



16: The Power of Networking

7-12

*A 7-12 Lesson on Building Relationships, Creating Opportunities,
and Growing Together*



Introduction for the Facilitator

This lesson introduces students to **networking**, defined as the professional skill of building authentic relationships that lead to growth, opportunities, and collaboration. While the term may sound like a business buzzword, networking is simply *connecting with others in meaningful ways* that support shared goals.

For teens, networking starts with recognizing the people already around them, like friends, classmates, teachers, and mentors, and learning how to communicate in ways that build trust and momentum.

This relationship-building mindset is a core part of their **personal competitive advantage**, helping them discover new ideas, get support, and open doors they couldn't reach alone. Networking supports the **lifestyle** they want to live that is connected, inspired, and filled with purpose-driven relationships.

This lesson includes:

- A Real-World Scenario to show networking in action
- 8 Group Discussion Questions with follow-ups
- 8 Journal Prompts (draw or write)
- 10 engaging Activities to build practical networking skills
- A printable Worksheet to reflect on and grow personal networks



Real-Life Scenario

You're working on a creative project but hit a wall. A classmate you barely know mentions they do video editing. You ask if they'd be open to helping.

They agree. You stay in touch. Later, they tell you about a summer program they're applying to and encourage you to join.

A connection turns into a collaboration. And then into an opportunity.

That's networking. It's not just meeting people. It's building real connections, offering support, and growing through others.



Group Discussion Questions

1. **What does networking mean to you?**
Follow-up: How is it different from just "meeting people"?
2. **Why do some people feel nervous about networking?**
Follow-up: What helps make it feel more natural or genuine?
3. **Who's someone in your life that's helped you grow?**
Follow-up: What made that connection meaningful?
4. **How do you build trust in new relationships?**
Follow-up: What are signs someone might be a good person to connect with?
5. **How can listening and curiosity help us network better?**
Follow-up: What's one great question to ask when meeting someone new?
6. **Why is it important to give as well as receive in networking?**
Follow-up: How can you add value to others, even now?
7. **How does networking grow your personal competitive advantage?**
Follow-up: How can relationships help you reach goals or explore careers?
8. **What kind of lifestyle do you want to live?**
Follow-up: How could networking help you build that life with others?



Journal Prompts

(Students can write or draw their responses depending on learning style or preference.)

1. **Write or draw about a time someone helped you and how that connection started.**
2. **Describe a time you made a new connection that led to something positive.**
3. **List people in your life right now who could be part of your “growth network.”**
4. **What makes a connection feel real, not just social or surface-level?**
5. **Sketch your “Networking Web.” Who’s already in it—and who might you add?**
6. **What’s something you could offer others when networking, like a skill, support, or kind word?**
7. **Describe someone you’d love to learn from. How could you make that connection?**
8. **How can networking help grow your personal competitive advantage?**



Activities

1. **Connection Web Builder**
Students create a personal “connection map” of people they already know—friends, teachers, coaches, family, mentors—and how each supports them.
2. **Networking Bingo**
Create a board with prompts like “Introduce yourself to someone new,” “Ask a thoughtful question,” “Share something you’re working on.” Students complete by connecting with peers.
3. **Elevator Pitch Practice**
Students write and practice a short introduction of who they are, what they care about, and what they’re working toward.
4. **Roleplay: Natural Networking**
Pairs act out realistic networking moments: asking for help, joining a group, or introducing themselves at an event.
5. **Thank You Note Challenge**
Students write a short note or message to someone who’s made a positive impact on their growth.
6. **Ask 3 Questions Game**
In groups, students rotate and practice asking three meaningful, curious questions to learn more about their peers.
7. **Interview a Connector**
Invite a guest speaker or have students interview a teacher or coach who networks often. Ask how they build and maintain relationships.
8. **Virtual Networking Exploration**
Talk about LinkedIn or professional email etiquette (age-appropriate). Practice writing a professional introduction or follow-up.
9. **Networking Role Models Wall**
Post images and stories of people who’ve grown their careers or purpose through relationships, not just grades or talent.
10. **Connection Goal Cards**
Students set one goal this month: reach out to someone, start a conversation, or follow up with a potential mentor. Share progress.



My Networking Growth Plan

Name: _____

Helpful Words:

- **Networking** = building real relationships that lead to growth and opportunity
- **Lifestyle Goal** = the kind of life I want to live
- **Personal Competitive Advantage** = the people, habits, and trust we build through connection

Directions:

Use **writing or drawing** to reflect on your current network and how you'd like it to grow.

Use the back of this sheet if you need more space.

1. One person who inspires or supports me is:

2. Someone I'd like to learn from or connect with is:

3. One small step I can take this week to build a connection is:

4. My Networking Superpower helps me do these things:

5. Here's one question I could ask someone I want to learn from:

6. Networking helps me grow my personal competitive advantage by:

7. This is how networking supports the lifestyle I want to live: