



# IGNITE MY FUTURE

## LESSON TITLE

## If You're Happy and You Know It

*Guiding Question: What does happiness mean?*

### SUBJECTS

English/Language Arts

Social Studies

### COMPUTATIONAL THINKING PRACTICE

Fostering an Inclusive  
Computing Culture

### COMPUTATIONAL THINKING STRATEGIES

Abstract

Decompose

### MATERIALS

Computers with internet access  
(optional)

Copies of the World Happiness  
Report (printed or online)

Paper and pencils

Sticky Notes

Large chart paper or whiteboard

[Consider This](#)

Student Capture Sheet

## Ignite Curiosity

- Does where we live impact how happy we are?
- Are the things that make people happy the same in every culture?
- Can you measure happiness? Are some cultures happier than others?
- Does happiness have a cost?

In this lesson, students will analyze data from different countries around the world in order to determine if there are common keys to happiness. In **THINK**, students will review data from the World Happiness Report. They will find patterns and commonalities between cultures that have high scores in the report and contrast them with countries that had low scores. In **SOLVE**, students will use the computational thinking strategies of abstraction and decomposition to identify common components of happiness across the top-ranking cultures. In **CREATE** students work in groups to develop a three-page Happiness Impact Report in the style of the World Happiness Report. Their reports will demonstrate what the happiest countries in the world have in common. They will also provide recommendations for the world's least happy countries on how they should increase happiness. They will end their report with a call to action which summarizes why spreading happiness is important. In **CONNECT**, students will learn how the concepts of well-being and happiness are key concerns for world leaders and how they can help spread happiness through a variety of careers.

Students will be able to:

- **Analyze** data on happiness and identify patterns,
- **Evaluate** qualitative and quantitative data in order to identify common factors that contribute to happiness across cultures, and
- **Apply** various data collection methods to conducting research on happiness.



Students simulate the role of world leaders who are attending a global development summit. They will review the 2017 World Happiness Report to identify common characteristics of countries that have high scores and low scores.

**1 Read** the following scenario to students:

*Imagine you are the leader of a small country. You are attending a global development summit on the subject of happiness and well-being. Your country is among the happiest in the world, based on the 2017 World Happiness Report. Your fellow leaders have asked you to create a Happiness Impact Report that identifies common elements among the world's happiest countries and gives instructions to other countries on how their citizens can become more happy. Can thinking like computers help make happier citizens? Let's find out!*

**2 Provide** students with sticky notes and pencils or pens. Ask students to write one or two words on one sticky note that describe something that makes them happy.

**3 Ask** one student to share his or her experience of happiness and put their sticky notes on the board. Have each student come up to the board and put up their own sticky notes, grouping those that are similar.

**4 When each student has put their sticky notes on the board,** identify names for each of the groupings.

**5 Summarize** and check for understanding by asking the following critical thinking questions:

- Were the things that made us happy mostly similar or mostly different?
- What do you need in order to achieve happiness? Money? Time? Something else?

**6 Divide** students into groups. Distribute a copy of the [2017 World Happiness Report](#) to each group.

**7 Instruct** groups to identify the following elements of the report and record them on the [Consider This](#) student capture sheet:

- The criteria used in assessing happiness
- How happiness is measured in the report
- The happiest country and the least happy country
- The change in the happiest and least happy countries from the previous year
- Geographical/cultural similarities amongst the most and least happy countries



## Students will review data about happiness among people of different cultures and abstract out common elements.

- 1 Instruct** students to remain in their groups. Each group will study the top five happiest countries in the world (Norway, Denmark, Iceland, Switzerland and Finland), the countries with the biggest change in happiness (Nicaragua, Latvia, Sierra Leone, Ecuador and Moldova) and the countries with the lowest happiness rankings (Rwanda, Syria, Tanzania, Burundi and the Central African Republic).
- 2 Each group should research** the countries using the [CIA World Factbook](#) and identify five common characteristics of the countries in each group.
- 3 When each group has completed their research,** check for understanding by asking the following critical questions:
  - What did you learn by identifying the common elements of happiness and unhappiness?
  - Do you think that you could apply these common elements to any country to make it more happy? Why or why not?
  - What are the benefits of “zooming out” to a global scale to research happiness? Why is it useful to abstract out common elements in the world’s happiest countries?
  - Did you notice that all five of the world’s happiest countries are in northern Europe? Did that surprise you? Why or why not?
  - Did you notice that most of the world’s unhappiest countries are in Africa and the Middle East? What factors do you think make these countries unhappy? If a Scandinavian country wanted to share their advice on how to be happy with a country in Africa, would it work? Why or why not?



- 1 Instruct** students that they will be working in their groups to develop a Happiness Impact Report. This report is meant to show other countries around the globe how they can make their citizens happier. Students must abstract out common elements of happiness among the world's happiest countries while also decomposing the elements of happiness into smaller pieces in order to apply them to different cultures and climates.
- 2 Each group's report should be divided into three sections:**
  - Common characteristics of happy countries
  - Provide recommendations for how a country can increase happiness in its citizens
  - End with a call to action that provides a thorough argument for why it's important that countries care about and measure the happiness of their citizens
- 3 Students may develop** reports in any of the following formats:
  - Google slides
  - PowerPoint
  - Microsoft Word
- 4 The final report** should be a three-page PDF document that can be printed and distributed among student groups.



## Select one of the strategies listed below to help students answer these questions:

- **How do this problem and solution connect to me?**
- **How do this problem and solution connect to real-world careers?**
- **How do this problem and solution connect to our world?**

- 1 Write** the three questions on PPT or flip chart slides and invite students to share out responses.
- 2 Display** chart paper around the room, each with one question written on it. Ask students to write down their ideas on each sheet.
- 3 Assign** one of the questions to three different student groups to brainstorm or research, and then share out responses.
- 4 Invite** students to write down responses to each question on a sticky note, and collect them to create an affinity diagram of ideas.

### How does this connect to students?

Students will gain insight into the feelings of happiness and pursue the research question “Are the building blocks of happiness the same across the world?”

Students will learn that while some characteristics of happiness are universal, others are highly dependant on culture and context. For instance, some cultures welcome the cold weather and it contributes to their happiness. Other cultures don't like cold weather as much and it reduces their happiness.

Students will research the link between mindset and economic growth and develop an argument for why world leaders should care about the happiness of their people.

### How does this connect to careers?

**Anthropologists** use research skills to improve products and services in many fields such as community studies, ecology, cognitive psychology, international development, and police investigations.

**Geographers** consider how humans interact with the natural world, plan for health and well-being needs of communities and understand different perspectives on complex human activity.

**Economists** study how people use resources and make decisions. They must understand historical trends to make predictions about people's needs and future behaviors. The microeconomics of happiness includes the need to save for retirement and budgeting for everyday life.

**Psychologists** research emotional and physical health. They study human behavior in economies, family systems and other social groups.

### How does this connect to our world?

Happiness contributes to motivation. Achieving happiness requires setting goals and working to attain those goals.

As students develop their Happiness Impact Reports, they gain insight into how they can improve their own lives and help others develop skills that improve their lives. As more individuals understand happiness, societies can improve the human condition.

## National Standards

### COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS: ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS

#### Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

##### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7**

Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

##### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8**

Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.

##### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.9**

Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.

#### Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity:

##### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.10**

By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 6-8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

### THE COLLEGE, CAREER AND CIVIC LIFE (C3) FRAMEWORK FOR SOCIAL STUDIES STATE STANDARDS

#### **D4.1.6-8.**

Construct arguments using claims and evidence from multiple sources, while acknowledging the strengths and limitations of the arguments.

#### **D4.2.6-8.**

Construct explanations using reasoning, correct sequence, examples, and details with relevant information and data, while acknowledging the strengths and weaknesses of the explanations.

#### **D4.3.6-8.**

Present adaptations of arguments and explanations on topics of interest to others to reach audiences and venues outside the classroom using print and oral technologies (e.g., posters, essays, letters, debates, speeches, reports, and maps) and digital technologies (e.g., Internet, social media, and digital documentary).

### K-12 COMPUTER SCIENCE FRAMEWORK

#### **Practice 1. Fostering an Inclusive Computing Culture**

Building an inclusive and diverse computing culture requires strategies for incorporating perspectives from people of different genders, ethnicities, and abilities. Incorporating these perspectives involves understanding the personal, ethical, social, economic, and cultural contexts in which people operate. Considering the needs of diverse users during the design process is essential to producing inclusive computational products.

## Consider This

**Directions:** Use information found in the [2017 World Happiness Report](#) to respond to the following questions.

**What criteria does the World Happiness Report use to measure happiness?**

**What countries are the world's happiest? Why?**

**What countries are the world's least happy? Why?**

**How have the happiness measurements for the top and bottom countries on the list changed in the past year? What has impacted this change?**

**What similarities do you notice about the world's happiest countries?  
What differences do you notice?**

**Do you think that someone from the most happy or least happy countries would agree with their ranking? Why or why not?**

**What are the benefits of ranking systems? What are the drawbacks?**