

SELF-AWARENESS



Lesson: Self-awareness

This lesson is about self-awareness. It encourages students to think about their own strengths and weaknesses, as well as the way their attitudes and behaviour can affect their lives. The main focus of the lesson is how we can all make positive changes to our lives by becoming more aware.

Level: Intermediate and above (equivalent to CEF level B1 and above)

Time: 60-90 mins

How to use this lesson:

This lesson can be done in class but if you are short of time, parts of the lesson can be done at home (see notes below). Allow as much time as possible in class for students to discuss the different exercises. This is particularly important for Worksheet B, where the discussion could easily fill a whole lesson.

Worksheet A

- 1 It would be better to do this first exercise in class so that students develop an understanding of what self-awareness means (see below for a definition). Allow a few minutes for students to read the quotes. Give help with any words or ideas they have trouble with (they will be needed later). Then conduct a brief discussion based on students' answers.

Make sure that during the discussion students recognise the meaning of self-awareness:

e.g. *Self-awareness means a knowledge and understanding of your own character, strengths and weaknesses.*

Follow up by asking how a better sense of self-awareness might improve different aspects of an individual's life (e.g. increasing self-confidence, becoming better organised, performing better, feeling better about yourself, etc).

- 2 Since this exercise introduces some more key vocabulary for the lesson, it is best done in class so that any difficult words can be explained. Depending on the class, you might need to explain some or many of these words. Remind students that they can add their own if they want to.

Try not to place too much emphasis on the negative. You could point out that there is nothing embarrassing in acknowledging negative characteristics (we all have them) – it is a good thing to be aware of our imperfections!

When students have chosen six adjectives to describe themselves, elicit a variety of answers from the class. Involve as many students as possible and open up a discussion prompted by questions such as:

- ▶ *Is it more important to be (optimistic, determined, etc) or to be (relaxed, polite, etc)? Why?*
- ▶ *Is it possible to be too (helpful, honest, enthusiastic, etc)? How?*
- ▶ *Why is it bad to be (pessimistic, introspective, shy, etc)?*
- ▶ *What could you do about being too (pessimistic, introspective, shy, etc)?*

- 3 This can be done in class, giving students more opportunity to practise speaking. Alternatively, they can do the exercise at home in written form to practise their writing. If the exercise is done at home, encourage students to write a paragraph or more for 3-5 of the questions (to be marked or read out in the next lesson).

Another approach would be to ask students to choose one item and write a paragraph about it.

In class, ask as many students as possible to join in the discussion and give their accounts of what happened. Follow up with questions such as:

- ▶ *And how did you feel when ... ? / How did that make you feel?*
- ▶ *Would you do it differently next time?*
- ▶ *Do you think that was the right thing to do?*
- ▶ *Do you think someone else would have acted differently?*
- ▶ *What made it such a (great, difficult, etc) experience?*



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Worksheet B

Questionnaire

The questionnaire will take some time to complete so you may wish to ask students to prepare it for homework. Remind them that some of the questions are quite personal and they do not have to reveal things about themselves if they do not feel comfortable doing so. However, they should aim to answer as many questions as possible so that they can take part in the follow-up discussion.

Point out some of the benefits of self-awareness in general, such as avoiding repeating mistakes of the past, achieving your goals, or simply being happier in your life. You may also like to stress that, just by answering the questions, students will have done something that not many people take the trouble to do – that is to examine their beliefs and their behaviour in a way that can make them much happier.

The answers that students write can be in note form – the point of the exercise is for them to discuss their answers afterwards. They only need to write down enough for them to be able to base a discussion on.

When students have answered all the questions either at home or in class, conduct a class discussion based on their answers. Allow plenty of time for this and elicit answers from as many students willing to answer as possible.

Note: Depending on the individual, and on individual cultures, some students might not feel happy about revealing their 'deepest, darkest secrets'. Others, on the other hand, might be quite willing to discuss personal matters. Be sensitive to this – there are still many questions of a less personal nature that students can answer – there is no need to insist on every student answering every question. If students feel sensitive about a question, focus instead on the more general questions. Aim to rely on students volunteering information, rather than them feeling pressurised.

Emphasis should be on students thinking about the meaning of the questions and their answers, so you might want to follow up a question or a section with further prompts such as:

- ▶ *What do you think that says about you?*
- ▶ *What do you think the purpose of the question is?*
- ▶ *Why do you think this question is here?*
- ▶ *What do you think that says about your attitude to (money, other people, your past, your friends, etc)?*
- ▶ *Do you think you have a healthy attitude towards (money, other people, your past, your friends, etc)?*
- ▶ *Do you think you might change anything in your behaviour based on your answer?*

Where appropriate, encourage students to use vocabulary from **Worksheet A** in their answers.

There are many ways to interpret students' answers but the ultimate aim of the lesson is for the students themselves to do the questioning. Encourage this at all points throughout the discussion.



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Worksheet A

1 Look at the quotes below. Which ones do you agree/disagree with?

A "If a professional footballer wasn't self-aware, how would he improve? You've got to know your own weaknesses and work on them."

B "I don't think other people know the real me. This sometimes leads to misunderstandings or even arguments."

C "Being introspective, shy or self-conscious is not the same as knowing yourself. Self-awareness doesn't have to be a negative thing at all."

F "I don't need to be self-aware. This is the way nature made me. Why should I want to improve myself? I'm not perfect, but nobody is!"

D "I would like to make changes to my life but I'm not sure how to do it. I admire people who seem to know what they're doing with their lives."

E "I don't think I could be happier. My life is perfect and I'm proud of my achievements. Bad events in my life don't really affect me. I can handle them."

Agree	Disagree

2 In the table below, write the three positive and the three negative characteristics that best describe you. You can add different characteristics if you want to.

Positive characteristics		Negative characteristics	
optimistic	enthusiastic	pessimistic	boring
determined	generous	too introspective	easily bored
hard-working	helpful	too shy	selfish
relaxed	trustworthy	too self-conscious	unreliable
polite	logical	impolite	too proud
decisive	honest	lazy	lack confidence
intelligent	open to new experiences	worry too much	illogical
interesting		quick-tempered	
My positive characteristics		My negative characteristics	

Definitions for the different characteristics can be found at www.macmillandictionary.com

Student's copy



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Student's copy

3 When was the last time you did the things below? Describe what happened.

1. I lost my temper.

2. I stopped myself from saying something bad.

3. I explained how I felt and I got the result I wanted.

4. I started daydreaming about how things might be different.

5. I achieved something that I really wanted to do.

6. I walked away from an argument wishing I'd said (or hadn't said) something.

7. I told a lie.

8. I felt sorry for someone.

9. I had a really great time.

10. I realised I had made a mistake.





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Worksheet B

Student's copy

Self-awareness questionnaire

Answer the questions as honestly as you can. You don't need to write full sentences. Also, remember that we don't need to know your deepest, darkest secrets – if you don't want to answer a question because it's too personal, that's fine. But do think about it!

The past ...

- Think of a positive event from your childhood. What happened?
- Now think of a negative event. Why was it bad?
- Which period of your life were you the happiest?
- What do/did you like about that period?
- What achievement in your life are you most proud of? Is it something you can do again?
- Have you ever felt that the time went past very quickly? What were you doing and how did you feel?

The present ...

- What strengths do you think you have? How do you use these strengths?
- What weaknesses do you think you have? Do they affect you, other people or both?
- What activity do you most enjoy doing (playing sport, reading alone, walking, etc)?
- How do you feel when doing these activities?
- Do you always tell the truth? When might you tell a lie?
- Do you ever daydream or imagine that your life is different? What's different?

Money ...

- What does money mean to you? Why?
- Do you truly believe you would be happy if you won a lot of money tomorrow?
- Is there anything more important to you than money? What is it?
- If you had plenty of money, which of the following would give you most pleasure?

- buying luxury goods
- giving money to charity
- giving money to friends and family
- volunteering your time to help people
- not having to worry about paying for things
- having the freedom to do something (e.g. travel or study)

Other people ...

- What qualities do you admire in other people?
- Think about one of your friends – why are you friends with him or her?
- What do you want other people to think about you? What do you imagine they really think about you?
- Do you want to change the way others see you? How could you make that happen?

The bad stuff ...

- What kind of people do you least like spending time with? Why?
- What do you least enjoy doing? What could make this activity more enjoyable?
- What makes you angry? What do you usually do when you're angry?
- Think of an argument or a misunderstanding you've had with someone. Could you have handled it differently?

The future ...

- What's the best thing you can imagine happening to you in the future?
- What do you fear most? How likely is it that your fear will come true?
- Imagine your perfect life in one, five or ten years:
- What will you be doing?
- Where will you be living?
- What else will be different?
- What would you need to do to make those things come true?

And finally ...

- How honest are your answers to the questions above?

