

The Emotional Alchemy: Grief & Gratitude

(Year 9 - Ages 14-15)

Lesson 7 of 9

Lesson Overview

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| Lesson Title: | The Emotional Alchemy: Grief & Gratitude |
| Year Level: | Year 9 (Ages 14-15) |
| Lesson Duration: | 60 minutes |
| Key Focus Areas: | Empathy, Grief, Writing Skills, Anonymity, Ethics. |
| Curriculum Links: | <p>Australian Curriculum – Health and Physical Education (Foundation)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>AC9HP10P06</u>: ...Evaluate the impact of emotional responses on relationships... and demonstrate respect and empathy. (Focus on complex grief/pride)• <u>AC9E9LY06</u>: Create... texts, experimenting with text structures and language features... to express complex ideas. (Writing sensitive correspondence)• <u>AC9HS9K04</u>: The freedoms and responsibilities of citizens... (Contribution to community through legacy) |

Learning Intentions

- Investigate the "Dual Emotion" experienced by donor families (Grief + Pride).
- Analyze the role of Legacy in the grieving process (how saving lives provides comfort).
- Examine the strict ethical rules of Anonymity in donor/recipient communication.
- Compose a respectful, empathetic letter of gratitude from the perspective of a recipient.

Success Criteria

- Explain why donor families often describe donation as "the only light in the darkness."
- Identify why anonymity is crucial for protecting both families from emotional harm.
- Differentiate between "Pity" (feeling bad for them) and "Empathy" (understanding their pride).
- Draft a letter that expresses gratitude without crossing personal boundaries.



Teaching Sequence

Work through this lesson in the following sequence:

| Duration | Part | Focus |
|------------|--------------------------|---|
| 10 minutes | Part A: The Anchor Hook | Video/Image: The Storm and the Anchor. Introduction. |
| 15 minutes | Part B: The Archive | Reading real letters (Teacher Content) & Empathy Mapping. |
| 25 minutes | Part C: The Scribe's Lab | Writing the Letter (Main Activity). |
| 10 minutes | Part D: The Connection | Reflection on the power of words. |

Part A: The Anchor Hook (10 minutes)

Step 1. The Metaphor

- Visual: Show an image of a boat in a storm.
- Say: "Grief is a storm. It tries to wash you away. What holds the boat?" (The Anchor).
- Link: "For a Donor Family, knowing their loved one is a Hero is the Anchor. Today, we help strengthen that anchor."

Step 2. The Video

- Play: A short clip of a "Walk of Honour" or a respectful news story about a donor family meeting a recipient (years later).

Part B: The Archive (15 minutes)

Step 1. Analysis (Worksheet Part 1)

- Read: Read the "Excerpt A" and "Excerpt B" from the Teacher Content.
- Discuss: "How can the Mum be sad and happy at the same time?" (Dual Emotion).
- Task: Students complete the Empathy Map.

Step 2. The Rules (Worksheet Part 2)

- Explain: "You cannot put your name. You cannot put your address. Why?" (Safety, privacy, no pressure).

Part C: The Scribe's Lab (25 minutes)

Step 1. The Scenario

- Set the Scene: "You are 14. You have new lungs. You just played basketball for the first time in 2 years. You are alive because a stranger said 'Yes'."



Step 2. Writing

- Task: Students draft their letter in Part 3.
- Guide: "Don't just say 'Thanks for the lungs.' Say 'Thanks for the basketball game.' Focus on the Life Lived."
- Circulate: Check for tone. Ensure it is respectful, not boastful.

Part D: The Connection (10 minutes)

Step 1. Sharing

- Volunteers: Ask 2-3 students to read just the middle paragraph (The "Because of you..." section).

Step 2. Conclusion

- Say: "You have just practiced 'Emotional Alchemy.' You took a tragedy and used words to turn it into comfort."

Differentiated Learning

- Extension:
 - Students write a response letter from the perspective of the Donor Family. "Dear Recipient, hearing from you made us feel..."
- Learning Support:
 - Provide a "Word Bank" of emotive words (Gratitude, Courage, Honour, Peace, Future) to help students articulate their feelings.

Teacher Reflection

- Did the students treat the "Letter Writing" with the necessary seriousness?
- Was the concept of "Anonymity" clearly understood as a safety measure?
- Did the lesson foster a deeper respect for the donor family's sacrifice?

Assessment

- Worksheet (Part 1): Check understanding of complex emotions (not just "Sad/Happy").
- Worksheet (Part 3): Assess literacy—does the letter use appropriate register and tone for a sensitive subject?

Additional Notes:

This is a quiet, intense lesson. It allows introverted students to shine through writing. It validates that "English Skills" (writing letters) are actually "Life Skills" (connecting humans). Be prepared for some students to be moved; have a quiet corner or "time out" option if needed.

