



## Steve Aoki and Growth Mindset

### OVERVIEW

#### ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How can our brains be shaped by our mindset, and how has a growth mindset helped Steve Aoki become one of the most successful DJs and record producers in the world?

#### OVERVIEW

*In this lesson, students will explore the growth mindset and the science of how our brains process and store experiences. To engage with these topics, students will examine interviews, music videos, and live performances by Steve Aoki, to see how the musician's approach may exemplify the growth mindset. They'll conclude with an activity that encourages them to embrace challenges.*



To some, Steve Aoki is an internationally-known DJ who organizes and performs spectacular performances for thousands of fans. Others may know him from his many collaborations with artists such as will.i.am, LMFAO, Linkin Park, Lil Jon, blink-182, BTS, Rise Against, Lauren Jauregui, and Fall Out Boy. Still others may have seen Aoki from the record label he founded, Dim Mak, his Billboard-charting albums, or his appearances in films, television, and video games. The truth is that Steve Aoki is all of the above.

As a musician and entrepreneur who has relished challenges and pursued continual creative progress, Steve Aoki is a living example of the positive outcomes possible to one who embraces what psychologist Carol Dweck named the “growth mindset.” Dweck suggests, “In a growth mindset, people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work—brains and talent are just the starting point. This view creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishment.”

Aoki developed a growth mindset early in his life, as a self-described teenage “skate punk.” With his small group of friends, he practiced a “D.I.T” (“Do it Together”) ethos: forming bands, organizing performances, and creating artistic products. These formative experiences instilled within him a perspective that anything was possible, and gave him experience working with other people towards creative pursuits. As Steve Aoki shows, you are never too young to begin developing a growth mindset.

## OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this lesson, students will:

### 1. KNOW (KNOWLEDGE):

- The ways to cultivate and develop a growth mindset
- The concept of neuroplasticity
- The career of Steve Aoki
- The definition of “D.I.Y.” (“Do-it-yourself”) and “D.I.T.” (“Doing-it-together”)

### 2. MASTERY OBJECTIVE:

- Students will be able to identify and practice strategies towards developing a growth mindset by watching clips of Steve Aoki and discussing how a growth mindset might have contributed to his success.

## ACTIVITIES

### MOTIVATIONAL ACTIVITY

1. Play **Clip 1, “Tarantino ft. STARX” by Steve Aoki and Timmy Trumpet**. After watching the video, ask students to write down a list of people who might have helped create the video. Encourage them to consider the music, the art, as well as the more technical aspects of a video, such as editing.
2. Ask students to share their list with the class, and create a classroom-wide list on the board.
3. Play **Clip 2, Steve Aoki Live at Tomorrowland Main Stage, 2019**. Again, ask students to write down a list of people who might have helped create this live event.
4. Ask students to share their list with the class and create a new classroom-wide list on the board.
5. Draw students attention to the two lists they created, and ask them:
  - How might Steve Aoki have been able to organize all the people needed to create the video and live event for his music?
  - What sort of skills and qualities might Aoki need to have to create projects such as music videos and concerts? For example, what skills might be required to stay focused on such a project? What skills might be needed to work with others?

## PROCEDURE

1. Tell students that in this class they will be discovering the growth mindset, a perspective people can develop within themselves to help overcome obstacles in life. They will be looking at the career of DJ Steve Aoki as an example of ways you can practice a growth mindset.
2. Play **Clip 3, The D.I.Y. Ethos**, from an interview Aoki had with photographer and entrepreneur, Chase Jarvis. Ask students:
  - “D.I.Y.” stands for “Do it Yourself.” How does Aoki describe the principles of the “D.I.Y.” lifestyle? Why was the “D.I.Y.” lifestyle important to him, even today?
  - According to Aoki, how does the “D.I.Y.” lifestyle create a community? What does the “D.I.Y.” community value?
  - What did Aoki learn through his experience with the “D.I.Y.” community?
  - How did the “D.I.Y.” approach transform into the “D.I.T.” approach? What did the “D.I.T.” approach teach Aoki?
3. Show **Image 1, “Two Mindsets,”** created by psychologist Carol S. Dweck. Ask students:
  - Based on what you have seen so far, which of the two mindsets do you think Steve Aoki exemplifies? Can you use examples from the chart to describe the characteristics you notice in Aoki?
  - How might have the D.I.Y. community helped develop Aoki’s mindset?
  - How might this mindset have helped Aoki become a successful artist?
4. Tell students that the growth mindset is based in science. The brain possesses what scientists call “neuroplasticity.” This means that as we grow, learn, and especially as we try new things, the neurons in our brain continually develop, and then maintain, new pathways. And much like other parts of our bodies, if we don’t exercise our brain, it suffers. According to Dr. Dweck, confronting new challenges and attempting new skills is one of the best ways to exercise the brain.
5. Play **Clip 4, Segment of “Aoki’s World.”** Tell students that this clip comes from the online video series “Aoki’s World,” which documents Aoki’s travels while on tour. After the clip, ask students:
  - In what way does Aoki continue to embrace a growth mindset while on tour?

## SUMMARY ACTIVITY

1. Show students **Image 1, “The Two Mindsets”** once again. Then ask students to write about a moment in their life when they held a fixed mindset, and a time in their life when they possessed a growth mindset. Ask students to share their answers with the class if they are comfortable.
2. In writing or through class discussion, ask students to reflect on the moment of their life when they held a fixed mindset, and consider ways they might have applied a growth mindset to that situation.



## EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

1. Watch **Clip 5, Creating a Zine**. Then, create your own zine based around something that you are passionate about. Consider including the following:
  - Interviews with friends and family
  - Poems, stories, or other forms of creative writing
  - Comics and drawings
  - Lists, fact sheets, or infographics
2. Watch the entire interview between Chase Jarvis and Steve Aoki, (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WeP1EzHRJoc>) then write a summary of some of the important messages you felt came from this interview.
3. Learn more about the growth mindset by reading **Handout - Your Malleable Brain and The Growth Mindset**.

## STANDARDS

### THE COLLABORATIVE FOR ACADEMIC, SOCIAL, AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING COMPETENCIES

#### *Self-Awareness*

Having a growth mindset

### COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

#### *College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing*

Text Types and Purposes 3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences.

#### *College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening*

Comprehension & Collaboration 1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Comprehension & Collaboration 3: Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

#### *College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Language*

Language 1: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use 4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use 6: Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.



## RESOURCES

### VIDEO RESOURCES

- “Tarantino ft. STARX” by Steve Aoki and Timmy Trumpet
- Steve Aoki LIVE at Tomorrowland Main Stage, 2019
- The D.I.Y. Ethos
- Segment of “Aoki’s World.”
- Creating a Zine

### HANDOUTS

- Handout - Your Malleable Brain and The Growth Mindset