
Navigating the Human Condition in the 21st Century | Lesson 3a | Overview

1 Key:



Aggression is a distress response.

Learning Outcomes:

- Students categorize three different types of aggression: warning, hostile (physical/social), and passive.
- Students identify aggression as a distress response.
- Students identify forms of physical aggression, social aggression, and passive aggression.

Materials:

- Each student will need a small lined journal – their “Ship’s Log” – preferably one with a cover they can decorate; there are inexpensive small journals with kraft paper covers available online.
- 1 copy per student of Codex Fragment with Key 6 plus definitions on reverse.
- *All lessons come with PowerPoint slides and require a way to share these with students. **Note:** the slides in this entire series of lessons often come with additional guidance in the notes section at the bottom of each slide, readable and editable in development mode and readable in presentation mode.*

Time:

- One 50-90 minute period depending on use supplemental activities.
- *Supplemental activities are provided at the end of the lesson.*

1. *Distribute Codex Fragment.*
2. **Show** Slide 1: Title slide
3. **Show** Slide 2: Key Map
4. “Last time we uncovered two new keys.”
5. **Show** Slides 3-5: How and why to keep a Ship’s Log.
 - a. These slides have animation. Click to advance text.
6. **Show** Slides 6-7: Review
 - a. “So far on the Island of Aggression, we’ve seen the most common form of aggression in nature, which involves making noise, appearing larger, and other threats.”
 - b. “What was that form of aggression called?” (Answer: Warning Aggression)
 - c. “What is that form of aggression trying to avoid?” (Answers: Violence, Injury, Death)
7. **Show** Slide 8: Codex Fragment and Warning Aggression Definition
 - a. “We are going to learn about two more kinds of aggression, and we are going to start thinking of aggression as heat emerging from a fire. On your codex fragment you have a diagram. The bottom part of the diagram represents fire, and the top part shows three heat plumes rising from the fire. Those three heat plumes represent three forms of aggression.”
 - b. “Take a moment to write ‘warning aggression’ on the first heat plume.”
Allow students time to write.
 - c. *This slide has animation. Click to reveal warning aggression definition.*
 - d. “Warning aggression intends to threaten in order to avoid violence.”
 - e. “Now turn the codex fragment over and write the definition of warning aggression.” *Allow students time to write.*
8. “Now we are going to identify two more kinds of aggression symbolized by the other two heat plumes.”
9. **Show** Slide 9: Hostile Aggression
 - a. *This slide has animation. Click to advance text.*
 - b. **Definition:** “Hostile aggression intends to harm.”
 - i. *Have students write hostile aggression on the next heat plume, and write the definition in the space provided on the back of the codex fragment.*
 - ii. **Question** for students: “What are some examples of hostile aggression?” *Allow time for responses.*
Note to Teacher: Students will probably come up with examples of both physical and social aggression, which can transition to the introduction of the two categories.

- c. **“Hostile aggression can be divided into two categories.”**
 - d. *Click to show **physical aggression**, the first category of hostile aggression.*
 - i. “Physical aggression is what we usually think of when we imagine hostile aggression. Physical aggression intends to harm through physical force.”
 - ii. *Click to advance text.*
 - iii. “Physical aggression can be directed in three ways: at others, at objects, or at ourselves. Write this category of hostile aggression and its description on one side of the hostile aggression heat plume. Write the three ways it can be directed somewhere on your paper that will be easy to read.” *Allow students time to write.*
 - iv. “There is another category of hostile aggression we want to examine. This form of hostile aggression intends to harm, but does not use physical force.”
 - e. *Click to show **social aggression**, the second category of hostile aggression, and its description. Have students write this form of hostile aggression and its description on the other side of the hostile aggression heat plume.”*
 - i. “Social aggression is a form of hostile aggression because it intends to harm. It does not harm through physical force, yet it can still cause intense pain.”
 - ii. **Question for Students:** “What are some examples of social aggression? Mark some examples somewhere on your paper that will be easy to read, and make sure to include at least two ways in which digital media can be used to express social aggression.”
 - iii. *Allow 2-3 minutes for sharing responses.*
 - f. **Reflection** Question: *Students can discuss the following in pairs, and can share after 2 minutes or so of discussion.*
 - i. “Do you think social aggression can hurt as much or maybe even more than physical aggression? Think of one example.” *Allow time for one or two examples to be shared.*
 - ii. “How can social aggression be used to incite someone to act out with physical aggression?” *Allow time for responses.*
10. “Now we are going to talk about the third heat plume, the third form of aggression.”

11. **Show** Slide 10: Superman Cartoon

- a. "The third form of aggression is shown in this cartoon."
 - i. "What is happening in this cartoon?" *Allow for responses.*
 1. "Superman's wife is sewing the word 'stupid' onto his outfit."
 - ii. *Click to advance text.* "Superman's wife is expressing something. What is she expressing?" *Allow for responses.*
 - iii. "What is her intent? What kind of aggression is this?" *Allow for responses.*

12. **Show** Slide 11: Passive Aggression

- a. "Passive aggression expresses contempt indirectly."
 - i. *Have students write passive aggression on the last remaining heat plume, and write the definition in the space provided on the back of the codex fragment.*
 - ii. **Note to Teacher:** If a student asks "What does contempt mean," a simple response is to say that contempt can be described as dislike, disrespect, or scorn.

13. **Show** Slide 12: Boy and Girl

- a. "Do you think the girl in this cartoon is feeling good or bad?"
- b. "Do you think she's fine with the situation?"
- c. "How can you tell that she's not fine with the situation?" *Have students think about both her verbal and non-verbal expression.*
- d. "How does this cartoon show passive, or indirect contempt?"

14. **Show** Slide 13: Other Examples of Passive Aggression.

- a. "What are other examples of passive aggression?"
 - i. *Possible responses: rolling eyes, silent treatment, gossiping behind someone's back, backhanded compliments, heavy sighing, sarcasm.*
 - ii. *Students can write some of these examples on their codex fragment near the definition of passive aggression. They can work in table groups or pairs to brainstorm ideas.*
- b. *This slide has animation. After students come up with examples of passive aggression, click to show cartoon.*

15. **Show** Slides 14-15: Aggression as a Small Toolbox

- a. *This slide has animation. Click through to show text.*
- b. "Aggression is not always bad."
- c. "Think of aggression as a small toolbox."
- d. "There might be times when people have to use warning aggression to protect themselves as a last resort."
- e. *Click to show video.*

- f. *To reinforce the concept of warning aggression, you can ask students if they think the people in the video wanted to get into a fight with that bear.*
16. **Show** Slide 16: Aggression as Chainsaw
- a. *This slide has animation. Click through to show text and picture.*
 - b. *Some reasons that the small toolbox of aggression is used so much in our society can include trauma, learning aggressive habits from adults, glamorization of aggression in the media (which can make aggression seem cool and much more effective than it really is), people not being taught alternatives to aggression (which is a much larger toolbox than aggression), aggression seeming like an easier and more convenient option, etc.*
17. **Show** Slide 17: Passive Aggressive Baby
- a. *This slide has animation. Click through to show text.*
 - b. *“Passive aggression is the **least useful tool in the aggression toolbox** because it almost never communicates what the issue really is.”*
 - c. *“Passive aggression is often used when there is a **power imbalance** or people feel **helpless** or **powerless** in some way.”*
18. *“Now let’s find out what’s causing aggression.”*
19. **Show** Slide 18: Fire *This slide has animation. Click through to see text.*
- a. *“Think of aggression as being like the heat emitted from a fire. Think of the fire as pain and distress.”*
 - b. *People don’t become aggressive because they feel good.”*
 - c. *“What kinds of metaphorical fires, what kinds of pain and distress, can cause the heat of human aggression?”*
 - d. *“Let’s start by naming some painful emotions that can cause the heat of human aggression.”*
 - e. *Students can work in pairs to brainstorm their responses, and record them on the codex fragment in the space marked “fires.” Allow time to share responses.*
 - f. *After students make a list of fires, ask them to select what they think are the top three fires that affect people their age.*
20. **Show** Slide 19: Physical Distress
- a. *“Can the heat of aggression also be caused by *physical* pain, distress, or discomfort?”*
 - b. *This slide has animation. Click to see the image.*
 - c. *“Notice how being ‘hangry’ is an example of how hunger can increase the need for expression, where expression here takes the form of anger/aggression.”*

Note to Teacher: You can ask the students if they have heard the word “slangry.” In addition to “hangry,” there is another word “slangry,” which means sleepiness as a source of distress and discomfort that is causing anger/aggression.

21. Show Slide 20: Reflection Question

- a. “Do you think it’s possible for someone to be aggressive today because of something that happened to them a long time ago?”
- b. *This slide has animation. Click to advance text.*
- c. “Can someone be aggressive at age 35 because of something that happened to them at age 5?”
- d. “Turn and talk to a partner, and each think of an example. Be ready to share with the class.”
 - i. *Students can share out loud with the class.*
- e. *Click to see the comic.*
- f. *After showing the comic, you can ask students what each mask represents. What is represented as being beneath the masks?*

22. Show Slide 21: Key #6

- a. *Have students write the key onto their codex fragment.*
- b. “This key unlocks a deeper way of understanding aggression. Aggression is a distress response. Aggression is an expression of distress.”

23. Show Slide 22: **Activity #1** Passive Aggression Roleplaying Scenario

- a. “Roleplay a scenario in which a leader only knows how to use passive aggression to communicate.”
- b. “Here is a sample scenario you can use.”
 - i. A crew is traveling on a spaceship in deep space. There has been a mechanical failure and life support systems are rapidly going offline. You estimate that you have enough oxygen left to last two days and can make it to a nearby planet, but the planet is unknown, and though it shows signs of oxygen, experts onboard do not know if it will be safe to land.
 1. Roles:
 - a. The captain, who only uses passive aggression to communicate (When you act this out, think of the distress the leader might be feeling that is causing them to respond this way.)
 - b. The first mate, who tries to translate
 - c. Panicking crew member, who keeps imagining the worst-case scenario.
 - d. Engineer, who can tell you about the condition of the ship

- e. The planetary scientist, who can give limited information about the planet
 - f. Any other crew you would like to add
- c. *Discuss the scenario and assign roles*
 - d. *Take time after the roleplay to discuss the experience.*
 - e. “Does passive aggression express competence? Does passive aggression express confidence? Why or why not? What does passive aggression express?” *Allow for discussion.*
24. **Show** Slide 23: **Activity #2** Digital Technology and Social Aggression
- a. “Digital technology has opened up a new world of almost unlimited potential for expression.” *This slide has animation. Click to reveal text.* “Expression is a major reason why digital technology is so appealing to so many people.”
 - i. Prompts:
 1. “How can people use social media or video games to express social aggression?”
 2. “How can people use social media or video games to express passive aggression?”
 3. “In what ways can social media or video games make it easier to express aggression?”
 4. “What are some reasons people use social media or video games to express aggression?”
 5. “How can social media or video games be used for healthy forms of expression?”
 - ii. Have students pair up to discuss the prompts and write their responses on chart paper.
 - iii. Once the writing is finished, give each student a set of post-it notes, and allow them to do a gallery walk to view all of the other groups’ responses. Direct them to stop where they see something that they feel they can **build on** (yes, and...) or **add to** (more examples).
 - iv. Regroup for discussion.
25. **Show** Slide 24: Key Map

Supplemental Slides:

- **Slide 23:** 3-min. video – The Key and Peele sketch about schoolyard bullying illustrates how aggression is a distress response (use at teacher discretion; contains some profanity though it is censored).
- **Slide 24:** Optional – The “Three Little Pigs” cartoon illustrates how warning aggression and physical aggression can overlap.
- **Slide 25:** A list of fires from a 7th grade class

Supplemental Reflection Question #2: (Refer back to handout from Lesson 2)

- Think back to the quote from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
 - a. Riots can include hostile aggression directed at objects (property, shared spaces, etc.) and sometimes people.
 - b. What fires can underlie riots?