

# THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION

## SECONDARY LEVEL

---

**MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOAL #2:** Achieve universal education

**Activity Snapshot:**

Students will understand the importance of basic education in their lives by considering the impact of their education on daily activities. Through research, they will apply this understanding to the ability of people in the developing world to meet their basic needs in the areas of health, hunger and income generation.

Note: “Basic needs” are those required for survival, including access to sufficient nutritious food, clean water and sanitation as well as shelter, clothing and access to adequate health care.

**Rationale:**

Around the world, approximately 120 million young children are not in primary school.<sup>iv</sup> These children never get the chance to learn the basic skills that children in North America take for granted. They cannot read, write or do simple arithmetic—basic skills that allow people to lift themselves out of the cycle of poverty. Universal education ensures that all children are equipped with these basic skills, giving them a fighting chance at improving their own lives and the lives of their children.

**Objective:**

- Students will draw empathetic links between their own privileged experience of education and the experience of their peers around the world who do not benefit from education.

**Time:** 60 Minutes

**Materials:** Chart paper or blackboard

**Steps:**

1. Ask students to identify each instance during a normal day when they either read or use math. Introduce the activity by explaining the difference between an “active” or “deliberate” act of reading or math (e.g., reading a book, writing a math test) and an “Unconscious” act of reading or math (e.g., instant messaging on the computer, sending e-mail, calculating the price of an item after tax). Ask each student to create a list that is inclusive of school and at-home activities.
2. In a large, group discussion, ask students to share their answers. Record answers on the board or chart paper.
3. Now ask students to identify broader activities that they wouldn’t be able to do as well or necessities that they wouldn’t be able to meet as easily if they couldn’t read or do simple math (e.g., managing finances, signing contracts, etc.). Make a separate list on the board.
4. Split the class into smaller groups of four to five students.
5. Each group will create two short day-in-the-life narratives based on a broader activity that they select from the list. They will create one story for an adult living in their community and one for an adult living in a rural village in the developing region they are studying. For example, if their topic is managing finances, they could create two stories that address the difference in financial literacy

between someone who has received a basic education and someone who has not. They will ask themselves, “How do levels of financial literacy affect daily life” and use the two diverse stories to answer the question.

6. Explain to students that the day-in-the-life narrative should focus on the specific issue they have selected. It can follow the subject through an entire day or just through one particular activity.
7. If time and resources allow, you may require students to support their narratives with two to four facts from online research or with anecdotes from the Stories About Education section of this binder.

**Closure:**

Students will present their narratives to the class. They may do so by reading their stories or by acting them out in a skit.

**Assessment Suggestions:**

- Student understanding of the cycle of education
- Student participation during discussions
- Presentation of narratives/skits