

Ninja Scholar 2.0 — Mentor Manual

A year-long facilitation guide • Grades 6–8 • 30 Weeks



FRONT MATTER

Front Matter

FRONT MATTER

MENTOR MANUAL

How to Use This Manual

The Mentor's Job

This manual tells you what to do, what to say, and what to watch for each week. Use it as a script when you need words, as a checklist when you are setting up, and as a contingency guide when the class veers sideways (which it will).

The student binder is the kid-facing artifact. This manual is the adult-facing one. Same week, same skill, same story – different register. Where the student binder says "you," this manual says "the room." Where the student binder cheers, this manual briefs.

The Week Shape

Every week of Ninja Scholar follows a 45-minute shape built to protect the active work block. If you talk more than 15 minutes total, you are teaching past the point of middle-school attention.

BLOCK	TIME	PURPOSE
Opening ritual	3 min	Learn the Ninja Way + accountability check
Warm-up	5 min	Low-stakes game that hides the writing lesson
Main instruction	10–12 min	The week's tool or habit, taught fast
Active work	22–24 min	Kids write, talk, move. This is where learning lives.
Close	3–5 min	Reflection card + logistics

Total: 45 minutes. Protect the active block at all costs. Every minute you talk past 15 is a minute stolen from kids writing, talking, and moving.

The Manual's Sections

Each week page contains, in the order you will need them:

- + **Week at a Glance** – the one-sentence summary of the whole session.
- + **Pre-Class Checklist** – everything that must be ready before the first student walks in.

- + **45-Minute Flow** – the timed blocks and the rationale for each.
- + **The Beats** (Week 1) / **Teaching Script** (Weeks 2+) – slide-by-slide or beat-by-beat language you can read or throw away.
- + **The Ninja Game** – the interactive thing that hides the lesson inside play.
- + **Materials** – quantities, notes, and why each item matters.
- + **Contingency Plans** – pivots for group size, shyness, time pressure, and refusal.
- + **After Class** – the three things that must happen before you close the car door.
- + **Parent Email (verbatim)** – exactly what to send home.
- + **Framework Connections** – where this week lives in the larger curriculum.
- + **Post-Class Log** – copy into the class log after teaching.

The Voice

Direct, trusting, brief. Voice to the adult, not the child. Facilitation cues, not lectures. Calmer accent than the student binder. Mochi appears, but sparingly – the mascot carries the joy so the rest of the manual can stay disciplined.

Inspire, don't require. Praise progress in public, correct in private. Short sentences. Trust the reader to rise to it.

If a Student Asks "Why Are We Doing This?"

The answer is always some version of: *"We're building the kind of room where the real stuff works. Trust me."* Week 1 is culture before content. Every week after is the same principle in a smaller form: build the room, then do the work inside it.

UNIT 01

Hero's Journey (Weeks 1–4)

Gear A · Phase 0–1 · The sentence begins, and the quest opens.

UNIT 1 — HERO'S JOURNEY (WEEKS 1-4) •
WEEK 01

MENTOR
MANUAL

Meet Mochi. Also, One of Us Is Lying.

The One Thing

Week 1 is not about writing. It's about making the room feel like somewhere worth being weird out loud. If they leave laughing and slightly braver than they came in, you won. The kernel sentence is real work, but it's smuggled inside a lying game and a name game on purpose. Culture first. Content rides in on its back.

If a kid asks "why are we doing this?" the answer this week is always: *"We're building the kind of room where the real stuff works. Trust me."*

Week at a Glance

WEEK	1
HABIT	None (foundation week; no explicit habit)
WRITING PHASE	0: Kernel Expansion (oral, then one written)
TEXT	None. Student introductions are the text
SESSION LENGTH	45 minutes
CENTRAL DELIVERABLE	One written expanded sentence + a Hero's Journey film/book picked for the year

Three jobs this week: set the tone (ninjas, not students), plant the year's first sentence tool (kernel → expansion), and launch the Hero's Journey Quest. Do not rush the culture. If the room isn't safe, the sentence work won't stick.

Pre-Class Checklist

Built for 8–14 kids (11+) in a 45-minute block. Scale quantities to your group.

- ☐ Name tents (kids write their own at the door: first tiny act of ownership)
- ☐ INDEX cards (3 per student: warm-up, speed-dating sentence, reflection card)
- ☐ A pen for every kid who will forget a pen (all of them)
- ☐ Whiteboard: Hero's Journey circle drawn in advance, 10 empty slots
- ☐ One pop-culture image they'll definitely know (Star Wars / Harry Potter / Moana)
- ☐ Mochi on display: printed big, or on the binder cover, somewhere they can see him
- ☐ Timer (visible: kills "how much longer")
- ☐ Stickers for Mochi's Seal of Approval
- ☐ Your three "One of Us Is Lying" statements, ready (two true, one gloriously false)
- ☐ Parent email queued (Hero's Journey pick due Week 2)

Why: prep the room like a stage. It tells them this class is different before you open your mouth.

45-Minute Flow

Protect the active block. Every minute you talk past 15 is a minute stolen from kids writing, talking, and moving.

BLOCK	TIME	WHAT	PHASE / TOOL
Cold open	5 min	One of Us Is Lying (you go first)	Phase 0 hook
The Ninja Way	3 min	"Begin before you're ready": as a dare	Culture
Kernel with Mochi	7 min	Kernel → expansion, one detail only	Phase 0 (oral)
Active work	24 min	Speed-dating → weird-true sentence → share	Phase 0 (written)
Close	3 min	Reflection card + HJ Quest pick + cleanup	Logistics

Total: 45 min. Start with mischief, hide the writing lesson inside the game, teach the framework fast, then let them practice while they're still awake.

The Beats (say-it-like-this, then follow the room)

This is a script you can throw away. Read it for the language, then let the room take the wheel where it wants to. Every beat has a **chaos hatch**: a spot where the kids can grab control. Let them. That's the fun.

COLD OPEN: YOU LIE TO THEM BEFORE YOU SAY HELLO (5 MIN)

Don't welcome them. Don't explain. Kids are still finding seats and you're already talking:

"Three things about me. Two are true, one is a filthy lie. Vote with your hands. If you vote wrong, a ninja out-lied you on day one and you'll have to make peace with that. One: I have three kids. Two: I've been to 47 states. Three: I have a pet named Mochi who is, technically, a ninja."

Let them vote. Milk it. Reveal. Then, deadpan, *after* the game:

"Congratulations. You just did the one thing this whole class is secretly about: you felt a detail that was off. That instinct? That's the superpower. Welcome to Ninja Scholar. You're not students in here. You're ninjas, and ninjas notice."

Chaos hatch: if a kid insists they can out-lie you, let them try one on the room. Now they're teaching the lesson and don't know it.

THE NINJA WAY: AS A DARE, NOT A POSTER (3 MIN)

Point at Mochi.

"Meet Mochi. Worst-built ninja alive: round, soft, sticky, squeaks when he walks, gets stuck to walls. Should not work. Became the smartest scholar in the building anyway, because he refused to wait until he was good at it. That's this week's Ninja Way: *we begin before we're ready*. Everybody cool started scared. JK Rowling, broke. LeBron, missing shots. Your mom stalling a stick shift in a parking lot. Nobody waits for confidence. They move, and the confidence limps in late. Ten seconds: who's started something before they were ready? I'll go first, because I'm not a coward. Probably."

You go first. Model the vulnerability. Keep it fast and oral. **Do not collect a worksheet on this.** Writing it down kills it.

KERNEL EXPANSION: TAUGHT THROUGH MOCHI (7 MIN)

Skip "a kernel is like a seed." Show it.

"*Mochi swims*. True. Boring. That's a **kernel**: smallest sentence that still works. Watch me grow it: *Mochi swims laps in my bathtub every night while judging my life choices*. Same sentence, one detail bigger. That's an **expansion**. You add ONE thing: when, where, why, or how. Not all four.

One. Ninjas are precise."

Then hand it over and *invite* the weird:

"Give me an expansion for *Mochi trains*. One detail. Weirder is better, as long as you commit to it."

Chaos hatch: take 3–4 kid expansions out loud. The room will one-up each other. Ride it. That IS the lesson landing.

ACTIVE WORK: SPEED-DATING WITH STAKES (24 MIN)

Two lines, 30-second rounds, one question per round. Rotate. After 3–4 rounds:

"Pick one person you met. Write a boring kernel about them. Then grow it with ONE weird, specific, TRUE detail. Weirdest true sentence wins Mochi's Seal of Approval. 'Bella reads.' Nope. 'Bella read a 400-page book in a day because she forgot to eat lunch.' *That's* a ninja sentence."

Walk the room. Read the surprising ones aloud. Give the sticker to **weird-and-specific, never to neat**. You're teaching them what "good" means by what you reward.

CLOSE: REFLECTION CARD + THE QUEST (3 MIN)

Index card: their best expanded sentence + one book/movie they want to map onto the Hero's Journey this year. Give the HJ a **90-second tease only**: "you already know this pattern, it's in everything you love, we'll prove it all year." Full 10 steps live in their binder for the curious. Don't lecture ten steps on day one.

Ninjas leave no trace. Room gets cleaned before anyone's dismissed.

Materials

ITEM	QTY	NOTE
Index cards	30 (3/kid)	Unlined. These become the year's first writing samples. Keep them.
Pens	15	They'll forget. Extras keep the room from stalling.
Name tents	15	Kids write their own at the door.
HJ circle	1 (board)	Draw 10 empty slots in advance so you point, not draw.

ITEM	QTY	NOTE
Pop-culture image	1	Pick the one your group definitely knows.
Mochi printout	1	Big. Visible. He's the mascot; let them see him.
Timer	1	Visible beats invisible.
Stickers	1 sheet	Mochi's Seal of Approval. Tiny, silly, works at every age.

Contingency Plans

Fewer than 8: speed-dating becomes a speed-circle. Stand in a ring, rotate every 30 seconds. Works with 5+.

More than 12: two circles running at once; you circulate, merge for sharing.

Too shy to move: seated "Two Truths and a Lie." Each kid writes 3 kernels about themselves (2 true, 1 false); class votes on the lie. Same target, less movement.

Running short: cut the HJ tease to one mentor example. Keep the lying game and the sentence. That's the foundation.

A kid refuses to share: "You don't have to read it out loud. Write it, I'll read it anonymously." Ninjas have choices.

After Class

- + Collect reflection cards (note the HJ film/book picks).
- + Send the parent email (below).
- + Keep the index cards. You'll compare them to Week 6 to show growth.

PARENT EMAIL (VERBATIM)

Ninja Scholar | Week 1: Meet Mochi

Today your student joined Ninja Scholar Skills and met our mascot, Mochi, a very soft, very determined mochi ninja who is proof that you don't have to be built for something to become great at it. This year we study sentence-level writing, the Hero's Journey, the 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens, and one novel together.

This week's task: help your student pick one book or movie that follows the Hero's Journey pattern (*Star Wars*, *Moana*, *Harry Potter*, etc.). They'll map it in class later this year.

No other homework. We're building culture first.

Thanks for sending your ninja to class.

Ninja Scholar Mentor

Framework Connections

ELEMENT	WHERE IT LIVES
Phase 0: Kernel Expansion	<u>Core-Framework</u> §4 (Writing Progression)
Hero's Journey (10 steps)	Semester-1-Synthesis, Unit 1
"Learn the Ninja Way" ritual	<u>Core-Framework</u> §2
Ninjas Leave No Trace	<u>Core-Framework</u> §2
Class format (45 min)	<u>Core-Framework</u> §1

Post-Class Log

Copy into the class log after teaching:

[Date]. Week 1: Meet Mochi / One of Us Is Lying

Skill Focus: Phase 0: Kernel expansion (oral + first written)

Fun Landed?

Skill Protected? (Did the sentence work survive the fun?)

Chaos Hatch Used? (Where did the room grab the wheel?)

Time Budget Honest?

One Fix for Next Time:

UNIT 1 — HERO'S JOURNEY (WEEKS 1-4) •
WEEK 02MENTOR
MANUAL

SMART Goals + Kernel Set-Up

Week at a Glance

This table is your dashboard. If someone asks what Week 2 is for, point here.

WEEK	2
HABIT	– (foundation week; no explicit habit)
WRITING PHASE	0 – Kernel expansion (written)
TEXT	Self-selected HJ film/book (chosen in class; ordinary world practice)
SESSION LENGTH	45 minutes
CENTRAL DELIVERABLE	Students choose their year-long HJ story, write 3 kernel-expanded sentences about the hero's ordinary world, and set one SMART goal for class

Week 2 exists to do three things: transition students from "begin before you're ready" to "aim at one small target," solidify the kernel-expansion skill in writing, and lock in a year-long Hero's Journey story. The story selection is the ownership ritual; the SMART goal gives the year a target. Do not rush them. A student who leaves without a clear story choice and one specific, doable goal will float for the next several weeks.

Pre-Class Checklist

This list is built for a class of 8–14 11+ year olds in a 45-minute block. Adjust quantities if your group is larger or smaller.

- ☐ Name tags or name tents (reuse from W1)
- ☐ Index cards (3 per student – warm-up, SMART goal, reflection card)
- ☐ Pen or marker for each student
- ☐ Whiteboard or display: Hero's Journey circle drawn in advance (10 steps, empty)
- ☐ Timer (for speed rounds and 3-minute blocks)

- ☐ Sticker or token system (optional: for "ninja-est detail" moments)
- ☐ Parent communication – handout/email explaining HJ quest and confirming film/book accessibility
- ☐ Optional: 10 pre-approved HJ film/book list for indecisive students

Why this matters: Week 2 is where students realize this class expects them to choose and track their own work. If they do not have a story locked in, the Hero's Journey quest stalls. If they do not have a small, specific goal, the year feels vague. Your prep makes the abstract concrete.

45-Minute Flow

The flow below protects the active work block. Every minute of instruction steals minutes from student choosing, writing, and goal-setting. If you talk more than 15 minutes total, you are teaching past the point of middle-school attention.

BLOCK	TIME	ACTIVITY	PHASE / TOOL
Opening ritual	3 min	Learn the Ninja Way – "set a target, then move" + accountability check on Week 1 HJ film/book selection	Culture
Warm-up / Game hook	5 min	Lie Detector – Kernel Expansion Game, Hero Edition (mentor models; students volunteer their own)	Phase 0
Main instruction	12 min	SMART goals framework (8 min) + kernel expansion demo about a hero's "ordinary world" (4 min)	HJ quest launch + Phase 0
Active work	22 min	Students choose HJ film/book; write 3 kernel expansions about hero's ordinary world on index card	Phase 0 (written)
Close / exit task	3 min	Reflection card: hero name, one HJ question, one SMART goal	Logistics

Total: 45 minutes.

Why this works: Start with identity (aim before moving), move quickly to a low-stakes game that reviews kernel expansion, introduce the year's usable goal-setting tool, model the sentence skill on a shared hero, then let students apply it to their own story choice. The active block bundles choice + writing because the skills reinforce each other: a hero who knows where they start is a student who knows what to aim at.

Materials

ITEM	QUANTITY	NOTES
Index cards	30 (3/student)	Plain white; no lines
Pens/markers	15	Students may forget; extras keep the room from stalling
Name tents	15	Reuse from W1
Hero's Journey circle	1 (whiteboard or slide)	Draw 10 empty boxes in advance so you can point, not draw
Timer	1 (phone works)	Visible timer removes "how much longer?" from the room
Sticker sheet	1 sheet	For "ninja-est detail" moments in kernel expansions
Pre-approved HJ list	1 (slide or print)	10 options for students who hesitate

Contingency Plans

If fewer than 8 students: Run SMART goal drafting as a whole-group "round robin" – each student offers one element of a class SMART goal, then writes their own. Share ordinary-world sentences in a circle rather than pairs. Vote on the "ninja-est detail" as a group.

If more than 12 students: Split story selection into two stations: one side browses the story menu, the other drafts SMART goals and ordinary-world sentences. Rotate after 10 minutes. Mentor circulates; assistant or older student helps with story selection.

If a student cannot decide on a story: Give them a 2-minute limit and a default trio: *Moana*, *Harry Potter*, or *Star Wars*. Say: "You can change your mind before Week 4. Ninjas decide and move." Stop the spiral.

If a student has not seen any suggested films: Pair them with a classmate who knows one of the stories well. The partner briefly describes the ordinary world; the student writes a kernel sentence based on the description. Or allow a picture book/fairy tale with parent approval.

If time runs short: Cut the SMART goal discussion to 5 minutes (skip examples; just framework). Keep the 3-sentence writing and reflection card – those are the week's non-negotiables.

If a student has already watched/read their HJ choice: "Perfect. Map it on the HJ circle at home and bring it next week."

If writing activity stalls: "Write one sentence about your hero's ordinary world. Just one. Then we'll make it better." Reduce demand, then rebuild.

If a student refuses to write: "You can dictate one sentence to me, and I'll write it on your card. The idea still belongs to you." Ninjas have choices.

Teaching Script

Copy everything below and feed to NotebookLM with prompt: "Convert this teaching script into an 8-slide presentation for middle schoolers. One idea per slide. Use simple visuals and include one interactive element on each slide. Add a speaker notes section with timing reminders."

[SLIDE 1: TITLE + ACCOUNTABILITY CHECK-IN]

Welcome back, ninjas. Last week we learned that ninjas begin before they're ready. This week we learn what to aim at once we've begun.

Before we start – who brought a Hero's Journey film or book idea from home? Thumbs up if you did. No stress if you didn't. You're about to lock one in today.

[SLIDE 2: LEARN THE NINJA WAY – WEEK 2]

This week's trait: **"Ninjas know where they're going before they start walking."**

Random effort is just noise. Ninjas set targets. They aim. Then they move.

[Call on 2–3 students. Fast. "What's one thing you want to get better at this year? Not 'be good at writing.' Something SPECIFIC."]

That's the Ninja Way. We don't wander. We aim.

[SLIDE 3: THE LIE DETECTOR RETURNS – HERO EDITION]

Same game, new material. I'll model with Harry Potter.

[Read or display:]

- 1** Harry Potter, a wizard who lives under the stairs, has a lightning-shaped scar.
- 2** Harry Potter, a wizard who lives under the stairs, has a pet owl named Hedwig.
- 3** Harry Potter, a wizard who lives under the stairs, has a pet dragon named Fluffy.

[Pause. Let them vote.]

The lie is #3. Fluffy is a three-headed dog, not his pet dragon. But did you notice the kernel? "Harry Potter, a wizard who lives under the stairs..." That's his ORDINARY WORLD. Before the adventure. Every hero has one.

[SLIDE 4: SMART GOALS – THE MAP]

You know what a dumb goal is? "I'm going to be a better reader." Cool. How will you know when you're there?

SMART goals have a shape. Write this down:

- + **Specific** – not "read more"; "read 3 chapters of my HJ book this week"
- + **Measurable** – a number you can check
- + **Achievable** – something YOU can actually do
- + **Relevant** – matters to your life or your quest
- + **Time-bound** – a deadline

A goal is a promise to your future self. A SMART goal is a promise you can actually keep.

[SLIDE 5: YOUR HERO'S JOURNEY QUEST – THE ORDINARY WORLD]

Today you choose the story you'll map all year. Every hero starts somewhere normal. That's called the Ordinary World.

[Show or describe one ordinary-world scene – Harry under the stairs, Moana on her island, or Luke on Tatooine.]

What's normal here? What's the hero's everyday life before everything changes?

[Take 2–3 quick responses.]

[SLIDE 6: KERNEL EXPANSION DEMO]

Let's write a kernel sentence about this hero's ordinary world.

[Write on the board:]

Harry lives with the Dursleys.

That's a kernel – short and true.

Now let's expand it with ONE detail. When? Where? Why? How?

[Add detail:]

Harry lives with the Dursleys in a tiny cupboard under the stairs because he has nowhere else to go.

That's the expansion. One detail. Not ten.

[SLIDE 7: YOUR TURN – ACTIVE WORK]

Here's your mission for the next 20 minutes.

On your index card:

- + Top: Write your name.
- + Line 1: Your hero's name and their ordinary world (kernel).
- + Line 2: Add WHEN or WHERE.
- + Line 3: Add WHY or HOW.

You need THREE expanded sentences about your hero before they ever become a hero.

Then, at the bottom, write one SMART goal for this class: "I will _____ by _____ because _____."

[Timer ready. Go.]

[Walk around. Celebrate specific details. Nudge students who haven't chosen a story after 5 minutes.]

[SLIDE 8: SHARE + REFLECTION CARD]

Who's brave? Read one ordinary-world sentence aloud.

[Read 3–4. Award sticker for: most specific detail, funniest detail, detail that surprised even the mentor.]

Here's what I notice. The sentences that popped had one weird or specific detail. "Luke works on a farm" is fine. "Luke works on a moisture farm on Tatooine while he stares at the twin suns" – that's a ninja sentence.

[Hold up the reflection card instructions.]

Fill out your reflection card. Take home the confirmation slip. Your Hero's Journey quest is officially open.

After Class

- + Collect reflection cards (confirm story choice + SMART goal).
- + Email parents explaining the HJ quest and asking them to confirm film/book accessibility.
- + Log any students still without a story choice – follow up by email before Week 3.
- + For students who didn't choose: assign from pre-approved list and email parent.

PARENT EMAIL (VERBATIM)**Ninja Scholar – Week 2: SMART Goals + Kernel Set-Up**

This week your student learned how to turn a vague wish into a SMART goal – one that is specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-based.

This week's at-home task: Confirm the Hero's Journey film or book your student chose. They will map this story all year. Please make sure the story is one your student can watch or read at home over the next month.

Examples of approved stories: *Star Wars*, *Harry Potter*, *The Hunger Games*, *Moana*, *The Lion King*, *The Hobbit*, *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*, *Percy Jackson & the Olympians*, or another family-friendly story you approve.

No other homework. We are building direction first.

Thank you for raising a ninja who aims before shooting.

– Ninja Scholar Mentor

Framework Connections

ELEMENT	WHERE IT LIVES
Phase 0: Kernel Expansion (written)	Ninja-Scholar-Writing-Sequence
SMART goals framework	Ninja-Scholar-30-Week-Skeleton Week 2
Hero's Journey quest (at-home)	Core-Framework Section 3 (certification)
"Learn the Ninja Way" ritual	Core-Framework Section 2
Class format (45 min, honest time budget)	Ninja-Scholar-Phase-3-Architecture Section 1
30-Week Skeleton placement	Ninja-Scholar-30-Week-Skeleton Week 2

SMART Goals Quick Reference

Use this as your mini-lecture cheat sheet. In class, students should hear one kid-friendly definition per letter and see one before/after transformation. Save the full framework for the active work block.

LETTER	STUDENT-FRIENDLY DEFINITION	MENTOR EXAMPLE
S – Specific	What exactly will you do?	"Read 3 chapters of my HJ book" instead of "read more."
M – Measurable	How will you know you did it?	"Check the box" or "count the chapters."
A – Achievable	Can you really do this for the time given?	"Read 10 minutes" beats "read the whole book tonight."
R – Relevant	Does this matter to you?	Connect the goal to something the student already wants.
T – Time-bound	When does it end?	"By Friday" or "this week" gives a finish line.

For the in-class slide version, keep the letters on the screen and one upgraded example. Let students supply the "vague goal" half so the transformation feels like their work.

Fun Factor Notes

ELEMENT	WHY IT'S FUN
Lie Detector – Hero Edition	Familiar game, new material = low-friction engagement
Harry Potter/Star Wars examples	Every middle schooler has an opinion on one of these
Hero selection = agency	Students pick their own quest; ownership from day 2
"Ninja-est detail" sticker	Gamification rewards specificity, not length
SMART goal structure	Makes the vague actionable; kids feel powerful when they can name a target

Post-Class Log Template

After class, copy this into Ninja-Class-Log:

[Date] – Week 2: SMART Goals + Kernel Set-Up

Skill Focus (Phase/Week): Phase 0 – Kernel expansion (written; HJ context)

Fun Landed?

Skill Protected?

Thick Evidence? N/A (no text evidence yet)

Time Budget Honest?

One Fix for Next Time:

UNIT 1 – HERO'S JOURNEY (WEEKS 1–4) •
WEEK 03

MENTOR
MANUAL

Paradigms & Principles + BBS Intro

Week at a Glance

This table is your dashboard. If someone asks what Week 3 is for, point here.

WEEK	3
HABIT	Paradigms & Principles (Roots – explicit foundation)
WRITING PHASE	Phase 1 – Because / But / So (oral + first written)
TEXT	Short clip selected by mentor (TED talk or mentor story)
SESSION LENGTH	45 minutes
CENTRAL DELIVERABLE	One written BBS sentence + paradigms worksheet begun

Week 3 exists to do three things: introduce paradigms as invisible glasses, launch the because/but/so connector as the main sentence tool for Phase A, and give every student a first written success. The paradigms lesson is abstract by nature (it's invisible glasses, for heaven's sake), so keep it concrete: real examples, a clip, a student paradigm. The active work must produce writing. If students leave with only a discussion, the week failed.

Pre-Class Checklist

This list is built for a class of 8–14 11+ year olds in a 45-minute block. Adjust quantities if your group is larger or smaller.

- ☐ Name tags or name tents (reuse from W1)
- ☐ Index cards, 3 per student – warm-up, BBS practice, reflection card
- ☐ Pen or marker for each student

- ☐ TED talk clip cued and tested (60–90 seconds showing a clear before/after belief shift)
- ☐ Whiteboard: three columns labeled BECAUSE / BUT / SO
- ☐ Timer (for 2-minute oral rounds and 5-minute writing blocks)
- ☐ Sticker or token system (optional: for best connector choices)
- ☐ Paradigms & Principles handout (optional, one page with 3 examples)
- ☐ *If running the Ninja Game enrichment*: oversized clown glasses (1–2 pairs), 6–8 Setback Cards written ahead, "Ninja Eye" tokens – see Ninja Game section

45-Minute Flow

The flow below protects the active work block. Every minute you talk is a minute they don't write. If you talk more than 15 minutes total, you are teaching past the point of middle-school attention.

BLOCK	TIME	ACTIVITY	PHASE / TOOL
Opening ritual	3 min	Learn the Ninja Way + HJ quest check-in (who started their film/book?)	Culture
Warm-up	5 min	Paradigm shift flash: two opposite reactions to the same event; students vote which is ninja	Phase 1 setup
Main instruction	12 min	Paradigms & Principles (7 min) + intro to Because/But/So with a pop-culture sentence (5 min)	Habit + Phase 1
Active work	22 min	Oral BBS on one sentence from clip (5 min); write one BBS sentence about a classmate's paradigm (10 min); share 3–4 aloud (7 min)	Phase 1 (oral + first written)
Close / exit task	3 min	Reflection card: one written BBS sentence + paradigms worksheet begun	Logistics

Total: 45 minutes.

If over budget: Cut the optional paradigms handout. Teach from the whiteboard only and move into active work 2 minutes early. Keep the BBS written practice protected at all costs.

The Ninja Game: Flip the Glasses

(enrichment — not in the canonical class plan; see page map)

BINDER ENRICHMENT FLAG

This game is a binder-layer addition; it does not appear in the canonical class plan ([Week-03-Paradigms-BBS-Intro.md](#)). The enrichment-vs-drift decision is deferred to the per-week Ninja Game inventory in the Week-03 Page Map.

Slot: Warm-up (5 min). Replaces the paradigm-shift flash vote. It produces the same BBS sentence the reflection card asks for, so it adds no net time.

Why this game: Paradigm is abstract. This forces students to *perform* the shift instead of discussing it, and the scoring rule teaches the actual definition: a shift changes action, not mood.

How to run it:

- 1 Read a **Setback Card** aloud (got a zero / didn't make the team / friend ignored me / burned dinner).
- 2 Student A puts on the **clown glasses** and reacts in the **fixed** voice (encourage ham). Student B snatches the glasses, puts them on, and replays the *same event* in the **growth** voice.
- 3 The pair locks it into one BBS sentence on the board.

Prop: oversized novelty/clown glasses. One pair works; the snatch is half the fun. If you want the metaphor crystal-clear, bring two pairs and label them FIXED and GROWTH.

The scoring is the lesson: award a Ninja Eye token only if the growth version changes what the character would *do next*. When a student wins with "but I felt better," name it: "*That's a pep talk, not a shift. What would you DO differently?*"

Watch for: students flipping only the emotion. Push every flip to a next action. Mixed ages: pair an older student (the snatcher) with a younger one (the fixed voice) so the harder move is scaffolded.

Materials

ITEM	QUANTITY	NOTES
Index cards	30 (3/student)	Plain white; no lines
Pens/markers	15	Extras prevent stalls
Name tents	15	Reuse from W1
Whiteboard: three columns	1	BECAUSE / BUT / SO – drawn before class
TED talk clip	1 (device)	60–90 sec; must show a clear before/after belief shift

ITEM	QUANTITY	NOTES
Paradigms handout (optional)	15	One page; 3 real-world paradigm examples
Timer	1	2-minute oral rounds
Sticker sheet	1 sheet	Best connector choice
Clown glasses ("Ninja Goggles")	1–2 pairs	Only if running Ninja Game enrichment
Setback Cards	6–8	Only if running Ninja Game; written ahead
"Ninja Eye" tokens	1 set	Only if running Ninja Game

Contingency Plans

If fewer than 8 students: Run oral BBS as whole-class popcorn style; each student adds one connector aloud in sequence.

If more than 12 students: Split into two circles for oral BBS, then merge for sharing. Alternatively, use seated pairs, then have 4 pairs share to the whole class.

If students are too shy for oral BBS: Anonymous written submissions on index cards; mentor reads 3–4 aloud and the class guesses the connector. Same target, no exposure.

If time runs short: Cut the paradigms lecture to 5 minutes (skip extra examples; whiteboard only). Keep the BBS written practice as protected active work.

If a student refuses to write: "Write just the connector word. Because. But. So. Pick one. We'll build the rest together."

If writing activity stalls: "One sentence. One connector. One honest thought. That's it."

If the TED talk clip is unavailable: Replace with a 60-second mentor story about a paradigm shift of your own.

If a student can't think of a paradigm: "What's something your parents believe that you disagree with? Start there."

Teaching Script

Copy everything below and feed to NotebookLM with prompt: "Convert this teaching script into an 8-slide presentation for middle schoolers. One idea per slide. Use simple visuals and include one interactive element on each slide. Add a speaker notes section with timing reminders."

[SLIDE 1: TITLE]

Two people. Same event. Totally different reactions. Why? Today you learn the word that explains everything.

[SLIDE 2: LEARN THE NINJA WAY – WEEK 3]

This week's trait: **"Ninjas question what they believe before they believe what they think."**

We all have invisible glasses on. They color everything we see. Most people never take the glasses off. Ninjas do.

[SLIDE 3: PARADIGM SHIFT FLASH]

Two kids get a zero on a test.

Kid 1 thinks: "I'm bad at this. I'll never get it."

Kid 2 thinks: "I don't get this YET. I need a different strategy."

Same event. Different glasses. Different action.

[Turn to class.] Which kid is the ninja?

[SLIDE 4: PARADIGMS & PRINCIPLES]

Your paradigm = the glasses you wear. Your principles = the truth underneath.

Principles don't change. Paradigms do. And when you change your paradigm, you change your life.

[One real example. Yours. Something embarrassing you believed that turned out to be wrong. Keep it under 60 seconds.]

[SLIDE 5: BECAUSE / BUT / SO – THE CONNECTOR UPGRADE]

Last week you EXPANDED sentences. This week you CONNECT them.

Three words. Three relationships:

BECAUSE – explains WHY. Cause. Reason. **BUT** – introduces conflict. Something unexpected. **SO** – shows result. What happens next.

These aren't just grammar. They're NINJA TOOLS. They make your thinking visible.

[SLIDE 6: TED TALK BBS – ORAL ROUND]

Watch this clip. (60–90 seconds.) Notice the moment the speaker's paradigm shifts.

[Play clip.]

Now, say a BBS sentence OUT LOUD about the clip. Don't write yet. Just speak.

Examples: "The speaker believed school was about obedience BECAUSE that's what he experienced."
 "The speaker wanted creativity in schools BUT the system punished it."

[2 minutes. Popcorn style. Call on volunteers fast. No wrong answers. Only "because," "but," or "so."]

[SLIDE 7: WRITE YOUR PARADIGM – ACTIVE WORK]

On your card, pick ONE of these and finish it:

"I used to think ninjas were _____, BUT now I think ninjas are _____ because _____ "

OR

"Ninjas don't quit SO they _____ "

OR

"Ninjas practice every day BECAUSE _____ "

[5 minutes to write. Walk around. Read over shoulders. "Show me your connector."]

[Now, find a partner. Read your sentence aloud. Partner tells you: Which connector did you use? Did it match your meaning? 3 minutes.]

[SLIDE 8: REFLECTION CARD]

Bottom of your card:

- 1** One BBS sentence about YOUR paradigm (anything you believed that changed).
- 2** Circle your connector: BECAUSE / BUT / SO.
- 3** One thing from this week that made you see something differently.

[Collect. "Paradigms worksheet" is listed as begun; it's optional follow-up if time ran short, otherwise complete in class.]

After Class

- ☐ Collect reflection cards (BBS sentences + paradigm reflections)

- ☐ Email parents: Week 3 summary + HJ quest reminder (midpoint check Week 13)
- ☐ Record names + first BBS writing samples (keep index cards; compare at Week 6)
- ☐ Flag students who struggle with connector choice for check-in next week
- ☐ **Season 3 Testing Log entry** (see Post-Class Log below)

PARENT EMAIL (VERBATIM)

Ninja Scholar – Week 3: Paradigms & Principles + BBS Intro

Today your ninja learned that everyone wears "invisible glasses" called paradigms, and that changing the glasses changes the outcome. We also introduced our first writing tool: because / but / so connectors.

At-home ask: Ask your ninja about a time they changed their mind about something. Can they say it in one sentence using "because," "but," or "so"?

Hero's Journey quest reminder: Week 13 midpoint check. Students should have chosen their story and started it by now.

– Ninja Scholar Mentor

Framework Connections

ELEMENT	WHERE IT LIVES
Phase 1: BBS connector	Ninja-Scholar-Writing-Sequence
Paradigms & Principles (Habit lesson)	7-Habits-Lesson-Mining – Paradigms & Principles section
"Learn the Ninja Way" ritual	Core-Framework Section 2
Class format (45 min, honest time budget)	Ninja-Scholar-Phase-3-Architecture Section 1
30-Week Skeleton placement	Ninja-Scholar-30-Week-Skeleton Week 3

Fun Factor Notes

ELEMENT	WHY IT'S FUN
Paradigm shift flash	Instant engagement – every kid has had a "zero on a test" moment
TED talk clip	Multimedia break; real person's story beats abstract lecture

ELEMENT	WHY IT'S FUN
Popcorn oral BBS	Low stakes, whole-class energy; no wrong answers
Partner check-in	Social + accountable; students hear their own voice
Your embarrassing paradigm story	Vulnerability = trust; opens the room

Post-Class Log Template

After class, copy this into Ninja-Class-Log:

[Date] – Week 3: Paradigms & Principles + BBS Intro

Skill Focus (Phase/Week): Phase 1 – BBS connector (oral + first written)

Fun Landed?

Skill Protected?

Thick Evidence? N/A (no text evidence yet)

Time Budget Honest?

One Fix for Next Time:

Season 3 Testing Log hypothesis for this week:

THIS WEEK'S HYPOTHESIS	RESULT (PASS / FAIL / PARTIAL)	EVIDENCE
Oral BBS before written BBS will produce more confident connector choices than jumping straight to writing		

UNIT 1 — HERO'S JOURNEY (WEEKS 1–4) •
WEEK 04

MENTOR
MANUAL

Annotation Bookmark + Discussion Protocol

Week at a Glance

WEEK	4
HABIT	– (implicit only)
WRITING PHASE	Phase 1 – BBS warm-up on a text sentence
TEXT	"The Dinner Party" by Mona Gardner
SESSION LENGTH	45 minutes
CENTRAL DELIVERABLE	3+ annotations on bookmark; one annotation shared aloud

Week 4 exists to do three things: teach annotation as a physical habit, launch the discussion protocol that will run all year, and give students their first experience of using BBS on actual text. The Dinner Party is the right story because it is short, surprising, and full of clear because/but/so moments. Do not let the read-aloud expand past 10 minutes. The active work: annotation + one practice discussion: is where the learning lives.

Pre-Class Checklist

- ☐ Name tags or name tents (reuse from W1)
- ☐ INDEX cards, 3 per student: warm-up, annotation practice, reflection card
- ☐ Pen or marker for each student
- ☐ Student Binders printed: full text of "**The Dinner Party**" is embedded in the binder, so no separate story copies are needed
- ☐ Annotation bookmark handout, 1 per student (see Curriculum/Ninja Scholar/Core-Framework.md or 07-Student-Materials)

- ☐ Whiteboard or display: discussion protocol steps drawn (Write → Sort → Draw → Facilitate)
- ☐ Timer (for 10-minute read-aloud and 5-minute annotation block)
- ☐ Index cards or half-sheets for Discussion Questions, 1 per table
- ☐ Optional: highlighters or colored pencils, 1 per student
- ☐ **Ninja Game (Three Stars):** 3 star tokens or star stickers per student

45-Minute Flow

BLOCK	TIME	ACTIVITY	PHASE / TOOL
Opening ritual	3 min	Learn the Ninja Way + HJ quest check-in	Culture
Warm-up	5 min	BBS warm-up: mentor reads one sentence from the story; students call out the connector	Phase 1 (oral)
Main instruction	10 min	Annotation bookmark walkthrough (5 min); discussion protocol: Write → Sort → Draw → Facilitate (5 min)	Annotation + protocol
Active work	22 min	Read "The Dinner Party" aloud (approx. 10 min); students annotate using bookmark; first discussion using protocol (12 min)	Phase 1 (text evidence via annotation)
Close / exit task	5 min	Reflection card: one BBS sentence + one annotation reflection	Logistics

Total: 45 minutes.

If over budget: Cut the read-aloud to mentor-only reading while students follow silently (7 min). Keep annotation and one practice discussion as protected active work.

The Ninja Game: Three Stars (*enrichment: not in the canonical class plan; see class plan [Week-04-Annotation-Bookmark-Discussion-Protocol.md](#)*)

BINDER ENRICHMENT FLAG

This game is a binder-layer addition; it does not appear in the canonical class plan ([04-Class-Log-and-Plans/Class-Plans/Week-04-Annotation-Bookmark-Discussion-Protocol.md](#)). Keep until the per-week Ninja Game inventory decides enrichment vs drift.

Slot: Runs *during* the read-aloud (inside Active Work): it replaces silent annotation, so it costs no extra time and produces the annotated page the deliverable requires.

Why this game: "Mark the move" games practice the *symbol*. This practices the *judgment*: annotation is deciding what matters under uncertainty. Scarcity (three stars) forces real discrimination, and the story's own suspense supplies the stakes.

How to run it:

- 1 Give each student exactly **three star tokens** (or three star stickers, or three allowed pencil-stars) before you start reading.
- 2 Read aloud, pausing at paragraph breaks. Students spend stars when they judge a moment is one of the three biggest: but the cobra reveal is coming, so holding a star is a gamble.
- 3 Any student may call **"Freeze"** to mark and justify a line. If the room agrees, all make the real mark.
- 4 At the end, tally where stars landed. **The most-starred moments become the discussion-protocol questions:** the game feeds straight into Write → Sort → Draw → Facilitate.

Watch for: early dumping (a kid spends all three in the first paragraph). Let the natural regret teach the lesson: he'll have no star left for the reveal. Underline, circle, and ? stay unlimited; only the star is scarce.

Materials

ITEM	QUANTITY	NOTES
Index cards	30 (3/student)	Warm-up + reflection card
"The Dinner Party" text	—	Embedded in the Student Binder (no separate copies); anchor text is in <code>Research/Extractions/The-Dinner-Party-20260610.md</code>
Annotation bookmark handout	15	Laminate if possible for reuse all year
Pens + highlighters or colored pencils	15 each	Annotation benefits from color-coding
Whiteboard: protocol steps	1	Drawn before class: Write → Sort → Draw → Facilitate
Timer	1	10-minute read-aloud; 5-minute annotation

ITEM	QUANTITY	NOTES
Sticker sheet	1 sheet	Best annotation shared aloud
Star tokens (Three Stars game)	3/student (45)	Tokens, star stickers, or capped pencil-stars; only the star is scarce

Contingency Plans

If fewer than 8 students: Round-robin read-aloud; discussion becomes a full-circle go-around rather than protocol.

If more than 12 students: Mentor reads while students follow, or split into two groups for read-aloud. For discussion, use fishbowl: inner circle of 6 practices protocol while outer circle observes; then swap.

If students are too shy to share an annotation: "Write your annotation on an index card. I'll read 3 aloud anonymously. Same learning, zero exposure."

If time runs short: Cut the full read-aloud to mentor reading only (students follow); keep 5-minute annotation + 5-minute discussion as protected active work.

If a student can't annotate (no highlighter, doesn't know what to mark): "Underline ONE sentence that made you react. That's it. No wrong annotation."

If writing activity stalls: "Pick one sentence in the story. Underline it. Write one word: Why? Where? When? That's an annotation."

PARENT EMAIL

Ninja Scholar: Week 4: Annotation Bookmark + Discussion Protocol

Today your ninja learned to read like a ninja: with a pen in hand, leaving marks on the page. We read "The Dinner Party" by Mona Gardner and practiced sorting questions into thin, thick, and ninja categories.

At-home ask: Ask your ninja to show you their annotation bookmark and explain one mark they made on the story.

Hero's Journey quest: Week 13 midpoint check is approaching. Please make sure your ninja has chosen their year-long story and begun it.

UNIT 02

Speak Your Mind (Weeks 5–6 partial)

Gear A tail • Phase 1 • From sentences on a page to questions that start fights.

UNIT 2 – SPEAK YOUR MIND (WEEKS 5–6
PARTIAL) • WEEK 05

MENTOR
MANUAL

Dinner Party Discussion + Connector Upgrade

Week at a Glance

WEEK	5
HABIT	– (implicit only)
WRITING PHASE	Phase 1 – Connector Upgrade (first evidence)
TEXT	"The Dinner Party" by Mona Gardner (revisited)
SESSION LENGTH	45 minutes
CENTRAL DELIVERABLE	One expanded BBS question with text evidence per table

Week 5 exists to do three things: reinforce the discussion protocol from Week 4, introduce the first real evidence demand, and show students that a question is a sentence tool. The Connector Upgrade is the pivot from oral play to written argument. Keep the model tight: one apprentice question, one connector, one piece of evidence, one twist. Students should leave the room having produced writing, not just discussion.

Pre-Class Checklist

- ☐ Name tags or name tents (reuse from W1)
- ☐ INDEX cards, 3 per student – warm-up, connector upgrade, reflection card
- ☐ Pen or marker for each student
- ☐ **"The Dinner Party" copies, 1 per student** (reuse or fresh copies if heavily annotated last week)
- ☐ Whiteboard: BBS connector columns + a model "Connector Upgrade" before/after drawing
- ☐ Timer (for 3-minute question-writing and 5-minute expansion rounds)

- ☐ Index cards or half-sheets for table questions, 1 per table
- ☐ Optional: "Apprentice vs. Ninja Question" poster or handout, 1 per table
- ☐ Sticker or token system (optional: for best ninja question per table)
- ☐ **Ninja Game (Divide the Room):** floor space cleared; YES / NO / UNDECIDED signs or tape zones

45-Minute Flow

BLOCK	TIME	ACTIVITY	PHASE / TOOL
Opening ritual	3 min	Learn the Ninja Way + annotation check (show me one mark from last week)	Culture
Warm-up	5 min	Connector-review speed round: mentor calls fragments; students shout BECAUSE / BUT / SO	Phase 1 (oral)
Main instruction	10 min	Review discussion protocol (3 min); Connector Upgrade: write a question, transform it with BBS + evidence (7 min)	Connector Upgrade + protocol
Active work	22 min	Write questions from text (5 min); one question selected per table; tables expand using BBS + thin evidence; mentor models paraphrasing (17 min)	Phase 1: Connector Upgrade
Close / exit task	5 min	Reflection card: one expanded BBS question with text evidence + HJ quest check	Logistics

Total: 45 minutes.

If over budget: Cut discussion protocol review to 1 minute ("Same as last week – you know it"). Keep the Connector Upgrade active work as protected block.

The Ninja Game: Divide the Room

Slot: Front of Active Work (the share-out of table questions) – it replaces the ordinary "read your question aloud," so it costs no extra time and produces the exit-ticket question.

Why this game: The week's trait is "questions that start fights." A relay rewards *speed*; this rewards *division*. The mechanic literally is the DEFINITION – a ninja question is one that splits a room.

How to run it:

- 1 Each table builds a question with the 4-step Upgrade Machine and reads it aloud.

2 The room votes with feet or hands: YES / NO / undecided.

3 **Score = the split.** A lopsided vote means the question was thin (one answer). A balanced, loud split means it's a true ninja question. Run it as a quick bracket and crown one **Ninja Question of the Day**.

Watch for: a deadlock where the room splits but no one will argue. That signals a question that divides on *fact*, not *judgment*. Push: "*You're split – now WHY? Use evidence from the story.*" That turns the vote into the discussion. Keep evidence-from-text as the tiebreaker so it never becomes opinion-only.

Materials

ITEM	QUANTITY	NOTES
Index cards	30 (3/student)	Warm-up + connector upgrade + reflection card
"The Dinner Party" copies	15	Fresh copies if heavily annotated last week; otherwise reuse
Pens	15	
Whiteboard: connector columns	1	BECAUSE / BUT / SO + one model before/after upgrade
Timer	1	90-second speed round; 3-minute writing blocks
"Apprentice vs. Ninja Question" handout (optional)	15	One-page reference with 2–3 examples
Sticker sheet	1 sheet	Best ninja question per table
YES / NO / UNDECIDED signs	3	Tape or printed signs marking the three vote zones; clear floor space for the vote

Contingency Plans

If fewer than 8 students: Tables of 2 instead of 3–4. Discussion protocol still works; sorting is faster.

If more than 12 students: Tables of 4–5. Use fishbowl for share-out: one table presents their ninja question; other tables vote on evidence quality.

If students are too shy to share their question: Anonymous submission to mentor; mentor reads 2–3 and the class upgrades them together. Then students upgrade their own.

If time runs short: Cut table selection to "mentor picks one question from each table." Keep the 10-minute expansion block as protected active work.

If a student can't write a question from the text: "Write any question about the story. Even if it seems thin. We'll upgrade it together."

If writing activity stalls: "Write one question. Any question. Add 'because' to it. That's the upgrade."

PARENT EMAIL

Ninja Scholar – Week 5: Dinner Party Discussion + Connector Upgrade

Today your ninja learned how to "upgrade" a basic question into a discussion-ready question using because / but / so connectors. They also practiced paraphrasing – saying a story's idea in their own words instead of copying.

At-home ask: Ask your ninja to explain the difference between an "apprentice question" and a "ninja question." Can they give you an example from "The Dinner Party"?

Hero's Journey quest: 14-Day Mission launch is coming in Week 5 / Week 6. Watch for the mission tracker.

UNIT 2 – SPEAK YOUR MIND (WEEKS 5–6
PARTIAL) • WEEK 06

 MENTOR
MANUAL

PBA + Freewrite #1

Week at a Glance

WEEK	6
HABIT	Personal Bank Account (Roots – explicit)
WRITING PHASE	Phase 1 – BBS warm-up with PBA vocabulary
TEXT	None (autobiographical; student is the text)
SESSION LENGTH	45 minutes
CENTRAL DELIVERABLE	PBA ledger started; Freewrite #1 in binder

Week 6 exists to do three things: make the 7 Habits concrete through the Personal Bank Account metaphor, launch the freewrite binder ritual that persists all year, and give students a safe place to write without mechanics correction. The PBA must feel like money in the bank, not therapy. Keep examples neutral and practical. The freewrite must have clear boundaries (5 minutes, one prompt, no sharing required) so students feel safe enough to be honest.

Pre-Class Checklist

- ☐ Name tags or name tents (reuse from W1)
- ☐ INDEX cards, 3 per student – warm-up, PBA ledger, reflection card
- ☐ Pen or marker for each student
- ☐ Freewrite notebooks or binders, 1 per student (if not yet distributed, use lined paper today)
- ☐ **PBA handout, 1 per student** (deposit/withdrawal categories; see [Curriculum/Ninja Scholar/01-Philosophy-and-Design/7-Habits-Lesson-Mining.md](#))
- ☐ Whiteboard or display: PBA ledger model drawn (two columns: Deposits / Withdrawals)
- ☐ Timer (for 5-minute freewrite block and 3-minute sharing)
- ☐ Optional: jar, rocks, or visual prop for Big Rocks demonstration

- ☐ **Ninja Game (The Trust Account):** 6–8 "Sam" action cards written ahead; balance meter drawn on the board
- ☐ Sticker or token system (optional: for most honest freewrite share)

45-Minute Flow

BLOCK	TIME	ACTIVITY	PHASE / TOOL
Opening ritual	3 min	Learn the Ninja Way + HJ quest check-in (who's 7-day mission is due this week?)	Culture
Warm-up	5 min	BBS speed round with PBA vocabulary: "I made a deposit/withdrawal BECAUSE..."	Phase 1 (oral)
Main instruction	10 min	Personal Bank Account (10 min): deposits vs. withdrawals + optional Big Rocks demo	Habit: PBA
Active work	22 min	PBA ledger: 3 deposits and 3 withdrawals from the past week (5 min); Freewrite #1 on "My biggest rock this week" (12 min); 2–3 volunteers share one sentence (5 min)	Phase 1 (BBS warm-up with PBA vocab) + Freewrite #1
Close / exit task	5 min	Reflection card: one PBA sentence + assignment: bring freewrite binder every week	Logistics

Total: 45 minutes.

If over budget: Cut the Big Rocks demo to verbal only (no physical props). Keep the PBA ledger and freewrite as protected active work.

The Ninja Game: The Trust Account

Slot: Main instruction (the PBA teach, ~10 min) – it replaces the deposit/withdrawal lecture. Students fill their own ledger afterward as usual.

Why this game: Charades for trust actions can feel performative, and exposing real deposits/withdrawals risks the "PBA as therapy" trap this week is built to avoid. Using a fictional banker, **Sam**, keeps it safe – and the running balance plus a withdrawal coming due makes "deposit before you withdraw" something students *watch* pay off rather than just hear.

How to run it:

- 1 Draw a **balance meter** on the board starting at zero. Read 6–8 short Sam actions one at a time (prep these – keep them neutral and sibling/friend scale, not heavy).

- 2 After each, the room votes **deposit or withdrawal AND by how much** (small / big). The "how much" is the judgment a yes/no charade skips. Move the meter.
- 3 **The twist that lands the lesson:** midway, a withdrawal comes *due* – "Sam needs to borrow his sister's bike." Ask whether the balance covers it. If they tanked Sam early, it doesn't.
- 4 *Then* students fill in their own private ledger – never required to share.

Watch for: keep every Sam action low-stakes and fictional. Do not invite students to volunteer real family withdrawals in front of the room. Protect that privacy boundary the same way you protect the freewrite.

Prep – sample Sam action cards:

- + Promised to help his sister study, then left to game. (*withdrawal, big*)
- + Apologized first after a fight. (*deposit, big*)
- + Did a chore without being asked. (*deposit, small*)
- + Repeated a secret a friend told him. (*withdrawal, big*)
- + Listened to his mom's hard day without trying to fix it. (*deposit, small*)
- + Showed up late again after promising not to. (*withdrawal, small but repeated*)

Materials

ITEM	QUANTITY	NOTES
Index cards	30 (3/student)	Warm-up + PBA ledger + reflection card
Pens	15	
Freewrite notebooks/binders	15	If first distribution, label with name + "Ninja Freewrites"
PBA handout	15	Deposit/withdrawal category list
Whiteboard: PBA ledger	1	Two columns drawn before class
Optional: jar + rocks	1 set	Big Rocks demonstration prop
Timer	1	5-minute freewrite
Sticker sheet	1 sheet	Most honest freewrite share

ITEM	QUANTITY	NOTES
"Sam" action cards	6–8	Written ahead; neutral sibling/friend scale (sample set in the Ninja Game section)
Board balance meter	1	Vertical scale drawn before class; starts at zero

Contingency Plans

If fewer than 8 students: PBA ledger sharing becomes whole-circle go-around. Each student reads one deposit or withdrawal.

If more than 12 students: Split into two circles for freewrite sharing. Or use pair-share instead of whole-class share-out.

If students are too shy to share freewrite: "Read one SENTENCE. Just one. You choose which one." Or collect anonymous written submissions; mentor reads 2 aloud without naming names.

If time runs short: Cut PBA ledger listing to 2 deposits + 2 withdrawals. Keep the 10-minute freewrite as protected active work.

If a student has no freewrite notebook: Provide lined paper today; a notebook is required next week. "Ninjas come prepared. Next week, bring a notebook or I'll give you one."

If writing activity stalls: "Write one sentence about your biggest rock. Just one. Then keep going if you want."

PARENT EMAIL

Ninja Scholar – Week 6: PBA + Freewrite #1

Today your ninja learned about the Personal Bank Account – the idea that every relationship has deposits (actions that build trust) and withdrawals (actions that drain trust). We also launched the freewrite binder, where students write without grammar or spelling correction.

At-home ask: Ask your ninja what their biggest "rock" was this week – the person or responsibility that mattered most. They can share as much or as little as they want; freewrites are theirs unless they choose to share.

Assignment: Please make sure your ninja brings a freewrite notebook to class every week. If they lose it, they will replace it during class time.

Hero Training Mission: 7-day mission completions are being checked next week. Please send a photo of the tracker if it is complete.



End of W1-6 vertical slice. Weeks 7-30 consolidate in later passes. Per UNIT-MAP.md: Unit 1 = W1-4 (complete), Unit 2 = W5-8 (W5-6 in this slice; W7-8 pending §1.1 merge fix).