



# Networking Strategies: Classroom Lesson Plan

## Lesson Topic:

Networking Strategies: Starting Conversations

## Lesson Objective:

Students will be able to use the FORD acronym to start and sustain a networking conversation.

## Materials:

- Writing utensils
- FORD Brainstorming worksheets, one per student
- Timer, stopwatch, or another method to track time that will be visible to all students
- Projector or other method to watch the video

## Advanced Preparation:

- Preview the [video](#) before sharing it with your students [3:29].
- Make copies of FORD Brainstorming, one per student.

## Warm-up Activity:

1. Ask, "If you need help with something or have a question, who do you turn to?"
2. Direct students to turn and talk to a partner.

3. After a minute of discussion, bring the class back together and ask students to share their ideas. Ensure that a variety of answers have been covered such as parents, teachers, friends, other family members, neighbors, etc.
4. Explain that these people make up your network. Give a basic definition of a network. For example, *"A group of people you know and could call on for help or advice. These people often have the same interests or goals as you."*
5. Ask, "Why might it be important to have a strong network?"
6. Direct students to turn and talk to a partner.
7. After a minute of discussion, bring the class back together and ask students to share their ideas.

### **View the Video: "Networking Strategies"**

1. Tell students they will be watching the video titled, "Networking Strategies".
2. Explain that the video presents role models discussing the importance of networking and providing advice on how to become a strong networker.
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. Ask, "What are some methods the role models suggested to grow your network?"

3. Direct students to turn and talk to a partner. Then bring the class together to share their ideas.
4. Tell students that they will have a chance to practice networking using the FORD strategy mentioned in the video.
5. Distribute the **FORD Brainstorming** worksheet.
6. Give students a few minutes to complete the worksheet.
7. Tell students that they will be pretending to be at a networking function. They will have ten minutes to introduce themselves to at least 3 people. They should use the FORD acronym to learn a bit about each person. All students should be prepared to share at least 2 new facts they learned about one of their networking partners during the activity.
8. Remind students that networking conversations should sound natural. *As needed, model using the FORD acronym naturally in a conversation by asking a student volunteer one or more questions related to each topic covered by the acronym.*
9. Begin the ten-minute timer and direct students to mingle. Circulate to assist and remind students that they should be practicing natural-sounding conversation.
10. When the ten minutes is up, call on students to share the new facts they learned about their networking partners.
11. Use some or all of the following questions to close the lesson:
  - How did you feel at the beginning of the ten minutes? At the end?
  - Was the FORD acronym useful for you? Would you use this strategy in a real networking situation? Why or why not?
  - Did you try any other networking strategies? Explain your answer.



- Do you have any upcoming networking opportunities? How can you prepare yourself for success?
12. End by reminding students that building a strong network can help them achieve their goals. Having a wide network enables them to access many different people for advice and guidance no matter what they decide they want to do in the future.



### Extension Activities:

1. Host a career fair, an academic or social day with another nearby school, or other types of events where students can continue to hone their networking skills.
2. Use the “Related Questions to Explore” as discussion springboards or writing prompts to help students further explore networking strategies.

### Related Questions to Explore:

- Why is it important to have a strong network?
- What kinds of things might your network help you with now? In the future?
- What might happen if someone didn't have a strong network?
- How have you used networking skills recently? What happened?
- If you had to give three networking tips to a younger student, what would you say?



## FORD Brainstorming

One recommended networking strategy is to apply the acronym FORD to help you start conversations. Think about how you might answer the questions related to the FORD acronym below. Then, be prepared to use some or all of these answers in a networking activity.

**F:** Family—Tell me a little about your family.

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**O:** Occupation—What job do you have? Or where do you go to school?

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**R:** Recreation—What do you like to do in your free time?

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**D:** Dreams—What goals or dreams do you have for yourself in the future?

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## Ideas for Future Lessons/Activities Related to Networking Strategies:

1. Networking in Action: Real Life Interviews with Strong Female Role Models in Your Community
2. Positivity, Friendliness, and Respect: Practicing Positive Attributes that Contribute to Healthy Social Networks
3. Public Speaking 101: How to Act, What to Say, and Other Tricks of the Trade
4. What is Active Listening? The Role of Active Listening in Relationship Building and Networking
5. Tapping into Your Network: How to Ask for Help Politely and Get Results
6. Who Are You and What Do You Want? Crafting a Compelling Elevator Pitch
7. The Art of Communication: Speaking, Reading, Writing... and Emails!
8. Networking Today: What Role Does Social Media Play in Networking?