



Lesson Plan

The Invitation We Miss

Created: 01/2025 by the National FFA Organization

Description of Lesson: An undistracted, aware and connected life is important. In her retiring address, 2023-24 National FFA President Amara Jackson shares her story on the invitation we miss because of distractions.

Student Learning Objectives:

After completing these activities, students will ...

- 1. Explore the impact of what it means to be present.
- 2. Understand how distractions affect relationships and personal growth.

Suggested Grade Level:

Grades 9 and 10 (This lesson is written so instructors can scale up and down based on class needs.)

Suggested Time: 60 minutes (*Time requirements may vary based upon student understanding and class schedule.)

Resources/References:

- 1. Video: "The Invitation We Miss" | Amara Jackson 2024 Retiring Address, <https://vimeo.com/1024090361>

Related Resources:

- 1. Retiring Addresses and Keynote Speeches, FFA.org/ffa-video-center/convention-keynotes-and-retiring-addresses/
- 2. FFA Values Lesson Series, <https://FFA.box.com/s/u9qnfyvape9sy3d3xc85hlqxdxqhg3dq>
- 3. Keynote-Retiring Address Lessons, <https://FFA.box.com/v/retiringaddresslessons>

Equipment and Supplies Needed:

- 1. A copy of the "The Invitation We Miss" worksheet for each student
- 2. Internet access to play the video in real time or embed it in a PowerPoint ahead of time

Vocabulary:

- 1. Aware
- 2. Connected
- 3. Distracted
- 4. Invitation

Cross-Curricular Connections:

English/Language Arts
Role play scenarios that build public speaking skills and practice active listening.

SAE and FFA Connections:

- 1. Agricultural Communications and Education SAE Idea Cards, <https://FFA.box.com/s/x7e4v2qzxcwkleuqkun3mt042lm5nejx>

2. Extemporaneous Public Speaking LDE, [FFA.org/participate/ides/extemporaneous-public-speaking/](https://ffa.org/participate/ides/extemporaneous-public-speaking/)
3. Prepared Public Speaking LDE, [FFA.org/participate/prepared-public-speaking/](https://ffa.org/participate/prepared-public-speaking/)

Student Activity Sheets:

Direct access to student activity sheets without lesson plan or answer key for easy upload to a learning management system or printing for classwork.

<https://ffa.box.com/s/w7allvw7noofr2yrg7ea1yi3d136xila> (Word)

<https://ffa.box.com/s/zljgyuszlj5h74iq8rv68pmutpapi7m8> (PDF)

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/18IGKG0hmlqXcyUCA2V7YS8cj8NiIorpxf1EAJroCE0I/copy> (Google)

These Activities Are Aligned to the Following Standards:

FFA Precept

- FFA.PL-A.Action: Assume responsibility and take the necessary steps to achieve the desired results, no matter what the goal or task at hand.
- FFA.PL-D.Character: Conduct oneself appropriately in relation to others regardless of the situation.
- FFA.CS-M.Communication: Effectively interact with others in personal and professional settings.

Common Core – Writing

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Common Core – Speaking and Listening

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.6 Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

AFNR Career Ready Practices

- CRP.04. Communicate clearly, effectively, and with reason. Career-ready individuals communicate thoughts, ideas and action plans with clarity, whether using written, verbal and/or visual methods.

Partnership for 21st Century Skills

- Collaboration
- Communication
- Initiative and Self-direction
- Productivity and Accountability
- Think Creativity

Lesson Plan:

1. **Bell Ringer:** What does it mean to be present?
2. **Introduction:** Give a copy of the “The Invitation We Miss” worksheet to each student. *Today, we are going to watch a retiring address from the 97th National FFA Convention & Expo. This retiring address was given by 2023-24 National FFA President Amara Jackson. In her speech, we will learn about the importance of being aware and connected. As we are watching the video, look over the questions on the worksheet “The Invitation We Miss” and be ready for the answers.*
3. **Activity:** Each student needs a copy of the worksheet “The Invitation We Miss.”
 - a. **Part 1:** Have students watch the retiring address of the 2023-24 National FFA President Amara Jackson. The video is available at <https://vimeo.com/1024090361>. While students watch the video, have them answer the questions.
 - b. **Part 2:** In this activity, students will work in pairs to understand how distractions affect relationships and personal growth. There will be a total of four rounds. One student will act as the “speaker” and the other as the “listener.” During Round 1, the speaker will share a story about a recent experience. The listener pretends to be distracted (e.g., looking at their phone, doodling, fidgeting). In Round 2, the same speaker shares again, but this time the listener gives their full attention, using active listening skills (e.g., eye contact, nodding, asking questions). For Rounds 3 and 4, students will switch roles with their partners. Once completed, students will answer the reflection questions.
4. **Follow-up:** Have a class discussion about how each student felt as a speaker and listener and apply it to how they have made others in their life feel when being distracted during conversations.
5. **Optional – Extended Learning Opportunities (Not factored into time requirement):**
 - a. This should take 15 minutes. Have students make a pledge or commitment to being more engaged in conversations with friends and family
6. **Exit Ticket:** Come up with one specific strategy that you can use to be more present in your daily life.

Name: _____

Aligned to the following standards:

FFA.PL-A; FFA.PL-D; FFA.CS-M; CCSS.ELA.W.9-10.4; CCSS.ELA-SL.9-10.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.6; CRP.04.

The Invitation We Miss

Part 1

Directions:

Answer the following questions while watching the retiring address of the 2023-24 National FFA President Amara Jackson, "The Invitation We Miss." The video is available at <https://vimeo.com/1024090361>.

1. Fill in the blank.

_____ leads to disconnection, but _____ leads to a connected life.

2. What did Amara get asked to do her junior year of high school?

3. How did Amara feel deep down at her grandma's funeral?

4. Distraction played a key role in missing a connection with her grandmother. What is your biggest distraction?

5. Amara states distractions are everywhere. What are some of the distractions she lists?

6. How is your biggest distraction (Question 4) holding you back from connecting with the people around you?

7. Why did Jackie feel like she belonged?

8. How does Amara check for awareness?

9. How can you check for awareness?

Name: _____

Part 2

Directions:

In Amara Jackson's retiring address, she talks about the importance of an undistracted, aware and connected life. In this activity, you will work in pairs to understand how distractions affect relationships and personal growth. Each pair should take turns as the speaker and listener.

1. Round 1: One student will act as the "speaker" and the other as the "listener." During Round 1 the speaker will share a story about a recent experience. The listener pretends to be distracted (e.g., looking at their phone, doodling, fidgeting).
2. Round 2: The same speaker shares again, but this time the listener gives their full attention, using active listening skills (e.g., eye contact, nodding, asking questions).
3. Round 3: Switch roles as the "speaker" and the other as the "listener." Repeat Rounds 1 and 2. Once completed, answer the reflection questions below.
4. Reflection:
 - a. Speaker: How did it feel to be ignored versus listened to?
 - b. Listener: What did you notice about your focus and engagement?
 - c. How do distractions affect your ability to connect with others?
 - d. Why do you think being present is sometimes called a "missed invitation"?
 - e. How can we train ourselves to accept this invitation more often?
 - f. Give a specific example of how you can be more present this week.



Name: _____

KEY: The Invitation We Miss

Part 1

Directions:

Answer the following questions while watching the retiring address of the 2023-24 National FFA President Amara Jackson, "The Invitation We Miss." The video is available at <https://vimeo.com/1024090361>.

1. Fill in the blank.

Distraction leads to disconnection, but awareness leads to a connected life.

2. What did Amara get asked to do her junior year of high school?

Help her grandma clean her house

3. How did Amara feel deep down at her grandma's funeral?

Like she received an invitation to an event but showed up at the wrong address

4. Distraction played a key role in missing a connection with her grandmother. What is your biggest distraction?

Answers will vary.

5. Amara states distractions are everywhere. What are some of the distractions she lists?

Phone buzzing, music playing, people talking and the news keeps being shared; bouncing between computer tabs, replaying mistakes and reliving old wounds, worrying about the future, overanalyzing ourselves

6. How is your biggest distraction (Question 4) holding you back from connecting with the people around you?

Answers will vary.

8. Why did Jackie feel like she belonged?

She was new to the state, and she felt like she found her people. They pay attention to her and they listen.

8. How does Amara check for awareness?

Looking down at her shoes asking where she is right now

9. How can you check for awareness?

Answers will vary.

Name: _____

Part 2

Directions:

In Amara Jackson's retiring address, she talks about the importance of an undistracted, aware and connected life. In this activity, you will work in pairs to understand how distractions affect relationships and personal growth. Each pair should take turns as the speaker and listener.

1. Round 1: One student will act as the "speaker" and the other as the "listener." During Round 1, the speaker will share a story about a recent experience. The listener pretends to be distracted (e.g., looking at their phone, doodling, fidgeting).
2. Round 2: The same speaker shares again, but this time the listener gives their full attention, using active listening skills (e.g., eye contact, nodding, asking questions).
3. Round 3: Switch roles as the speaker and the other as the listener. Repeat Rounds 1 and 2. Once completed, answer the reflection questions below.
4. Reflection:
 - a. Speaker: How did it feel to be ignored versus listened to?

Answers will vary.

- b. Listener: What did you notice about your focus and engagement?

Answers will vary.

- c. How do distractions affect your ability to connect with others?

Answers will vary.

- d. Why do you think being present is sometimes called a "missed invitation"?

Answers will vary.

- e. How can we train ourselves to accept this invitation more often?

Answers will vary.

- f. Give a specific example of how you can be more present this week.

Answers will vary.

