



OVERVIEW

The student will learn the definition of a network and the importance of creating a network while evaluating three individuals in their network. Next, they will create a visual representation of their current network. Finally, they will develop a plan to engage or expand their network and reflect on the Agilities they'll activate in the process.

Engage in age-appropriate activities to boost network strength

GRADE LEVELS

6th-8th grades

TIME

90 minutes



OBJECTIVES

- I can understand the importance of a personal or professional network.
- I can create a visual representation of my network.
- I can create a plan for building my network.

RESOURCES NEEDED

- [Creating a Network Teaching Slide Deck](#)
- [Creating a Network Digital Student Handout](#)
- [Creating a Network Printed Student Handout](#)
- [Creating a Network Exit Ticket](#)
- [Learning Your Agilities one-pager](#)

BEFORE ACTIVITY PREPARATION

- Review the Teaching Slide Deck and activity directions in this guide
- Share the Creating a Network Digital Student Handout link through LMS or print a copy of the Printed Student Handout for each student
- Share the Creating a Network Student Digital Handout and the Exit Ticket to your LMS so each student has their own copy



ACTIVITY COMPONENTS SUMMARY

Assess Your Current Network

Students learn the definition of a network and the importance of creating a network while evaluating three individuals in their network.

Visual Representation of My Network

Students create a visual representation that helps them see the connections between people, interests, locations, etc.

Grow My Network

Students learn the lifecycle of a network connection, see several networking suggestions, and create a plan to engage or grow their network.

Assessment

Students describe how they could use their Agilities to engage or expand their networks.



ACTIVITY INTRODUCTION

Review the objectives with students and ask about their understandings, experiences, and misconceptions of networks. Some questions to support this process include:

- What is a network?
- What does it mean to network?
- What does it look like to network?
- What does a network do for you?
- What kind of people have strong networks?

The definition of a network is “a group of interconnected people or things.”

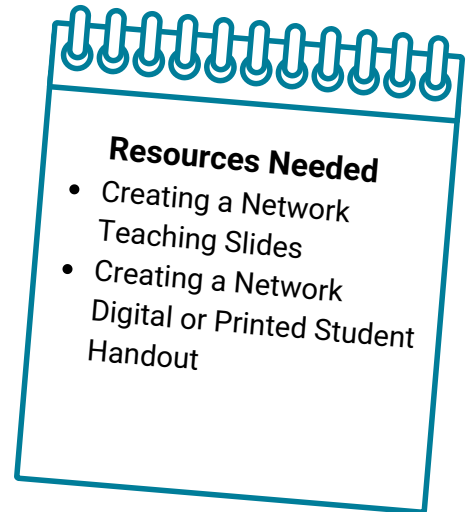


ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

Assess Your Current Network

Why is your network important?

Use the “Why is your network important?” slide to facilitate a conversation around this topic. A strong or weak network changes how individuals feel or think about their lives. Research shows that individuals who build strong networks or perceive their networks as strong are more confident to take on challenges. They are also able to face adversity better.



Strong Networks Make Us Feel

Safe
Connected
Important
Valuable



Strong Networks Make Us Think

Grow
Learn
Change

Have students think-pair-share using the questions on the slide as a guide:

- How would having a strong network make you feel? Why?
- What could having a strong network do for you?
- How could a strong network help you evolve?
- What could you do to create change in your life using your network?

Who is in Your Network?

Use the “Who is in Your Network?” slide to facilitate a discussion with students about the importance of cultivating a diverse network that can help them in many different areas of their lives. Then, flip the conversation and discuss how they could fulfill some of these categories for others.

Who are you connected to?

Use the “Who are you connected to?” slide to explain that students’ networks shift as they age. They can include their family, friends, classmates, teammates, neighbors, teachers, etc. As they get older, this will also include their coworkers, bosses, mentors, etc.

Importance of a Network

Use the “Importance of a Network” slide and ask students to open their handouts. Students will likely be limited in their view of their current network. Encourage them to think through all the people they know. This could be a weak connection, like a cashier they see weekly, or a strong connection, such as a close family member. Talk through examples of a student network using the questions as a guide:

- Who are you connected to?
- How strong are those bonds?
- Why are those bonds strong?
- What makes a connection dependable?

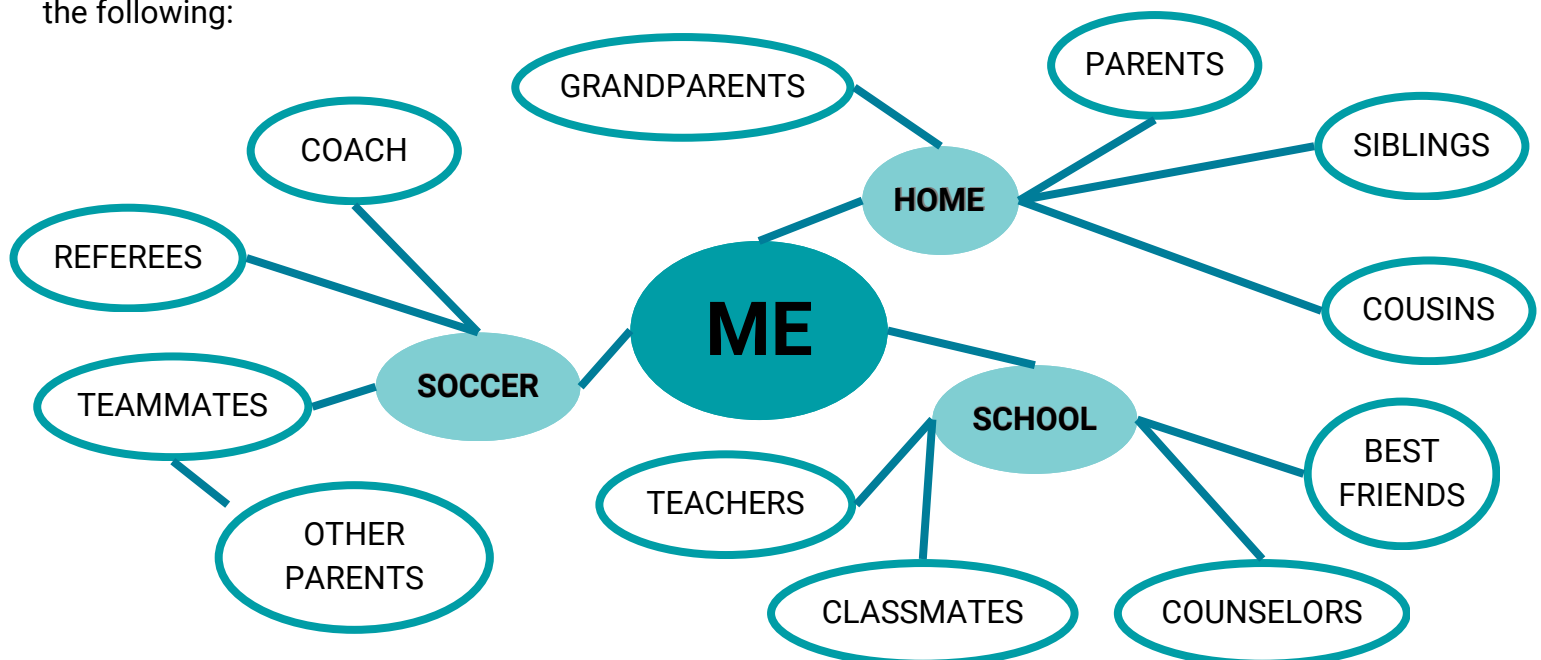
Students will use their handouts to record three selected individuals in their current network. Encourage students to select individuals from different aspects of their life, i.e. not selecting all family members. Students will then address the questions for each of the three individuals.

Use students’ work to discuss similarities and differences in how they met their connections, how their connections have grown or not, and what it means to have a strong bond. Students may share in small groups or with the large group. Use what students share as circle-back points to emphasize quality networking later in the lesson.

Visual Representation of My Network

Picture My Network and Create My Web

Use the next two slides in the slide deck to prepare and model creating a network web for students. The traditional network visual representation is a web, but they can also be displayed as branches. Students will create a visual representation of their network. Encourage them to sort and create categories for their contacts. These categories could be based on the relationship to the person, the location where the connection exists, or the strength of the bond. An example network might look like the following:



Grow My Network

Developing Networking Skills

Use the “Developing Networking Skills” slide to explain that the process of building a network connection follows a standard form which includes: meeting a person, building a relationship, being of mutual service, and reconnecting with them. How each individual chooses to do each of the phases is different and depends largely on experience, confidence, and personality. There are a few suggestions for each phase to give students an idea of some options.

There are 10 additional suggestions on the following slide that may be helpful as students build their own networking plan.

Creating My Networking Plan

Use the “Creating My Networking Plan” slide and ask students to access their handout to begin creating their plan. They will develop their plans to engage in or expand their current network.

Students should develop a plan that fits their personality, which means they will likely follow through with their plan. If a student is very outgoing and enjoys being around large groups of people and their plan doesn't incorporate those elements, they're likely not going to enjoy the process. The same is true for students who are shy or who prefer to be in smaller groups.

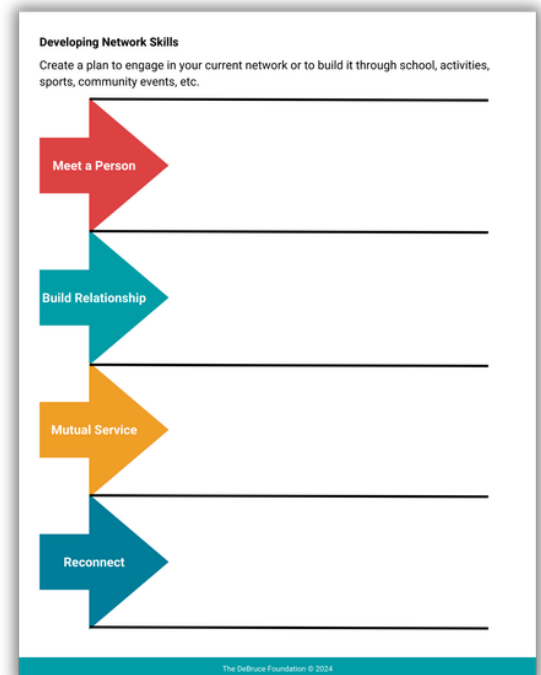
Encourage all students to select activities and locations where they'll feel comfortable and have the opportunity to grow.

Reflect on Objectives

Use the teaching slides to provide visual reminders to help students reflect on how they met the learning objectives through the various learning activities. Then, move on to the exit ticket.

Assessment

Use the exit ticket slide found in the resource kit to facilitate this activity. Determine if you will share the link through your LMS or print the ticket.



Developing Network Skills
Create a plan to engage in your current network or to build it through school, activities, sports, community events, etc.

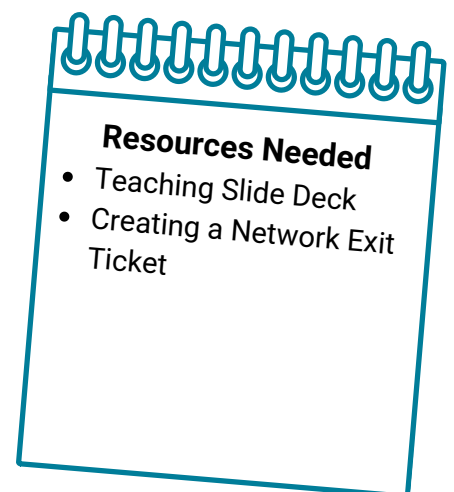
Meet a Person

Build Relationship

Mutual Service

Reconnect

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Resources Needed

- Teaching Slide Deck
- Creating a Network Exit Ticket