

Lesson Plan: Designing Your Life's Compass

Materials Needed:

- A large piece of paper or poster board
- Markers, colored pencils, or paint
- Old magazines for collage, scissors, and glue (optional)
- A journal or notebook and a pen
- Access to the internet for a short video and optional research

1. Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- Articulate a set of personal core values that are important to you.
- Create a visual "Life Compass" that represents your passions, strengths, and future aspirations.
- Apply a simple framework to make a thoughtful decision about a real-life scenario.
- Synthesize wisdom from another person's life experiences through a structured interview.

2. The Lesson Procedure (A Journey in Four Parts)

Part 1: Finding Your True North (60 minutes)

Just like a compass needle always points north, your "True North" is your set of core values. These are the principles that guide you, even when things are difficult. They are your internal sense of what is right and important.

1. **The Hook (10 min):** Start by watching the "This is Water" speech by David Foster Wallace (you can find a 9-minute animated version easily on YouTube). After watching, spend a few minutes journaling on this question: *What does it mean to live a conscious, intentional life instead of just going through the motions?*
2. **Values Brainstorm (20 min):** In your journal, create two columns. In the first column, list at least 10 things you genuinely enjoy doing (e.g., "playing guitar," "talking with my best friend," "solving a hard math problem," "going for a walk in the woods"). In the second column, next to each activity, write down the *feeling* or *value* that activity gives you (e.g., "creativity," "connection," "achievement," "peace").
3. **Define Your Core (30 min):** Look at your list of values from the previous step. Circle the 5-7 that feel the most important, the most "you." Now, for each of your circled values, write a single sentence in your journal that defines what it means to you. For example: "**Creativity:** For me, this means making something new that wasn't there before, whether it's a song, a story, or a new solution to a problem." These are the first coordinates for your compass.

Part 2: Mapping Your World (90 minutes)

Now you will create the actual compass—a visual map of your inner world that combines your values with your passions and goals. This is a creative, personal project. There is no right or wrong way to do it.

1. **Gather Your Materials:** Take out your large poster board and art supplies.
2. **Design Your Compass Rose:** In the center of your poster, draw a compass rose. Instead of N, S, E, W, label the four main points with four of your most important core values from Part 1.
3. **Fill in the Map:** Using drawing, collage, words, or a mix of all three, fill in the space around

your compass rose. This is your chance to be creative! Your map should visually represent the answers to these questions:

- **What are your greatest strengths?** (Are you a great listener? A creative problem-solver? Resilient?)
- **What topics make you curious?** (Space exploration? Ancient history? Psychology? How to build things?)
- **What problems in the world do you wish you could help solve?** (Environmental issues? Loneliness? Misinformation?)
- **What does a happy and successful "day in the life" look like for you in 10 years?** (Don't focus on a job title, but on the *activities* and *feelings* of that day).

Part 3: Navigating Difficult Terrain (45 minutes)

A compass is most useful when you're lost. This exercise is about using your values to navigate a tough choice.

1. **The Scenario:** Consider this common teenage dilemma: *"My close friends have started to engage in a new activity (like excessive partying, or gossiping maliciously, or being exclusive and mean to others) that makes me uncomfortable and goes against my values. I feel pressured to join in to avoid being left out."*
2. **The Framework:** In your journal, create a table with four columns titled:
 - **Option 1: Go along with friends**
 - **Option 2: Don't participate and say why**
 - **Option 3: Find a different solution (e.g., suggest other activities, distance myself slowly)**
 - **Option 4: [Your own creative option]**
3. **Analysis:** For each option, write down the potential short-term consequences (How will I feel tomorrow?) and long-term consequences (How will this affect my friendships and my self-respect in a year?).
4. **Consult Your Compass:** Now, look at your Life Compass from Part 2. Which option best aligns with your "True North" values? Write a final paragraph explaining which path you would choose and why, specifically referencing one or two of your core values.

Part 4: Consulting a Guide (60 minutes + Interview Time)

Even the best explorers consult guides who have traveled the path before them. Your task is to learn from the experience of a trusted adult.

1. **Choose Your Guide:** Identify a trusted adult you admire (a relative, family friend, former teacher, mentor). Ask them if they would be willing to chat with you for 20-30 minutes about their life path.
2. **Prepare Your Questions:** Prepare at least five questions. Avoid "yes/no" questions. Here are some ideas:
 - Can you tell me about a time you had to make a major life decision where the "right" path wasn't clear? How did you decide?
 - Looking back, what's a value that has become more important to you over time?
 - What's a piece of advice you would give your 16-year-old self?
 - How did you figure out what you were passionate about? Did it change over time?
3. **Conduct the Interview & Reflect:** Have the conversation! Listen more than you talk. Afterwards, spend 15 minutes writing in your journal. What was the most surprising or useful thing you learned? How does their experience relate to your own Life Compass?

3. Assessment & Reflection (30 minutes)

This isn't about a grade, but about reflecting on what you've created and learned. Review your completed Life Compass, your journal entries, and your interview notes. Then, have a conversation

(with a parent, tutor, or just reflect on your own) about the following questions:

- What was the most challenging part of this lesson for you? What was the most rewarding?
- Looking at your Life Compass, what is one small action you could take *this week* that aligns with one of your core values or goals?
- How might you use this "compass" in the future when you face a new opportunity or a difficult choice?

4. Extension Activities (Optional)

- **Create a "Values in Action" Jar:** Write down each of your core values on a slip of paper and put them in a jar. Once a week, pull one out and make it your mission to intentionally live out that value for the day.
- **Read a Biography:** Choose a biography of someone you find interesting. As you read, pay attention to the major decisions they made and what values seemed to guide them.
- **Start a Passion Project:** Choose one of the "curiosities" from your Life Compass and turn it into a small, 1-month project. If you're curious about coding, take a free online course. If you care about the environment, organize a small cleanup in your neighborhood.