



THE SCIENCE OF CHARACTER

DISCUSSION GUIDE AGES 10-14

If you haven't watched the 8 minute film *The Science of Character*, you can [watch it here](#). Then dive in:

*Please feel free to tailor the language as appropriate for each age group.

1. Take a look at the periodic table of character strengths at the end of this document. What are your four strongest character strengths?
2. How can you use them to improve your life? How can you use them to improve your community?
3. Now look back at the table of character strengths. What are three character strengths you'd like to develop?
4. Pick one of the strengths you want to develop. What's something you could do right now to bring more of that strength into your life?
5. The movie describes character strengths as being like super powers. Pick your favorite superhero. Why is this hero your favorite? What character strength do they represent?
6. Now think about real people. Who do you admire most in the world? And what are the character strengths you admire in them?
7. Different cultures value different character strengths. What are the most valued character strengths in your culture?

8. What character strengths are valued most at your school? Are these the same as the character strengths most valued in your home, or are they different?
9. The film describes a fixed mindset (when you think you can't change who you are) and a growth mindset (when you believe you can change and improve things about yourself). Is there an area in your life that you have a fixed mindset about, like "I'm no good at sports," or "I just can't do math"? Can you think of a way you can use your character strengths to improve in that area?
10. If our character strengths and abilities aren't fixed, that means anything is possible. Think really, really big: If you could achieve *anything*, what would you do?
11. Think about a time when you failed. What happened? How did you feel about it at the time, and how do you feel about it now?
12. As the film mentions, failing can be a good thing—we learn by failing. Think of an activity you might fail at the first time but want to try anyway: snowboarding, skateboarding, singing, a dance class. What would it be? What could you learn by failing?
13. The film ends asking by you to complete this sentence: I want to be _____ . What do you want to be? What character strengths will help you achieve that, and how will you use them?

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FOLLOW UP DISCUSSION GUIDE AGES 10-14: CHECK-IN

A little while ago, you watched *The Science of Character*. Let's check back in and see what's changed for you since then.

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1. *The Science of Character* talks about paying attention to the things in your life that are going well. What's gone well for you recently
2. Now let's talk about things going wrong. The film shows that failure isn't always a bad thing; with a growth mindset, it can help us learn and improve. Think of something that didn't go how you hoped it would in the past few months. Can you think of a way it might lead to a success?
3. We get even stronger when we help others strengthen their character too. In the past month, have you done anything to help others be strengthen their character? What was it?
4. Take a look at the "Periodic Table of Character Strengths" below. In the past month, has your own personal periodic table of character strengths changed? Have any character strengths gotten stronger or weaker?
5. Pick a character strength from the Periodic Table that you want to work on. What can you do in the next month to make it stronger?

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FOLLOW UP DISCUSSION GUIDE AGES 10-14: CHECK-OUT

Time for a wrap-up. These questions will help you think about how your own character has developed this year.

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1. What did you do in the past year that you're most proud of?
2. What character strengths did you use to accomplish this?
3. What's your biggest goal for next year?
4. What character strengths will help you achieve it?