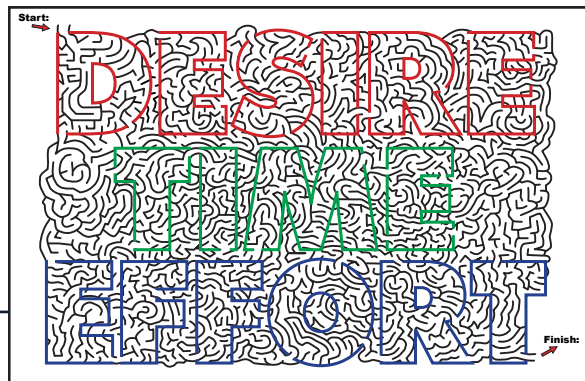


Hard Work & Determination  
(Desire, Time, & Effort) Activity:






## “Focus”



### Introduction:

Students will participate in a guided focus exercise designed to help them experience how effort applies not only to physical tasks, but also to mental focus. This activity helps students recognize that staying focused is a skill that requires time, effort, and practice. By experiencing how difficult it can be to maintain focus—and how quickly it improves with intentional effort—students will better understand how focus impacts their ability to complete challenging tasks and achieve their goals.

### Details:

 <b>Space:</b> Minimal Space	 <b>Activity Type:</b> Reflection	 <b>Grades:</b> K-12	 <b>Group Size:</b> Any	 <b>Time:</b> 10–15 minutes
---	--	---	--	--

### Materials:

- No materials required.

### Activity Instructions:

Explain to students that they will be participating in a short experiment to observe how their brain works when trying to focus.

#### Round 1: Baseline Focus (30 seconds)

Ask students to sit still and choose one thing to focus on. Options may include:

- Their breathing
- A number
- A word

Instruct students:

“Your job is to stay focused on that one thing for 30 seconds. Try not to think about anything else.”

Begin timing for 30 seconds.

## Activity Instructions (Continued):

### Processing (Round 1):

After time is up, ask students:

- What did you choose to focus on?
- How did it go?
- Be honest—did your mind wander at all?
- About how long did it take before your mind drifted?

Allow a few students to share their experiences.

### Mini Teach (Facilitator Explanation):

Explain:

“What you just experienced is normal.”

“At any moment, your brain is taking in a lot—what you’re seeing, hearing, and feeling. All of that information is being processed at the same time, which makes it easy for your mind to get pulled in different directions.”

“That’s why your focus drifts—not because something is wrong, but because your brain isn’t trained yet to stay on one thing.”

“Your ability to focus is a skill. And just like any skill, it takes time, effort, and practice to improve.”

### You may add an example:

*“For example, a Formula One race car driver travels over 200 miles per hour and has to stay completely focused on the track. Their ability to focus is one of the most important skills that helps them succeed.”*

*“You may not be driving a race car, but when you’re in class or working on something difficult, your ability to focus determines how much effort you actually give.”*

## Focus Coaching (Strategies):

Before the second round, teach students simple strategies to improve focus:

- Pick one clear focus (your “anchor”)

- Slow your breathing or counting
- If your mind wanders, calmly bring it back
- Don't get frustrated—the effort is in returning your focus
- Sit up and stay physically still to help your concentration

Emphasize:

“The effort is in bringing your focus back.”

### **Round 2: Trained Focus (45–60 seconds)**

Say:

“Now we're going to try it again, using those strategies.”

“You can choose the same thing to focus on or something different.”

“Your goal is to stay with it the entire time.”

Start a timer for 45–60 seconds.

### **Activity Instructions (Continued):**

As students complete the second round, encourage a quiet and focused environment. Allow a brief pause after the timer ends before transitioning into discussion.

Remind students that improvement—not perfection—is the goal.

---

## **Processing the Experience:**

Use the following questions to guide discussion:

- What felt different the second time compared to the first?
- What helped you stay focused longer?
- When your mind wandered, what did you do?
- Which round took more effort? Why?
- What does this teach you about focus and effort?
- How does this connect to things in your life—like schoolwork, challenges, or the Maze?

---

## Final Thoughts:

Help students connect the experience to the lesson by emphasizing:

Effort is not just about doing something physically—it also includes controlling your attention and staying mentally engaged.

When something feels boring, frustrating, or difficult, the challenge is not just the task itself—it is staying focused on it.

The more students practice focusing, the stronger that skill becomes. Over time, this increases their ability to put in effort, which leads to greater success and accomplishment.

### Remind students:

“When your mind starts to drift and you bring it back—that is effort.”

“That small moment of effort is what helps you finish what you start.”