

Lesson Plans for Things to be Happy About *Barbara Ann Kipfer*

As a teacher, one is always looking for creative writing projects and using the theme of "things to be happy about" is ideal. Lists can help us open our minds to new thoughts. As the writer of **14,000 things to be happy about**, I have thought about being happy in many different ways. Students in various schools have compiled their lists and sent them to me. For example, students in Beaufort, South Carolina, made their own list of 100 things that make them happy. They wrote their list on a poster and hung it up in their classroom. A school in Massachusetts had each student compile a list of 25 things to be happy about in a notebook. They sent a copy of the notebooks to me. Sending a copy of the finished project to me can add to the lesson because I respond personally to the teacher and class. How much fun is it for the class to work on a project and have a note come back from the author? You cannot beat that kind of positive reinforcement.

Efficient writing is one of the most important skills a student can develop. One of the best ways to instill good writing skills in students is to make sure they have success at writing in the beginning. As they meet with success, students become more confident in their ability. One of the best ways for students to have success with early writing is to have lessons where they cannot be "wrong." There are no "rights" or "wrongs" to creating such lists since they are personal. The best lists are those which are thoughtful and insightful, so it is important to encourage the students to write with attention to detail. Creating lessons based on lists of what makes students happy may develop their basic writing skills and increase their confidence for writing in the future.

While I encourage you to utilize my ice-breaker and lesson plan, I also would like you to write to me with any ice-breakers and lesson plans that you come up so I can share them with other educators. Thank you for using this website and I hope it makes you happy!

At the beginning of each school year, it is important to get to know your students. One of the best ways to get to know students is to have them write down things that make them happy. I call these activities ice-breakers. They are not really lesson plans, but activities for discovering who the students are and what makes them tick. Below are a few ice-breakers that I have used in the past. A teacher can be very creative with ice-breakers.

Ice-Breaker 1: Sometimes in life you have to stop and smell the roses. We sometimes forget to note what makes us happy. This ice-breaker is designed to make the student think about and note what things make them happy.

What makes us happy? Ask each student to create a list. After the lists are completed, go around the room and have each student read five of their happy thoughts to the class. Depending on your grade level and the general atmosphere, you may want to add a little instruction on keeping this a clean and fun exercise.

Ice-Breaker 2: Everyone gets a little nervous when the school year starts. Summer is a time for freedom and with school beginning, the student must focus again. This ice-breaker is designed to get the students think about things that make them happy about school.

What makes us happy about school? Have the students list 14 things that make them happy about school. After the lists are completed, have each student read five of their happy thoughts to the class.

Ice-Breaker 3: Being a successful teacher is one of the most rewarding yet difficult professions a person can choose. A key element to creating a successful environment is to make sure that students know what is expected of them. This ice-breaker is designed to let the students think about what makes the teacher happy in the classroom.

What makes the teacher happy? Have the students list 14 things that would make teachers happy. After the lists are completed, have each student read five of their happy thoughts to the class.

Ice-Breaker 4: This will help the student get to know the person that sits next to them. Getting off on the right foot with neighboring students is important to classroom management.

By working in a group of two or more to create a list of things to be happy about, the students learn to work together and get to know each other. Have the clusters of students list 14 things that make them happy. The list does not have to be divided exactly equally between or among them ñ and they do not necessarily have to agree that they all/both like the items. After the lists are completed, have each of the groups read five of their happy thoughts to the class.

A lesson plan can be fun and effective at the same time. Here are some lesson plans that will help you create a positive environment while teaching important skills.

Lesson Plan 1: Written Composition (pre-writing skills, writing skills, or organizational skills).

Goal: Each student will put together a book of happy thoughts.

Objective: Given his/her Happy Notebook and a pencil, the student will write in his/her notebook for 10 minutes and come up with at least 10 happy entries.

Materials: Happy Notebook, pencil

1. The teacher will tell the students to take out their Happy Notebooks. The teacher will tell the students they have 10 minutes to write entries into their notebooks and to come up with at least 10 happy thoughts.

2. The teacher will also write in their own Happy Notebook.
3. After 10 minutes, the teacher will ask the students to share some of their happy entries. The teacher will share some of his/her happy entries, too.

Adaptations: This project can last as long as the teacher wants. It can be used around holidays, once a week or month, or last the entire year. This project can also be based on a theme. For example: sports, pets, towns. This project can be completed in a notebook or on a computer.

Evaluation: I believe that it is important for the teacher to periodically review the students' Happy Notebooks. This offers the teacher tremendous insight into how their students think. It also gives the teacher tools for positive reinforcement. For example, if a student's Happy Notebook mentions horses frequently, you have a way to effectively use horses to better communicate with the student.

Lesson Plan 2: Poster with written composition (pre-writing skills, writing skills, organizational skills, design skills).

Goal: Each student or group of students will design a poster with a happy theme.

Objective: Given a poster board, paints, markers, crayons, scissors, etc., the student or group of students will design a poster with a happy theme.

Materials: Poster board, paints, markers, crayons, scissors, etc.

1. The teacher will pass out materials to students. The teacher will explain the theme of the Happy Poster to be completed. The teacher will tell the students to design a Happy Poster.
2. The teacher will display the completed posters in the room.

Adaptation: This project can be based on happy thoughts or around a theme. Theme examples could be holidays, season, interests, school subjects, or the school.

AP CENTRAL TEACHERS' RESOURCES RECOMMENDS *14,000 THINGS TO BE HAPPY ABOUT*

Resource Details

We hope you find the information and review of the resource you selected useful. Choose the **Back** button to see the details of another resource or to initiate a new search.

Title: *14,000 Things to Be Happy About*

Author: Barbara Ann Kipfer

Course:	Studio Art: Drawing Portfolio, Studio Art: 2-D Design Portfolio, Studio Art: 3-D Design Portfolio
Abstract/Summary:	<p>This book can help AP art students, teachers, artists, and artist-teachers with discovering and generating ideas for their artworks. The author, Barbara Ann Kipfer, suggests that readers interact with the "words and the images they create [and this] can be a great source of pleasure and inspiration." I have used this book with my AP art students and with AP teachers attending my workshops and institutes.</p> <p>As we know, AP art students will create many two- and three-dimensional designs, compositions, illustrations, drawings, paintings, prints, sculptures, fiber artworks, jewelry/metal forms, works in clay, and photographs. One of the hardest parts of teaching is helping others unlock and come up with unique, thoughtful, and contemplative ideas for artworks. In this book, AP students and teachers will find a treasury of word pictures, each suggesting an idea for two- and three-dimensional images.</p> <p>Reading, observing, and reflecting on Kipfer's list of remembrances can stimulate and jump start student art creations. Many AP teachers provide lists of reading references for their students, as the word pictures in works by prose writers and poets can be interpreted through the AP Studio Art student's mind and hands.</p> <p>Once I discovered Kipfer's book, I began filling my own art notebooks and journals with "all the little things that make me happy." These are added to my computer, along with a list of all the little things that make me unhappy and another list for perceptual awareness, including the sounds I hear and the smells, tastes, and sights I experience. I reread my lists as I create my personal two- and three-dimensional artworks. One of my goals is to create a form that is original, has profound content, and is emotionally expressive and technically proficient.</p> <p>For 20 years, beginning when Kipfer was in the sixth grade, she recorded "all the little things that ... [made her] happy." She often flips through her book and feels better, while at other times she uses the book to "get ideas ... [to] reminisce, wish and dream." She recommends we look at her list (as I look at my lists) to help us discover, as she did, "that happiness comes from noticing and enjoying the little things in life."</p> <p>I have found that AP students and teachers can bring themselves happiness by noticing and enjoying the little things in life, while at the same time they discover ideas for their own profound, personal artworks. Once these ideas are uncovered, they can develop them into artworks for their own portfolios.</p>
Publication Data:	Workman Publishing, 1990 ISBN 0894803700
Type:	Book
Cost:	\$7.95

Vendor Name:	Available in bookstores
AP Specific:	No
Link to More Info:	http://www.workman.com/catalog/pagemaker.cgi?0894803700
Resource Includes:	Student Activities, Lesson Plans, Experiments, Homework Activities, Reference Material, Teaching Tips, Explorations, Project Ideas, Problem Sets, Discussion Questions
Reviewer Name:	Linda Kennedy
Review Last Modified:	09/07/2004

<http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/Pageflows/TeachersResource/viewResourceDetail.do?source=tr&resourceId=8259>