



Help Students Identify and Understand their Passion

A Simple Classroom Reflection Activity



WHAT IS PASSION?

Passion is “a strong inclination toward an activity that one likes (or even loves), finds important, in which one invests time and energy, and is part of one’s identity.”

There are two types of Passion depending on how the activity is internalised:



HARMONIOUS PASSION

“I love doing this, and I choose to.”

- Flexible engagement
- Can step away when needed
- Fits with other parts of life
- Associated with positive experiences



OBSESSIVE PASSION

“I love doing this, but I feel I have to.”

- More rigid engagement
- Harder to disengage
- May conflict with other parts of life
- More negative emotions, rumination and experiences



IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER: Harmonious and Obsessive Passion are not dichotomous. They can coexist. The type of passion at play **may vary** depending on the **situation and context** at a given time.

TRY THIS ACTIVITY WITH YOUR STUDENTS

Time: 20–45 minutes

Format: Individual reflection followed by class discussion



1 IDENTIFY A PASSION

Ask students to identify an activity they like or love, find important, and spend a significant amount of time doing.



2 REFLECT ON OBSESSIVE PASSION – 5 MIN

Ask students to recall the following event vividly and include as much detail in your writing as you can to relive the experience.

“A time when you had difficulties controlling your urge to do your favorite activity and you felt that this activity was the only thing that gave you excitement.”

Encourage students to think about:

- How did I feel?
- What did I do?
- What was I thinking?
- What decision did I make?



3 PAUSE AND DISCUSS

Invite students to reflect on their experience.

- How did you feel?
- What was happening in that situation?
- Did it affect other areas of your life?



4 REFLECT ON HARMONIOUS PASSION – 5 MIN

Ask students to recall the following event vividly.

“A time when your favorite activity was in harmony with other things that are part of you and you felt that your favorite activity allowed you to live a variety of experiences.”

Encourage students to think about:

- How did I feel?
- What did I do?
- What was I thinking?
- What decision did I make?



5 COMPARE AND REFLECT

Help students compare the two experiences and reflect on:

- How were your thoughts and emotions different?
- When does your passion tend to feel more harmonious or obsessive?
- What distinguishes these situations?
- What could help you engage with your passion more harmoniously?



PURPOSE OF THE ACTIVITY

By the end of the activity, students should be better able to:



DIFFERENTIATE

between harmonious and obsessive passion.



IDENTIFY

how they typically engage with an activity they are passionate about.



RECOGNISE

situations that may bring out harmonious or obsessive passion.



TEACHER TIP: This activity helps students notice how their mindset and the situation influence their passion – and how they can make choices that support a healthier, more balanced passion.

Sources:

- St-Cyr, J., Paquette, V., & Vallerand, R. J. (2025). Engaging in an activity with passion: How the situation affects our mindset.
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- Vallerand, R. J. 2015. *The Psychology of Passion: A Dualistic Model*. Series in Positive Psychology. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

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