



Breathwork

Decrease anxiety and stress through controlled breathing practices. Encourage students to breathe in a way that feels comfortable. With regular practice, breathwork can strengthen their lungs, build endurance, and increase vitality.

Lesson 1: Benefits of Breathwork

Learning Outcomes:

Students will:

- Learn controlled breathing practices
- Use breathwork to limit distractions
- Increase their concentration skills
- Learn how to manage their cognitive energy at the same time as learning to regulate their body
- Learn how to retain information more efficiently
- Become aware of their basic needs at the moment: rest, water, food

CASEL-5 Competencies:

Self-Awareness
 Self-Management
 Responsible Decision-Making
 Relationship Skills
 Social Awareness

Awakening Practice

Awaken your senses with a Breathwork practice.

Consider the following question: What's going on in your life (now or in the past) that causes you to be distracted from your school studies?

Educator Note: Set a timer for 4 minutes and ask students to answer the question non-judgmentally with stream-of-consciousness writing. Discuss steps they currently take to help them improve their concentration, then segway to Breathwork Practice #1, Ocean Breath.



Instructional video available online

Ocean Breath

Ocean Breath is the foundational building block of breath. It can be used any time of the day to help increase concentration and focus.

Educator Note: Set a timer for 2 minutes and guide the class through Breathwork Practice #1: Ocean Breath (also referred to as nose breathing).

1. Inhale through your nostrils and notice how your breath moves across the back of your throat—creating a sound similar to the ocean or to Darth Vader’s breathing.
2. Exhale through the nose like you’re fogging up a mirror. Slowly, try to control your exhale.
3. Complete three rounds of nose breathing.
4. Notice if you can control rapid, shallow, and fear-based breathing by slowly extending your exhale through nose breathing. Try using a count as you inhale. Mirror your exhale with the same count.
5. The sounds are mesmerizing and rhythmic. They offer us an opportunity to become tuned into our own breath, allowing us to move in rhythm with other areas of our lives.

Review your answers to the first question where you identified the distractions in your life.

- Circle the most obvious one.
- Next, think of why this distraction is so powerful.
- Take note of the physical, emotional, or social issues you might be experiencing.
- Imagine what it would feel like to be able to increase your concentration and decrease the impact of the distraction. What could you accomplish?
- Practice Ocean Breath for one minute with the intention of aligning with what you really want to accomplish in your life.

Awareness Practice



Consider the following question:

What is the impact of breathwork on your body and your mind?

Suggestions:

- Brings you into the present moment
- Helps regulate your emotions
- Reduces anxiety and stress
- Helps regulate your nervous system
- Lowers your heart rate
- Signals neurotransmitters—the “feel good” hormones—to fire in your brain
- Increases the flow of oxygen to your brain and muscles
- Strengthens your lungs and diaphragm

Alignment Practice

Practice aligning your mind and your body with Ocean Breath and Angel Wings.

Angel Wings

1. Sit up tall in your chair
2. Interlace your hands behind your head
3. Inhale and lift your elbows high
4. Exhale and bow your head forward
5. Gently tuck the chin towards the chest to stretch the neck and back
6. Continue to breathe
7. Complete 3-5 rounds



Consider the following questions and discuss them as a class:

- How can you manage your cognitive energy (slowing down, not overthinking) at the same time as disciplining your mind and body?
- How do you use your breath in the pose?
- Are you experiencing some aspect of mindfulness in the pose?
- How much effort are you putting into the movement practice?
- Are you flowing freely or are you meeting obstacles in your body or mind?

Alchemize the mind-body connection through mindful movement.

Benefits of Breathwork

 Instructional video available online

Activate Practice

Activate and embody these practices into your daily routine.

Closing Activity #1: Guided Visualization



Educator Note: Set a timer for 5-10 minutes and guide the class through a guided visualization practice.

- Sit comfortably in your chair.
- Imagine your favorite beach or body of water.
- Inhale through your nostrils and notice how your breath moves across the back of your throat.
- Exhale slowly out your nose, trying to control your exhale.
- Let the sounds of breathing be mesmerizing and rhythmic like ocean waves.
- Become attuned to your own breathing so you can move in rhythm with other areas of your life.

Closing Activity #2: IRL (In Real Life) Practice at Home

Ocean Breath with Music

- Choose your favorite song.
- Sit still and practice Ocean Breath for the entire length of the song.
- Notice—without judgment—how long you can remain focused on your breath.
- Congratulate yourself for allowing your mind and body the opportunity to rest and digest.
- Try the practice again another day.
- Set a goal to do the IRL Practice 1-3x per week.

