

Lesson 4	Mastering Focus: Strategies for Enhancing Attention
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Time	45-60 minutes
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<u>Materials</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pen or pencil ● SEL Journal ● Lesson 4 Slides ● Lesson 4 Focus Checklist ● Green Our Planet Studios video link ● SEL + Science Adventures Manual (Green Our Planet Studios) ● Internet access ● Resources to play videos for students
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<u>Vocabulary</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>attention</i>: actively listening to, engaging with, and comprehending someone or something ● <i>distractor</i>: anything that inhibits one's ability to pay attention ● <i>neuron</i>: nerve cells in the brain ● <i>networks</i>: groups of nerve cells in the brain ● <i>neurotransmitters</i>: chemicals that assist in transmitting signals from one nerve cell to another across the brain's networks ● <i>dopamine</i>: a neurotransmitter associated with motivation and reward
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<u>Overview</u>	<u>Lesson description:</u> Students will explore the skill of paying attention, learn about the physiology behind it, and practice a mindfulness strategy to recenter and clear distractions.
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<u>Agenda</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introduction ● Green Our Planet Studios Video ● Activity: Worksheets, Quizzes, or Cutouts ● Reflection & Sharing ● Closure
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<u>Learning Objectives</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Describe how the distractions affect the functioning of the brain. ● Describe how distractions disrupt the brain’s ability to sustain focus. ● Practice the “Body Scan Exercise” as a coping strategy. ● Create a focus checklist to identify what you need to achieve a goal with limited distractions.
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<u>Dimensions of Learning</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mindsets & Behaviors ● SEL Competencies ● Science Standards ● Math Standards
	<p>Mindsets & Behaviors: For the full list of ASCA (American School Counselor</p>

	<p>Association) Student Standards, please see the “ASCA Student Standards” section of the manual.</p> <p>SEL Competencies:</p> <p>For the full list of CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, Emotional Learning) Competencies, please see the “SEL Competencies” section of the manual.</p> <p>Self-awareness Self-management</p> <p>Next Generation Science Standards:</p> <p>DCI: In multicellular organisms, the body is a system of multiple interacting subsystems. These subsystems are groups of cells that work together to form tissues and organs that are specialized for particular body functions (MS-LS1-3).</p> <p>SEP: Developing and Using Models</p> <p>CCC: Structure and Function</p>
	<p>Health Standards:</p> <p>For the full list of National Health Education Standards, please see the “Health Standards” section of the manual.</p>

<p><u>Procedures</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Engage ● Explore ● Explain ● Elaborate ● Evaluate
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ENGAGE: Opening Activity – Access Prior Learning / Stimulate Interest / Generate Questions: (5-10 minutes)

1. Say to students: *Hello students! Today we're going to discuss the skill of paying attention! 'Pay attention' is something said all the time, but how does one do it? What is a "good enough" attention span? Today we are going to learn this and much more!*
2. Say to students: *First let's start with testing our attention span. I'm going to play a video and you need to stare at the dots and count down. Mark when you lose focus.*
3. Project [slide 4](#).
4. Say to students: *This test is much different than what we normally need to focus on at school or at home. Take out your SEL notebook and write down an amount of minutes you think you can focus on the tasks on [slide 3](#). Then write a list of the things that distract you when you're trying to focus.*

EXPLORE: Lesson Description – Materials Needed / Probing or Clarifying Questions: (10 minutes)

1. Say to students: *Now, before we go any further. I want us to watch a quick video that will explain to us what part of our brain affects our attention skills as well as some things that can help or distract our brains. Feel free to take notes as we watch!*
2. Show Green our Planet Studios video

EXPLAIN: Concepts Explained: (7-10 minutes)

1. Say to students: *So as you saw in the video, our*

ability to pay attention can easily be interrupted by distractions or supported by creating healthy learning environments. Consider this analogy: your prefrontal cortex is like your phone: the more apps I have open the more the phone functions will lag. In this case, the open apps are your distractors, taking away from your functioning by demanding some of your attention! The trick is to create healthy learning habits and promote attention rather than steal from it!

2. Review [slides 6-10](#).

ELABORATE: Applications and Extensions: (10-15 minutes)

1. Say to students: *Today we are going to learn another coping strategy that you can add to your list. When you feel like your brain is being overloaded with distractors, try doing a body scan. This is a mindfulness exercise that can take as quick as three minutes to recenter yourself and clear your head. When you're finished you'll be able to refocus on whatever it was you were working on before being distracted. Follow along with me.*
2. For the body scan exercise the teacher can use the script on [slide 9](#).
3. **Discussion questions:**
 - Ask students: *What is something you can do during school today that might help you pay attention better in class?*

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ask students: <i>What is one thing you are going to do at home to promote your attention span?</i> <p>EVALUATE: Formative Monitoring (Questioning & Discussion): (10–15 minutes)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Drawing activity (slide 13): In your journals, you’re going to draw your learning space. This can be at home, outside, at school, the library, or somewhere else. Think of how you can eliminate distractors, create comfort, have easy access to water and other things you need. 2. Focus Checklist (slide 14): Say to students: <i>Think about the week ahead and identify 3–4 goals or things you need to get done. (Example: I need to study for my math exam.) Identify what you need to do in order to accomplish those goals. What distractions do you foresee getting in your way? How will you address those distractions?</i>
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<p><u>Independent Practice</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Encourage students to digit span test one another and report high scores. ● Encourage students to show you the chart they created in their journals to track their attending scores.
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<p><u>Pre-teaching Review for Educator</u></p>	<p>Digital Resource: Article: Penn Medicine Neuroscientists Identify Brain Mechanism that Drives Focus Despite Distractions</p>
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<u>(to be viewed before teaching class)</u>	Digital Resource: Article: Concentration & Distraction
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<u>Inspirational quote</u>	"The simple act of paying attention can take you a long way." - Keanu Reeves
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