This *anytime* activity was inspired by H. Jackson Brown, Jr.’s book *Live and Learn and Pass It On*. The book is a compilation of life lessons from people of all ages.

The activity allows the students to compose their own “life lessons” learned. It could range from the start of the school year to the end, or things they learned when they were younger.

After I read examples from the book & from past classes, students are given an index card to write their own life lesson. I compile each year’s “lessons” into a class booklet. (See examples below and on following pages.)

*I listed this last April as an end-of-the-year activity; however, it truly can be used anytime. If you have semester or quarter classes, use this as an end-of-the-term activity, or even as an icebreaker.

The rules:
1. Write your age only (no names).
2. Write your lesson learned in one to three sentences. (Many students like to contribute more than one--allow as many as you wish. Printable handouts are available on the final pages if you’d like to use those instead of index cards.)

Additional Ideas:
• Have all the staff members write what they have learned through teaching & compile them for a student teacher or new teacher “handbook.”

• Post the lessons on a school website.

• Students or staff members could use the lessons in a graduation speech. It makes the speech much more personal and interesting.

• Keep the originals in large 3-ring binders and add to them each year. (See photos on last page.)

• **CREATIVE WRITING:** In literature or history, write from the perspective of a character or famous person in history. What would they say they’ve learned? (See handouts.)

Examples from the book by H. Jackson Brown, Jr.:
“I’ve learned that if you want to cheer up yourself, you should try cheering up someone else. -Age 13” (p. 65)

“I’ve learned that you should never jump out of a second story window using a sheet for a parachute. -Age 10” (p. 65)
Examples from the book by H. Jackson Brown, Jr., continued from previous page:
“I’ve learned that regardless of which bank teller’s line you get in, the other ones move faster. -Age 32” (p. 74)

“I’ve learned that if you talk on the phone too long with a girl, your parents suspect something is going on. -Age 11” (p. 75)

“I’ve learned not to kiss and tell. -Age 15” (p. 95)

“I’ve learned that it doesn’t cost anything to be nice. -Age 65” (p. 16)

“I’ve learned that just when I get my room the way I like it, Mom makes me clean it up. -Age 13” (p. 14)

“I’ve learned that my daddy can say a lot of words that I can’t. -Age 6” (p. 11)

“I’ve learned that you can be in love with four girls at the same time. -Age 9” (p. 20)

“I’ve learned that you can’t hide a piece of broccoli in a glass of milk. -Age 7” (p. 33)

“I’ve learned that my mother wouldn’t like my boyfriend even if he were the captain of the football team and sang in the church choir. -Age 17” (p. 34)

“I’ve learned that takers lose and winners give. -Age 58” (p. 78)

Examples from my past students:
“I’ve learned that guys don’t understand girls very well. -Age 15”

“I’ve learned that teachers don’t like it when you fall asleep in class. -Age 15”

“I’ve learned that people can’t hear you if you don’t speak up. -Age 15”

“I’ve learned that life is too short to live by the rules...until you get caught. Then you’ll wish it was a lot shorter. -Age 16”

“I’ve learned never to walk on a pool cover when there is slush on it. -Age 14”

“I’ve learned that parents sometimes need help too. -Age 13”

“I’ve learned that nicknames come and go, so always use your real name. -Age 16”

“I’ve learned that when you ask a question you may not always get the answer you seek. -Age 17”

“I’ve learned that my mom knows pretty much everyone and everything that goes on at school. -Age 15” (From a teacher’s kid)

“I’ve learned that people like to spread a lot of rumors in small towns, so don’t believe everything you hear. -Age 16”

“I’ve learned that with some teachers, just mentioning that you have menstrual cramps can get you out of having to do things. -Age 16”
“I’ve learned that when you bite into sweet-tart flavored chapstick, it doesn’t taste like sweet-tarts. -Age 14”

“I’ve learned that life isn’t fair and it never will be, so just deal with it or be miserable forever. -Age 18”

“I’ve learned that most lessons in life are learned the hard way. -Age 17” (from a student taking English I, English II and English III his junior year)

“I’ve learned that if you want to sit in the front seat of a car, yell ‘Shot gun no shambles’! -Age 14”

“I’ve learned that dying my hair every three weeks will cause damage. -Age 16”

“I’ve learned that some boys should never wear a dress and heels no matter what the Homecoming dress-up day is! -Age 14”

“I’ve learned that stealing candybars from the teacher’s desk is not a good idea. -Age 15”

“I’ve learned that boys will break your heart again and again, but I will still love them. -Age 17”

“I have learned that no matter which desk I move to in the room, annoying kids will flock to me. -Age 16.”

“I’ve learned not to sit in front of Brian during algebra class. -Age 15”

“From teachers:
“T’ve learned that students sometimes say the funniest things, so write them down when you can for a good laugh later. -Age 44”

“I’ve learned to listen with my heart, especially when it comes to the students. -Age 51”

“I’ve learned that sometimes flunking a student is the best thing for that kid. I’ve also learned that sometimes passing a student so you don’t have to have him in class another year is the best thing for your sanity and the rest of the kids. -Age 36”

“I’ve learned that it’s almost impossible to find a name for your baby that does not remind you of one of your students. -Age 34”

“I’ve learned that most students want to learn. They just don’t realize it yet. -Age 29”

“I’ve learned that as soon as I write my students’ names in the grade book in ink, I’ll get a new student added to that class. -Age 32”
Live & Learn & Pass It On
Any-Time Activity

I've learned...

I’ve learned...

Age: ______ ______

I’ve learned...

Age: ______ ______

I’ve learned...

Age: ______ ______

I’ve learned...

Age: ______ ______

My other products: http://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Store/Tracee-Orman/Products

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I’ve learned...</th>
<th>Age: _______</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I’ve learned...</td>
<td>Age: _______</td>
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<td>I’ve learned...</td>
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<td>I’ve learned...</td>
<td>Age: _______</td>
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<tr>
<td>I’ve learned...</td>
<td>Age: _______</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Choose a character from the story. What would this character write as their life lesson learned?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character:</th>
</tr>
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</table>

I have learned...

|  |
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Age: _____
Choose a figure from history. What would this person write as their life lesson learned?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Historical Figure:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have learned...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Age: ______
**Common Core Standards**
(Grades 6-12)

**Live & Learn Character or Historical Figure Reflection**
Because pre-reading of the material is necessary to complete this activity, students will practice both reading and writing skills.

**COMMON CORE STANDARDS for ELA Writing Standards Grades 6-12**
4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

**COMMON CORE STANDARDS for ELA Reading Standards Grades 6-12**
1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

**Live & Learn Self-Reflection**
When using this activity in class, your students are practicing the skill of reflective writing in a short amount of time (single sitting) for a general audience of all ages: their peers, parents, teachers, etc.

**COMMON CORE STANDARDS for ELA Writing Standards Grades 6-12**
10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

**Thanks for supporting your fellow teachers & visiting the TeachersPayTeachers website!**

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**Other Activities & Lessons You May Like:**
- Creative Activities for Any Novel or Story: [http://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Creative-Activities-for-ANY-Novel-or-Short-Story-with-Handouts](http://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Creative-Activities-for-ANY-Novel-or-Short-Story-with-Handouts)
- Literature Activities Bundle: All My Best-Sellers Grouped Together: [http://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Literature-Activities-for-ANY-Novel-or-Story-100-Handouts](http://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Literature-Activities-for-ANY-Novel-or-Story-100-Handouts)
- Poetry Resources Bundle: My Best-Sellers Grouped Together: [http://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Poetry-Resources-Bundle-for-Writing-Reading-Understanding-Poetry](http://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Poetry-Resources-Bundle-for-Writing-Reading-Understanding-Poetry)

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Examples
from my classroom:

Read about it on my blog:
http://bit.ly/e3bs0u