



**Future Ready Pathways for  
School, Work and Life**

# **Communication & Leadership**

*Lessons for high school  
students, aged 14-19*

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# Communication & Leadership

*Lessons for high school students, aged  
14-19*

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# Teacher/Parent Guide

## Welcome

High school is a time when students begin to define who they are and how they want to show up in the world. Leadership during these years often appears in quiet ways—speaking with purpose, listening carefully, taking initiative, responding thoughtfully to feedback, and acting with integrity both in person and online.

This workbook is designed to help students develop the communication and leadership skills that shape how they express ideas, make decisions, and influence others. Through reflection, scenarios, and skill-building activities, students will explore how leadership grows from self-awareness, responsible action, and thoughtful communication.

Throughout these lessons, students will examine their own leadership identity, practice communicating with intention, consider different perspectives, and learn how to take initiative in meaningful ways. Students will come to understand that leadership is not about attention or authority. It is about awareness, responsibility, and the ability to use one's voice and influence in ways that contribute positively to the world around them.

## Learning Objectives

By the end of these lessons, students will be able to:

- Reflect on their developing leadership identity and recognize that leadership can take many forms, including quiet and reflective leadership styles.
- Communicate ideas with clarity, purpose, and intention, recognizing how tone, word choice, and timing influence how messages are received.
- Demonstrate active listening and perspective-taking, considering how different experiences and viewpoints shape understanding.
- Analyze situations and determine when it is appropriate to take initiative.
- Make thoughtful decisions by considering context, consequences, and personal values.
- Recognize the difference between reaction and intentional communication.
- Respond to feedback and constructive criticism with reflection and openness.
- Identify how feedback and mistakes can contribute to personal growth and confidence.
- Demonstrate awareness of how digital communication and online behavior contribute to reputation, credibility, and leadership presence.
- Reflect on how their communication choices, decisions, and actions contribute to the kind of leader they are becoming.



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# Teacher/Parent Guide

## Learning Rationale

High school students are increasingly navigating complex social environments, greater independence, and decisions that begin to shape their future opportunities and reputation. Their words carry weight, their actions are more visible, and their ability to express ideas, interpret perspectives, and respond to challenges becomes an essential life skill.

At this stage of development, leadership is not simply about participation or speaking up. It is about understanding how identity, awareness, and responsibility guide the way individuals communicate, make decisions, and influence others. Students encounter moments that require initiative, thoughtful judgment, and the ability to reflect on feedback without losing confidence in their voice.

This workbook is designed to support students as they strengthen the personal leadership skills that shape how they show up in conversations, decisions, and digital environments.

The workbook is grounded in the understanding that:



Leadership identity shapes influence and decision-making



Purposeful communication strengthens clarity and credibility



Perspective and awareness deepen understanding



Initiative reflects responsibility and self-direction



Feedback supports growth and resilience



Digital spaces extend leadership beyond physical environments



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# Universal Design for Learning

## Overview

This workbook is designed using Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles to ensure that all students can access, engage with, and benefit from the lessons. The goal is not to lower expectations, but to remove unnecessary barriers so every student can participate fully.

## Multiple Means of Engagement - How students stay interested and motivated

- Lessons incorporate a variety of formats including reflection prompts, scenario analysis, structured dialogue, journaling, decision-making challenges, and real-world examples.
- Students are encouraged to engage with content in ways that feel authentic to them.
- Content is grounded in realistic high school situations involving communication, leadership opportunities, feedback, initiative, and digital presence. These contexts increase relevance and encourage students to think critically about how their choices shape their influence and reputation.
- Opportunities for individual reflection are balanced with structured discussion so that both quieter students and more outspoken students can engage comfortably and meaningfully.

## Multiple Means of Representation - How information is presented and understood

- Key concepts such as leadership identity, purposeful communication, perspective-taking, initiative, feedback, and digital leadership are introduced using clear explanations, structured examples, and short real-world scenarios.
- Abstract leadership ideas are connected to everyday experiences students encounter in school, work, activities, and online environments. This helps students see how communication and leadership skills apply beyond the classroom.
- Lessons intentionally revisit core ideas across different contexts so students can deepen their understanding and transfer skills to new situations.
- Guiding questions, reflection prompts, and structured thinking frames are included to support students who benefit from organized approaches to processing ideas.

## Multiple Means of Action & Expression - How students demonstrate understanding

- Students are provided with multiple ways to demonstrate their learning, including written reflections, structured discussions, scenario responses, and decision-making exercises.
- This flexibility allows students to communicate their understanding through formats that best match their strengths while still engaging deeply with the material.
- Opportunities for self-reflection and goal-setting encourage students to monitor their growth in communication, leadership, and decision-making skills.
- The focus remains on students demonstrating thoughtful understanding of concepts and applying them to real-life situations, rather than simply recalling information.



# Pre-Assessment



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# Pre-Assessment Lesson Plan

## Learning Objectives

By the end of the pre-assessment activity, students will:

1. Reflect on their current beliefs about leadership, influence, and communication.
2. Identify how they typically express ideas, respond to feedback, and make decisions.
3. Consider their comfort level with speaking with purpose and taking initiative.
4. Examine how they currently approach perspective-taking and awareness of others.
5. Reflect on how they handle feedback, mistakes, and personal growth.
6. Evaluate how their digital communication and online presence contribute to their reputation and influence.
7. Begin thinking about the kind of leader they want to become.

## Learning Rationale

A pre-assessment helps students become aware of their existing habits, assumptions, and beliefs about leadership and communication before new learning begins. High school students often have developed patterns in how they express themselves, respond to challenges, and interact with others—both in person and online. However, these patterns are not always consciously examined.

By reflecting on their current approaches to voice, initiative, perspective-taking, feedback, and digital communication, students gain insight into the skills they already possess and the areas they may want to strengthen.

This process supports the broader goals of the workbook by encouraging students to see leadership as a developing practice rather than a fixed trait. As students move through the lessons, they can revisit their initial responses and observe how their thinking, confidence, and awareness evolve over time.

The pre-assessment, therefore, serves as both a reflection tool and a baseline for personal growth, helping students approach the lessons with curiosity, openness, and a clearer sense of their own leadership development.



# Pre-Assessment Lesson Plan

## Step 1: Introduce the Activity

- Explain: “This activity helps us understand how you currently think about communication, leadership, and influence. It looks at things like speaking with purpose, understanding different perspectives, taking initiative, responding to feedback, and how we show up in digital spaces.”
- Encourage honesty and self-reflection — this is about noticing personal starting points, not grades.

## Step 2: Clarify the Format

- Students read each statement and mark their response in the rating column.
- If working one-on-one or in a small group, you may also read the statements aloud.
- Remind students to respond quickly and honestly, without overthinking.

## Step 3: Optional Discussion

- After a few selected statements, invite quick, low-pressure sharing.
  - “What situations make it easier or harder to speak up and share your ideas?”
  - “When someone disagrees with you, what is usually your first reaction?”
  - “What helps you understand someone else’s perspective, even when you don’t agree?”
  - “When do you feel most comfortable taking initiative or stepping forward?”
  - “How do you usually react when someone gives you feedback or criticism?”
  - “Where do you see leadership happening in everyday life — not just in formal roles?”
- Keep it light — don’t correct or explain. The goal is to listen and observe.

## Step 4: Record Insights

- Teachers/parents jot down notes on patterns you notice:
  - Areas where students show confidence in communication or decision-making
  - Situations where students appear uncertain about taking initiative or expressing ideas
  - How comfortable students seem with perspective-taking and listening
  - Students’ attitudes toward feedback and personal growth
  - Awareness of digital communication and online influence
- These notes create a baseline snapshot of students’ current relationship skills and perspectives and can be revisited during the post-assessment.

## Step 5: Set the Tone

- Reassure students that this is a starting point: “This activity is just a starting point. Throughout the lessons, you’ll explore how communication, initiative, perspective, feedback, and digital presence shape leadership. As you learn new strategies and reflect on different situations, your answers and perspectives may change.”
- Keep the atmosphere reflective, respectful, and supportive. Frame the pre-assessment as exploration, not evaluation, and reinforce that growth is expected.



# Pre-Assessment

Read each statement carefully. For each one, choose the response that best describes how true the statement feels for you right now. There are no right or wrong answers. Respond honestly and without overthinking. If a statement doesn't fully apply to you, choose the option that feels closest.

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have a sense of what kind of leader I want to be.				
I understand that leadership can look different for different people.				
I feel comfortable expressing my ideas or opinions when something is important to me.				
I think carefully about my tone and word choice when communicating with others.				
I try to understand another person's perspective before reacting or responding.				
I can recognize when my assumptions might be affecting how I interpret a situation.				
I feel confident taking initiative when I see something that needs to be done.				
I take responsibility for my decisions and actions, even when mistakes happen.				
I am willing to step forward and speak up when a situation calls for it.				



# Pre-Assessment

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I can listen to feedback without immediately becoming defensive.				
I see mistakes or criticism as opportunities to learn and improve.				
I reflect on how my actions and communication influence the people around me.				
I understand that my online behavior can affect my reputation and credibility.				
I try to use my voice and influence in ways that contribute positively to the people around me.				

Which statements felt easiest for you to agree with? What do they suggest about your current strengths in communication or leadership?

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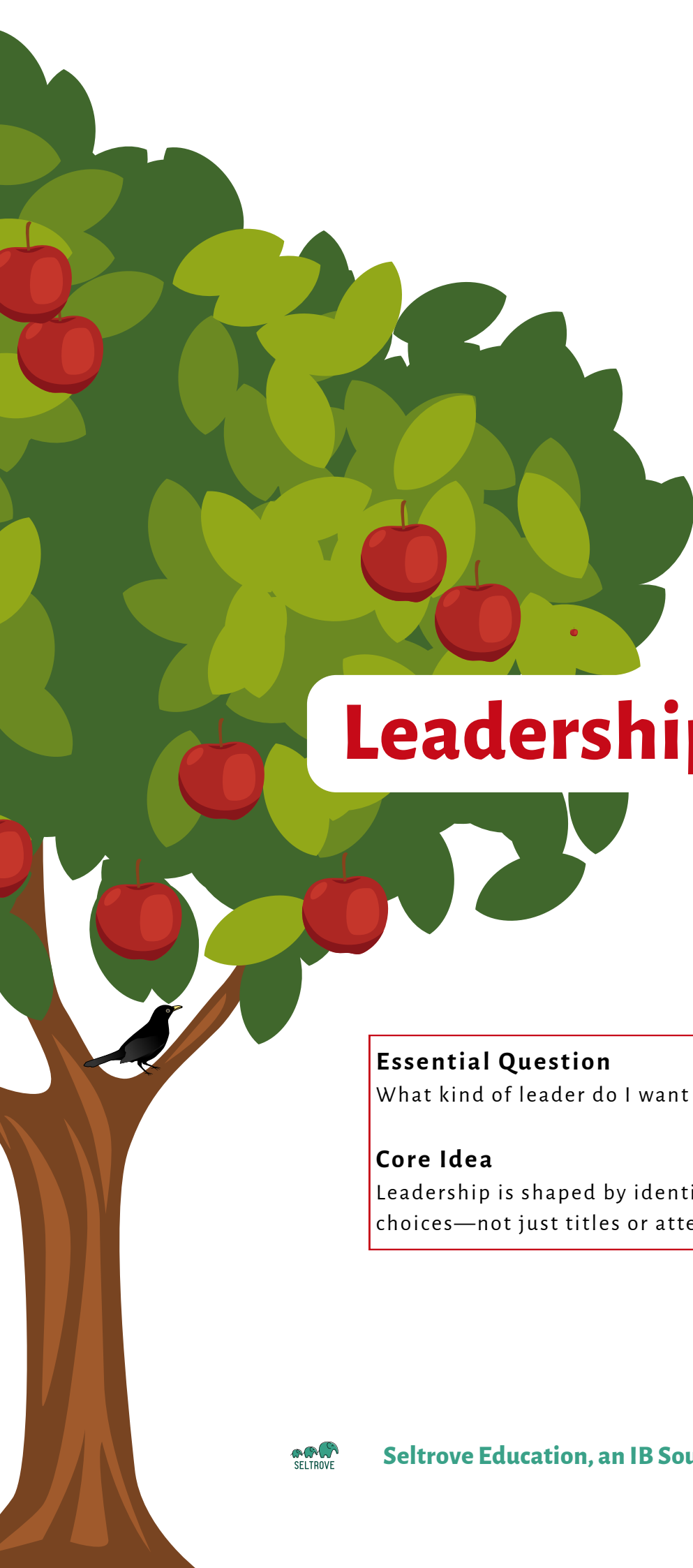
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Which statements made you pause or feel unsure? What skills do you think you might want to strengthen during these lessons?

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## Lesson 1

# Leadership Identity

### Essential Question

What kind of leader do I want to be?

### Core Idea

Leadership is shaped by identity, values, and everyday choices—not just titles or attention.



# Lesson Plan: Leadership Identity

## Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Describe how personal values, identity, and character influence leadership style.
2. Recognize that leadership can take many forms, including quiet, thoughtful, or supportive leadership.
3. Reflect on their own strengths, tendencies, and communication habits.
4. Identify examples of leadership that occur without formal authority or recognition.
5. Explain how everyday actions and decisions contribute to a developing leadership identity.
6. Begin considering the type of leader they want to become.

## Learning Rationale

High school students are at a stage where identity, values, and personal direction begin to take shape in meaningful ways. During this time, students often encounter increasing expectations to communicate clearly, make independent decisions, and take responsibility for their actions in academic, social, and digital environments.

However, many students associate leadership only with visible roles such as team captains, class officers, or public speakers. This narrow definition can cause students who are quieter, more reflective, or less interested in formal leadership roles to overlook the ways they already demonstrate leadership through reliability, initiative, thoughtful communication, and integrity.

This lesson introduces leadership as a personal identity rather than a position. Students explore how leadership is expressed through everyday behaviors, choices, and communication styles. By examining different forms of leadership—including quiet leadership—students begin to recognize that influence and responsibility can appear in many ways.

Developing this awareness helps students approach the rest of the workbook with a broader understanding of leadership. Instead of focusing only on external recognition, students are encouraged to reflect on how their values, voice, and decisions contribute to the kind of leader they are becoming.



# Lesson Plan: Leadership Identity

Read the **Student Lesson** out loud. Ask students to share their ideas after reading the Reflection Question, if they wish.

## Activity 1: Leadership Snapshot

- Read the directions with your students.
- Encourage students to include non-famous people to reinforce everyday leadership.
- Remind students leadership can appear in small actions, not just big achievements.

## Activity 2: What Does Leadership Look Like?

- Read the directions with your students.
- Encourage groups to generate many examples quickly before discussing.
- Walk around and prompt groups with questions if they get stuck.

## Activity 3: Quiet Leadership Scenarios

- Read through the directions with your students.
- Emphasize that leadership does not require authority or recognition.
- Invite brief class discussion about which scenarios felt most like leadership.

## Activity 4: Discover Your Leadership Style

- Read the directions with your students.
- Emphasize that students may relate to more than one style.
- Avoid framing styles as “better” than others.

## Activity 5: Leadership in Action Mini Research

- Read the directions with your students.
- Allow students to choose leaders from diverse fields.
- Encourage examples beyond traditional political leaders, for example: a parent or guardian, a teacher, a coach, a mentor, or a community member.

## Activity 6: The Leader I Want to Become

- Read the directions with your students.
- Allow students to keep responses private if they prefer.
- Encourage thoughtful reflection rather than long answers.



# Universal Design of Learning

## **Engagement — Multiple Ways to Motivate & Sustain Interest**

- Allow students to choose leaders who are personally meaningful to them, including public figures, community leaders, or individuals in their personal lives. Personal choice increases engagement and ownership.
- Provide options for how students participate in discussions. Some students may prefer speaking in small groups or pairs rather than whole-class discussions.
- Frame leadership as something that appears in everyday situations. Connecting the lesson to real-life contexts such as school experiences, jobs, sports, or online interactions.
- Include both reflective and interactive activities. Quiet reflection tasks support students who prefer independent thinking, while scenario discussions and group brainstorming support students who learn through conversation.
- Encourage curiosity rather than evaluation. Remind students that the leadership quiz and reflections are tools for self-discovery, not tests with correct answers.

## **Representation — Multiple Ways to Understand the Skill**

- Introduce the concept of leadership using multiple examples, including visible leaders and quiet leaders. This helps students understand that leadership does not require a specific personality type.
- Use short scenarios to illustrate leadership behaviors. Concrete examples help students understand abstract ideas such as initiative, influence, and leadership identity.
- Encourage students to examine leadership through different lenses, such as actions, values, decisions, and communication style.
- When discussing leadership qualities, provide examples that students can easily recognize, such as helping others succeed, taking responsibility, speaking with purpose, or noticing when something needs attention.
- Reinforce key ideas throughout the lesson. Concepts such as leadership identity, everyday leadership, and quiet leadership can appear in multiple activities to strengthen understanding.

## **Action & Expression — Multiple Ways to Show Learning**

- Allow students to respond in multiple ways, including written responses, small-group discussions, or short presentations.
- Provide structured prompts and charts on worksheets to help students organize their thinking, especially during reflection or research activities.
- Encourage students to use brief notes or bullet points instead of full paragraphs if writing is a barrier to participation.
- Offer opportunities for students to demonstrate understanding through examples and explanations rather than only written responses.
- Include reflection questions that allow students to connect leadership ideas to their own experiences and goals.

# Leadership Identity



## At the end of this lesson, I will be able to:

- Describe how personal values, identity, and character influence leadership style.
- Recognize that leadership can take many forms, including quiet, thoughtful, or supportive leadership.
- Reflect on your own strengths, tendencies, and communication habits.
- Identify examples of leadership that occur without formal authority or recognition.
- Explain how everyday actions and decisions contribute to a developing leadership identity.
- Begin considering the type of leader you want to become.



When people hear the word "leader," they often picture someone standing at the front of a room, giving instructions or being in charge of a group. Leadership is often associated with titles such as team captain, club president, or class officer. But leadership is not limited to positions like these.

Leadership is about how you show up in everyday situations. It includes how you communicate, how you make decisions, how you treat others, and how you take responsibility for your actions. Your leadership identity is the combination of your values, behaviors, and choices that shape how you influence the world around you.

## Leadership Looks Different for Different People

One of the biggest misconceptions about leadership is that it only belongs to people who are loud, outgoing, or comfortable speaking in front of groups. In reality, leadership can take many different forms.

Some leaders are very visible. They enjoy speaking up, sharing ideas, and guiding others directly. Other leaders are quieter. They lead by listening carefully, thinking before acting, supporting others, and stepping forward when something needs to be done.

Both approaches can be effective. What matters most is how someone uses their strengths and values to contribute in meaningful ways.

## Quiet Leadership

Quiet leadership is an important and often overlooked form of leadership. A quiet leader might:

- Notice when something needs to be improved and take action.
- Speak thoughtfully rather than frequently.
- Support others and help them succeed.
- Stay calm and thoughtful during challenges.
- Take responsibility without needing recognition.

Quiet leadership does not mean avoiding responsibility or staying silent when something matters. It means leading through thoughtful action, reliability, and awareness.

## Leadership Shows Up in Everyday Moments

Leadership is not something that only happens during big events. It often appears in small decisions and everyday situations. For example:

- Speaking up when you have an idea or concern.
- Choosing to act responsibly even when no one is watching.
- Listening carefully when someone else is sharing their perspective.
- Taking initiative when something needs to be done.
- Responding thoughtfully instead of reacting emotionally.

These everyday moments shape how others experience you and how you influence the environment around you. Over time, these choices form your leadership identity.

## Leadership Identity Continues to Develop

Your leadership identity is not something that is fixed or decided all at once. It develops over time as you gain experiences, face challenges, learn from mistakes, and reflect on your values.

High school is an important time to begin thinking about questions such as:

- What kind of person do I want to be when others depend on me?
- How do I want people to experience my voice and actions?
- What values matter most to me when making decisions?

Thinking about these questions helps you develop a clearer sense of the leader you are becoming.



## Reflection Question

What qualities do you think are most important in a leader, and which of those qualities do you already see in yourself?



### Activity 1: Leadership Snapshot

Leadership is often easier to recognize in other people before we see it in ourselves. In this activity, you will think about people you believe demonstrate leadership and identify the qualities that make them effective.

Think of 2–3 people you consider leaders and complete the chart for these leaders.

Leader	Leadership Qualities	Examples of Leadership

What patterns did you notice in the leadership qualities you listed? \_\_\_\_\_

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## Activity 2: What Does Leadership Look Like?

Leadership is not limited to people who hold positions of authority. It often appears in everyday actions and decisions. In a small group, brainstorm examples of leadership you have seen in everyday life. In a small group, brainstorm examples of leadership you have seen in everyday life. Think about situations at school, jobs, sports, activities, online spaces, and friendships.

