

# Keep Calm and Focus On



SINGLE LESSON – Teacher Facilitation Guide

Grades 8-12

## ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

Focusing is an essential skill that helps students succeed well beyond their time in school, in many facets of life. In our [Work Skills](#) framework, we define the skill “**focus**” like this:

Focus on relevant information and tasks without getting easily distracted, shift tasks effectively, and take mental and physical breaks when needed and appropriate.

## LESSON OBJECTIVE

Facilitate a lesson on focus. Provide students with strategies to improve their focus and/or concentration. Students will become self aware of how they can impact their focus levels by creating a personalized Focus Contract.

## LESSON PLAN OVERVIEW

This lesson on focusing includes teacher modeling, group practice, and independent practice. Students begin by reflecting on how they currently focus while completing work at home. Then, students are given a task while the teacher actively tries to distract them. Students use their experience to compose a personalized Focus Contract with themselves and walk away with concrete strategies for staying focused. Students will follow up with their teacher to discuss the success of their strategies and make changes if necessary.

## HOW TO PREPARE

1. Preview the [Lesson Framework](#) that follows.
2. Preview and make copies of each of the resources listed below. Take note of any changes you would like to make to meet your students' needs.
3. Make a copy of the [Keep Calm and Focus On](#) slide deck. Edit for your needs.

## RESOURCES

- [Keep Calm and Focus On](#) (Google Slides)
- [Keep Calm and Focus On Practice Activities](#) (Google Doc)

## ACTIVITIES

### JUMP TO

#### [Activity 1 \(slides 2-3\): Background Discussion](#)

- [Slide 2](#)
- [Slide 3](#)

#### [Activity 2 \(slides 4-5\): Investigate and Reflect](#)

- [Slide 4](#)
- [Slide 5](#)

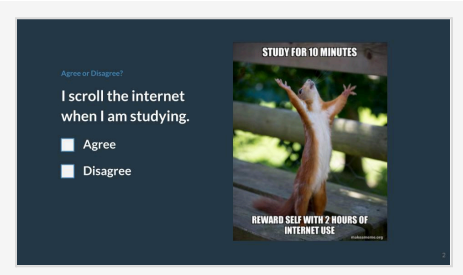
#### [Activity 3 \(slides 6-7\): My Focus Contract](#)

- [Slide 6](#)
- [Slide 7](#)

## LESSON FRAMEWORK

### ACTIVITY 1: BACKGROUND DISCUSSION (SLIDES 2-3)

#### Slide 2



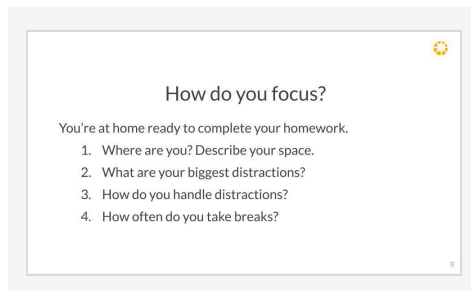
Facilitate a background discussion on focusing using the meme on slide 2. Students should feel free to share prior experiences and examples from their own lives. This is also a good place for you to share your experiences.



#### ACTIVE LEARNING

Invite students to turn and talk to a partner first, and then take responses from the whole group.

#### Slide 3



Ask students to take time to respond to these questions on slide 3 independently in their journals first. This will encourage them to accurately reflect on their own experiences.

After they have had time to reflect, continue the whole class discussion by asking students to share their responses. Use the turn and talk method if time allows.

## ACTIVITY 2: INVESTIGATE AND REFLECT (SLIDES 4-5)

### Slide 4

Make a copy of the [Keep Calm and Focus On Practice Activities](#) and explore the resources on focus and concentration.

Distraction	Type/Example	How well did you focus?
Phone Use (Email, Text, Social Media)		
Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.)		
Loud Music		
Loud Conversations		
Loud TV Shows		
Loud Noises		
Add your own example		

Introduce the [PtP: Keep Calm and Focus On Practice Activities](#) document and have each student make a copy.



### DIFFERENTIATE

Options for facilitating this activity follow:

**Small Groups:** Divide the resources into centers around the room. Students rotate through the centers and experience a different distraction at each center while trying to read/watch the resources.

- Sample distractions:
  - Students open Instagram/SnapChat on their phones and have it out next to them.
  - Students use fidgets while working.
  - Students wear headphones while working.
  - Play the TED Talk on your projector or smart board while students are trying to work in groups.

**Whole Class:** Give students a few minutes to start reading the resources independently and then start playing loud music. Every few minutes after that, provide a different distraction (use ideas from the list above).

### Slide 5

How did you focus?

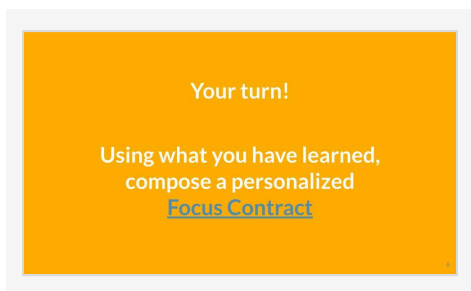
1. Did you complete your work successfully? What strategies or tips did you learn?
2. Did you get distracted?
3. How did you try to keep focus during the distractions?
4. What did you do that worked? What did not work?

Facilitate a group discussion with the guiding questions on slide 5. Use the turn and talk or think-pair-share method as time allows.

**SAY:** *Was it really hard to focus with all of the distractions around the room? What about for those of you who had something to help improve focus? How are you actively sabotaging your own focus at home and at school?*

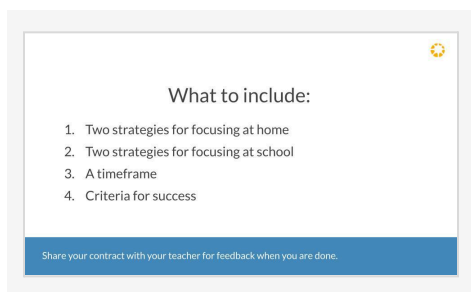
## ACTIVITY 3: MY FOCUS CONTRACT (SLIDES 6-7)

### Slide 6



Introduce the idea of a [Focus Contract](#) to your students. This should be a set of personalized strategies each student selects to help improve their focus. Students can pull these strategies from the resources they looked at in the previous activity. If possible, students should compose their contracts during the same class period, and then follow up with you about their success in a follow up session.

### Slide 7



Focus Contracts should include the following:

- Strategies for both home and school
- A timeframe to try strategies
- Criteria for success

You may modify this list for your students- it would be easier to check in with everyone if they have the same two week timeframe for example.

**SAY:** *Remember there are no right or wrong strategies for your contracts- these should be practical and doable for YOU! How will you know if your strategies work? Will it take less time to get something done? Will your grades improve? Be reasonable. We will follow up to see if your strategies were successful in a couple of weeks.*

Get more resources like this at [www.opportunityeducation.org/resources](http://www.opportunityeducation.org/resources)