, students are automatically directed to a mini-lesson on the value of *integrity*. The introductory text creates a bridge between the responsible decision making-lesson and a two-minute video in which Noah takes the opportunity to demonstrate integrity, honoring his word to his sister. Students then reflect on what they've watched in a brief check for understanding experience.