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Cabot's Habits: A Lesson Plan
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OBJECTIVES:

After reading and studying "How To Have A Habit," students will be able to:

- Understand the health risks of tobacco and e-cigarette use
- For Native American communities, distinguish between the historical and sacred use of tobacco and the consumption of commercial tobacco products under the influence of marketing
- Define and explain habits, distinguishing between "good habits" and "bad habits" in the context of mindfulness
- Recognize the dangers of "non-thinking" behavior
- Identify reasons that may motivate other people to influence one's behavior
- Evaluate ways to apply "mindfulness" and critical thinking to keep "good habits" good
- Distinguish between same spelling and different spelling rhymes
- Create a rhyme about habits

STANDARDS:

A. McREL Language Arts and Literacy Standards and Benchmarks

Writing:

Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process.

PreK-2: Uses writing and other methods (e.g., drawing pictures, using letters or phonetically spelled words, telling, dictating, making lists) to describe familiar persons, places, objects, or experiences.

Grades 3-5: Writes narrative accounts, such as poems and stories (e.g., establishes a context that enables the reader to imagine the event or experience; develops characters, setting and plot; creates an organizing structure; sequences events; uses concrete sensory details; uses strategies such as dialogue, tension, and suspense; uses an identifiable voice.)

Reading:

Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of literary texts.

PreK-2: Knows setting, main characters, main events, sequence, and problems in stories.

Knows the main ideas or theme of a story.

Grades 3-5: Understands elements of character development in literary works. Makes connections between characters or simple events in a literary work and people or events in his or her own life.

B. McREL Health Standards and Benchmarks:

Knows environmental and external factors that affect individual and community health

PreK-2: Recognizes the influence of peers and the effect of relationships on health

Grades 3-5: Understands consumer health and external influence of advertisements.

Recognizes reliable sources of health information.

Understands aspects of substance use, dependence and abuse

PreK-2: Knows how to distinguish between helpful and harmful substances.

Grades 3-5: Knows influences that promote alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use (e.g., peer pressure, peer and adult modeling, advertising, overall availability, boredom, cost,

anxiety, competition, chemical dependency). Knows ways to avoid, recognize, and respond to negative social influences and pressures to use alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs (e.g., refusal skills, self-control, creative time management, risk/benefit assessment).

C. California Next Generation Science Standards:

Grade 3: 3-LS2-1, LLS2-D **Construct an argument that some animals form groups that help members survive.** Social Interactions and Group Behavior: How do humans influence each other's habits?

D. California Health Education Framework Standards:

Grade 3: 2.1.P **Identify how culture, family, friends, and media influence positive health practices.** 5.1.P Use a decision-making process to reduce the risk of communicable disease or illness.

Grade 4: 2.1.A **Identify internal and external influences that affect the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs,** and 2.2.A **Examine advertising strategies used for alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.** 3.1.A **Identify sources of valid information regarding alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.** Why might information be unreliable from some sources? 6.1.A **Make a plan to choose healthy alternatives to tobacco and drug use.** 8.1.A **Encourage others to be free of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.**

Grade 5: 5.1.P **Use a decision-making process to determine personal choices that promote personal, environmental, and community health.**

MATERIALS:

- *How to Have a Habit*, book or PowerPoint presentation
- Pencil and Paper
- Materials to create collages and posters

SUGGESTED TIME:

One to three class periods

PROCEDURES:

1. Read *How To Have A Habit* out loud with your class or present the story as a slide show using Powerpoint equipment. To stimulate buzz, the presenter may wear a silly hat from the story of Cabot (picture attached). After reading the story, the presenter asks the following questions and directs students to one or more of the suggested activities:

Reading Comprehension:

1. Why did Cabot start to chew on the grass? What is boredom? Do you ever get bored? What do you do when you get bored? Does that help to take away your boredom? Is it a good thing to do instead of being bored? What else can you do when you are bored?
2. Why couldn't Cabot "stop doing it" after he started chewing on the grass? Can you think of things you started doing that were hard to stop doing? What are the reasons it might be hard for someone to stop doing something?
3. Why did the Bug bite her nails? Why did Cabot start to bite his nails? Why did the Bug want Cabot to stop chewing the grass? Do you bite your nails? Why or why not? Do you

- think it is a bad habit? Why or why not? If you bite your nails, do you think you should stop? Would it be hard to stop? Why or why not?
4. Why do you think the Skunk wanted Cabot to put clothespins on his nose? Why on his tail? Do you think this was to help Cabot or for the Skunk's own benefit?
 5. Why did Cabot decide to try putting sticks between his toes after the one Goose whispered to the other one, "I think he's not cool enough"? Have you ever done something just to fit in? The Geese were "Toe Fashion Pros." Who determines the latest fashions? Are clothes fashions habits?
 6. Why did the Turtle suggest that Cabot put dirty dishes on his head? What did Turtle get out of the deal? If you knew someone was taking advantage of you, how would that make you feel?
 7. Cabot said, "Having habits is hard!" What do you think he meant by that? Think of some habits that people have that are hard to keep. Why are they hard? (answers could include time, money, willingness, health risks)
 8. Why does the Frog try to keep Cabot from smoking? Do you think that Frog gives Cabot good information? Does Cabot pay attention to Frog at first? Why does he finally quit?
 9. Have you ever tried to get someone to stop smoking? If yes, why? Did it work? Why do you think that people smoke? Do you think that they know that smoking hurts them? Why would people choose to smoke, even if they know that smoking can affect their health?

Themes:

1. What is a habit? List the habits that Cabot tried. For each habit, explain why he quit the habit.
2. What reasons are given by Cabot, and what reasons do you learn about as you read, that make Cabot's smoking habit the worst of all his habits? What do you know about smoking that would make you decide that this is his worst habit?
3. Do Cabot's habits seem silly to you? Do you think they seemed silly to Cabot? Why did he say, "I wonder if habits can go a little too far?" Did his smoking habit make him look silly? Do people who smoke also look silly for having this habit? Why, or why not?
4. Do you have any silly habits? Have you ever tried to quit them? Is it hard to break a habit? If you know it is hard to break a habit, will it make you less likely to do something that can begin a bad habit? What can you do to avoid starting a bad habit?
5. When you have a habit, do you think about what you are doing while you are doing it? Why, or why not. Give examples of habits that you do "automatically," without thinking. Give examples of other "non-thinking" behavior that is harmful (answers could include violent behavior, bullying, prejudicial behavior, littering). What is it about "nonthinking" behavior that makes it potentially hurtful?
6. What words do we use to describe "thoughtfulness?" (examples might include mindfulness, 'using your head,' deliberate, on purpose, critical thinking, discretion etc...)
7. What is the difference between "hearing" and "listening?"
8. Is there such a thing as a "good habit?" If so, what are some good habits? At the end of the book, an example is given of how a "good habit" can sometimes turn into a "bad habit" if it is done without a purpose in mind. Can you give an example of another good habit that can become a "bad habit" if done without thinking? Do you have any good habits? Are they easy or hard to keep? How can you help yourself keep "good habits" good?

8. Write a letter to Cabot suggesting some good habits he could try when he is feeling bored again. Or write these ideas to him in a rhyme.
9. Have students create a collage illustrating bad habits on one side and good habits on the other.
10. Direct students to give short presentations to the class on reasons and ways to stop bad habits and reasons and ways to promote good ones. Challenge them to create antismoking posters to go along with their presentations.

Language arts:

1. Have students look at rhyming words. Show them that some words that rhyme, such as "yawn" and "lawn," have endings that are spelled the same. Other words, such as "ago" and "slow," sound the same but are not spelled the same. Ask students to think of rhyming words in both categories.
2. Read some passages of the story aloud accentuating the pattern of stressed and unstressed sounds. Then clap out the pattern using loud and soft claps and have the students do this with you so that they can recognize this pattern of one stressed and two unstressed syllables. See if they can find other verses that have the same rhythm pattern. Then ask them to find an example of a different rhythm pattern (such as one stressed and one unstressed). They can read some lines and clap the rhythm; then have the rest of the class join in clapping the pattern.
3. The poem about Cabot depends on sensory verbs and adjectives. Review the five senses with your students and have them search the story for words that describe each. Ask how these words bring the story to life.
4. Challenge students to write a short rhyming poem about a habit that is not described in the Cabot story.

EXTENSIONS:

1. Invite a doctor or other health professional to talk to your students about smoking and the physical damage it can cause to the body.
2. Invite a health professional to talk to your class about good health habits and how to begin and maintain them throughout their lives.

RELATED WEB SITES:

- 1) Tobacco Product Use and Associated Factors Among Middle and High School Students – U.S. <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/68/ss/ss6812a1.htm>
- 2) Vital Signs: Tobacco Product Use Among Middle and High School Students – U.S. 2011-2018 <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/68/wr/mm6806e1.htm>
- 3) Tobacco Free Kids Campaign website <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/>
- 4) Tobacco Education Clearinghouse of California educational materials <https://www.tecc.org/>



A 2007 slide presentation of *How To Have A Habit* by Dr. Stolp (wearing the Dirty Dishes Hat to a combined class of 4th and 5th graders).