

# GoodCharacter (almost) Monthly Newsletter

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## Age-Appropriate Responsibility:

### We Get Letters (emails, actually)

Recently, we received a thought-provoking question. An elementary school teacher in Indonesia wrote us asking: "My concern is how to teach responsibility in the classroom for Fifth Grade in elementary school. Maybe you have a solution for helping me?"

That brought to mind an experience I (David) had many years ago as a [volunteer Big Brother](#). My Little Brother and I had been discussing what it meant to be a "grownup," and that gave me an idea. I grabbed my cassette recorder and a microphone and had Little Bro do a series of man-on-the-street interviews, asking people of different ages: "What is a grownup, and how do you know when you are one?" This odd little question turned out to be surprisingly substantive, producing a delightful collection of thoughtful responses. And some profound insights, too.

Insights?

So, here's how it shook out. The big kids, in the age range of, say, 10-15 years, mostly thought of a grownup as someone who has assumed responsibility for his or her own life. No more relying on Mom & Dad for the basics. The older teens and early 20s crowd expanded on that a bit, suggesting that a grownup is someone who takes responsibility for more than just him/herself, but for other people, as well—like family, for example. The older age groups further broadened the tent to include responsibility for their community, for their country, for the planet, and so on—you see where we're headed? What was stunning was that everybody we interviewed defined being a grownup in terms of responsibility.

Now, we're not pretending that this makes for any kind of scientific study, but it does seem to point us in a useful direction. If growing up is what comes from taking responsibility, that would appear to indicate that teaching responsibility is probably a good way to help our kids grow up. What, you're not surprised?

Okay, so maybe that's a no-brainer. But what isn't quite so simple is the bigger question(s) of how and when to teach what kind of responsibility. What is responsibility? What are responsible behaviors? Why bother being responsible in the first place—what's in it for the kid? These are some of the questions we've addressed in this newsletter.

And, by the way, we have quite a few excellent videos for sale on our website that'll help you teach responsibility to your students. Check them out by visiting [www.livewiremedia.com](http://www.livewiremedia.com) and click on "Responsibility." Meanwhile, we've found some other useful resources on the web that we'd like to share with you. We hope you find them helpful.

David & Freddy

## Articles and Stuff About Responsibility and How to Teach It

A comprehensive [overview of responsibility](#), formatted as bullet copy. Very easy on the eyes.

[Teaching teens responsibility](#) and the difficulties of teens living under rules while trying to learn independence.

Why children avoid responsibility and how to hold them accountable. An article about the [necessity of holding children accountable for their actions](#).

This [4 part article](#) talks about 12 important aspects of responsibility, why responsibility is so important, and how we can teach our children to be responsible.

Responsibility-building activities from Scholastic Instructor. These "[Teacher Made Activities for Teaching Responsibility](#)" are very clear and useful.

Responsibility within the context of sports – responsible athlete, responsible coach, responsible parent. [These articles and video](#) are from Liberty Mutual, who host the ongoing "Responsibility Project."

[Another resource on responsibility in sports](#). A boxer takes personal responsibility for the poor choices he made in his life. Responsibility can mean knowing when you are wrong, and being able to admit when you've made a mistake.

In this [highly satisfying first-person account](#), the author shares her personal story of turning her life around by taking responsibility. A thumbs-up read for all high school students.

List of [elementary school fiction books that cover responsibility](#). These books can usually be found at your local library.



### Teach Responsibility With Videos

[Click Here for Award-Winning Lessons for K-12](#)

## Elementary School Lesson Plans

An elementary lesson plan called "[Responsibility and Jobs](#)," from Learning To Give. The recommended book can usually be obtained from your local library

This is the core of the [teaching guide](#) that accompanies our own video, "Being Responsible." Even if you don't use the video, there is plenty of material here for you to craft a solid lesson plan

## Middle School Lesson Plans

A direct pdf link to [the Responsibility guide "You can Count on Me"](#) from the Peaceful Solution Character Education Program. This document is 25 pages long and can be used without the audio CD. It employs stories and critical thinking skills to help students learn why responsibility is an important character trait. *(This link does not work well with the Safari browser. If you have problems, use a different browser.)*

This lesson plan uses [multi-media to explain personal responsibility](#). The book and movie mentioned can both usually be obtained from your local library. *(This link does not work well with the Safari browser. If you have problems, use a different browser.)*

This material is from the teaching guide that accompanies our own video, "[The Responsibility Connection](#)." Even if you don't use the video, there is plenty of material here for you to construct a comprehensive lesson plan.

## High School Lesson Plans

As kids grow up they have to begin taking responsibility for their own financial matters. Here is a lesson plan that involves [economic responsibility](#).



Also, we don't mind mentioning that we have several excellent videos for young people on managing their money. If you're interested, pay a visit to [our Personal Finances page at LiveWireMedia.com](#).

And most of the teaching guide that accompanies our own video, "Responsibility" from the series "In Search of Character" is [available here](#). Even if you don't use the video, there is a lot of good material here for you to use in constructing a comprehensive lesson plan.

Please send us your comments, suggestions, character education stories, and anything else that you think would be of value to our subscribers. [Email](#) us today!

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