

Taking Initiative: Classroom Lesson Plan

Lesson Topic:

What Is Initiative and Why Should You Take it?

Lesson Objective:

Students will be able to define the phrase “taking initiative” and describe how taking initiative can impact their lives.

Materials:

- “Initiative and Me: Thinking Through Real-Life Situations”, enough copies for each student
- Projector or other method to watch the movie

Advanced Preparation:

- [Preview the video](#) before sharing it with your students [1:50].
- Make enough copies of “Initiative and Me: Thinking Through Real-Life Situations” for each student to have one.

Warm-up Activity:

1. Ask students if they have ever heard the phrase “taking initiative”.
2. Have students turn and talk to a partner or small group to explain what they know about taking initiative or when they have heard the phrase.
3. Allow students to share their thoughts with the class and work together to come to a class definition for “taking initiative”. If

possible, this definition should be written so students can refer to it again later.

View the Video: "Taking Initiative"

1. Tell students they will be watching the video titled, "Taking Initiative".
2. Explain that the video presents role models talking about the power of taking initiative and creating opportunities.
3. View the video together. Invite students to formulate questions or comments about the ideas discussed in the video and to be prepared to discuss these after viewing the video.

Video Follow-up:

1. Ask students to offer their questions, comments, reactions and responses to the video.
2. Return to the class definition for "taking initiative" and ask students if they have anything additional to add or change about their definition.
3. Pass out copies of "Initiative and Me: Thinking Through Real-Life Situations" to each student.
4. Work with students to ensure understanding of the quote from the role model: "Without initiative you will just basically sit back and let the world happen to you as opposed to making the world your oyster."
5. Divide students into groups of three. Have each group work together to complete the "Initiative and Me" worksheet.
6. Bring the students back together to discuss their answers to the scenarios on the "Initiative and Me" worksheet.

7. Use the following questions to guide students to an understanding of the power of taking initiative and the impact that it can have:
 - What do you think happened in each of the scenarios when the girl decided to take initiative? How does this compare to what might have happened if they didn't take initiative?
 - Is it better to take initiative or to "sit back and let the world happen to you"?
 - Can you think of a time in your life when you took initiative? What happened?
 - Why is it powerful to take initiative? How can it impact your life?
8. Bring the lesson to a close by asking students to silently reflect on their own lives. Ask them to pinpoint areas where they could be taking more initiative, and challenge them to step up and volunteer for this responsibility! It could change their lives.



Extension Activities:

1. Use the “Related Questions to Explore” as discussion springboards or writing prompts to help students further explore taking initiative.
2. Challenge students to reflect on their own lives and pinpoint areas where they could take more initiative. Have students work independently to create goals to increase their initiative. If time allows, these goals could be shared in one-on-one sessions with the instructor or other adult volunteers to increase accountability.

Related Questions to Explore:

- Can you be successful without taking initiative? Explain your answer.
- What do you already do to take initiative in your life? What else could you do?
- Do college students have to take initiative? What about grandparents? Is there an age where you don’t have to take initiative anymore? Explain your answer.
- A friend tells you that she’s afraid to take initiative. What advice might you give her?

Initiative and Me: Thinking Through Real-Life Situations

The video “Taking Initiative” discusses the importance of stepping up and volunteering for responsibility. As one role model tells listeners, “Without initiative you will just basically sit back and let the world happen to you as opposed to making the world your oyster.”

Try This!

Read the scenarios below. Work with your group to decide what might happen in each scenario if the girl doesn’t take initiative. Then imagine what they might do if they were “making the world their oyster” by taking initiative.

Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3
Hattie is babysitting for a family she has never worked for before. After she puts the baby to bed, she notices that the playroom needs to be cleaned.	Joanna has a project due next week in English class, but she doesn’t understand the directions.	Keiko loves to read and spend time editing her writing. She has just moved to a new town and has a new school. While sitting at lunch, she is reading her new school’s newspaper. She notices a lot of grammatical errors.
What might happen if Hattie doesn’t take initiative?	What might happen if Joanna doesn’t take initiative?	What might happen if Keiko doesn’t take initiative?
What might Hattie do if she was taking initiative?	What might Joanna do if she was taking initiative?	What might Keiko do if she was taking initiative?
After she takes initiative, what might happen to Hattie?	After she takes initiative, what might happen to Joanna?	After she takes initiative, what might happen to Keiko?



Ideas for Future Lessons/Activities Related to Taking Initiative:

1. Creative Writing Link: Imagining Strong Women and Stories of Taking Initiative
2. Conducting and Recording Interviews about Initiative with Real-Life Inspiring Women
3. Literature-Based Learning: Reading, Responding to, and Identifying Initiative in the Autobiographies and Memoirs of Famous Females
4. Women Who Have Overcome Challenges: Researching the Role of Initiative in Various Careers
5. Generating an Initiative Mindset: Practicing Language and Actions to Take Initiative
6. What Would You Do to Take Initiative? Challenging Scenarios for Students to Imagine and Discuss
7. Initiative in the News: Hunting for Stories of Initiative in Newspapers and Magazines