

## Habits of Mind for Gemara

*By Rabbi Tzvi Pittinsky*

*All 4 years of the curriculum will focus on the habits of Thinking Interdependently and Listening with Understanding and Empathy since these habits are indispensable for all Chavruta Learning.*

Goals	Skills	Habits of Mind	Resources
<p><b>9<sup>th</sup> Grade:</b> To make a laining on a new piece of Gemara.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>One very useful technology assisted learning methodology to help the student accomplish this goal is Gemara Berura.</i></b></li> </ul> <p><b><u>Questions one would ask</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does the Gemara say?</li> <li>• Explain the Shakla Vetarya of this Gemara.</li> <li>• Where is the right place to start and stop each line?</li> <li>• What is the correct punctuation for each line?</li> <li>• How does each line connect with what came before?</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identifying the different sections in the Gemara: Questions, Answers, Proofs, Problems, Solutions. One can use a system of shapes and colors to do this like the one in Gemara Berura.</li> <li>2. Using the Practical Talmud Dictionary or Gemara Berura to find commonly used vocabulary words in the Gemara.</li> <li>3. Unlocking key syntax phrases that shed light on the proper punctuation of each line. (Using Gemara Berura or the Practical Talmud Dictionary.)</li> <li>4. Using the Jastrow Dictionary to find uncommon words in the Gemara.</li> <li>5. Identifying the different parts of the Talmud page: When to use Rashi, Tosfot, Rabbenu Chananel, Rabbenu Gershom, Mesorat Hashas, Hagahot Habach, Torah Or, Ein Mishpat Ner Mitzva.</li> <li>6. Identifying the major components of Gemara: Mishna, Braita, Tosefta, Memra etc.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Persisting:</b> Working through a new Gemara with the help of dictionaries, student feedback, and cues by the teacher with the intent of mastering the text. Developing a strategy to go through the Gemara and decoding the text without giving up.</li> <li>2. <b>Applying past Knowledge to New Situations:</b> Using prior knowledge of vocabulary, syntax, and sentence structure to master the decoding of the Gemara.</li> <li>3. <b>Striving for Accuracy:</b> Constantly checking your work to make sure the Gemara that you have decoded makes sense. Rechecking your work against the work of other students in the class and making corrections based on the feedback from the class and the teacher.</li> </ol>	<p>Gemara, Rashi, Practical Talmud Dictionary by Rabbi Frank, Talmud Dictionary by Dr. Marcus Jastrow, Gemara Berura</p>

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<p><b>10<sup>th</sup> Grade:</b> To discover the underlying connection between the different parts of the Gemara.</p> <p><u><b>Questions one would ask</b></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What assumptions is this Gemara based on? Why?</li> <li>• What evidence does this Gemara have for its assertions?</li> <li>• How do you know its true?</li> <li>• What are the different layers embedded within this Gemara? (Tanaim, early Amoraim, Late Amoraim, Stam Gemara)</li> <li>• How do these different layers connect to each other?</li> <li>• What is the final conclusion of the Gemara? Why?</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Asking critical questions.</li> <li>2. Working through the Gemara a second time and being with a cognizant of the different layers embedded within the text.</li> <li>3. Mapping out the Shakla Vetarya and looking for the major connections between the lines. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i><b>Gemara Berura can be a great help in giving a bird's eye view of the entire Sugiya through the flowcharts so that students can see the connections between the different parts of the discussion..</b></i></li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Questioning and Posing Problems:</b> Asking the basic questions about the structure of the Gemara. Some examples of these questions are: Why does the Gemara think that the Mishna is Peshita? How does the Pasuk prove the statement? What are the benefits of the first answer cited in the Gemara and what are the benefits of the second answer?</li> <li>2. <b>Metacognition:</b> Thinking about the strategies you employed to decode the Gemara. Thinking about the strategies the Gemara used in structuring its debates. How does the Gemara get from the first line to the second line? What thought processes did the Gemara go through to reach its conclusions?</li> </ol>	<p>Gemara, Rashi, Practical Talmud Dictionary by Rabbi Frank, Talmud Dictionary by Dr. Marcus Jastrow, Gemara Berura, Some Tosfot, Meiri</p>

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<p><b>11<sup>th</sup> Grade:</b> To develop a Sevara to explain the Nekudat HaMachloket in the Gemara. <b><u>Questions one would ask</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the point of argument between the 2 opinions in the Gemara?</li> <li>• How does Tosfot argue on Rashi and how would Rashi defend himself?</li> <li>• What is the Nafka Minah Lehalacha between the different opinions of the Tanaim, Amoraim, and Rishonim?</li> <li>• How does the Machloket reflect 2 different ways to view the issue such as: Chofsa vs. Gavra, Maaseh hamitzva vs. Kiyum Hamitzva, and Maaseh vs. Totzaah.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Posing difficult questions about the thought processes in the Gemara and Rishonim.</li> <li>2. Carefully formulating each opinion found in the Gemara and Rishonim.</li> <li>3. Trying to see different perspectives on the same halachic issue.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Thinking and communicating with clarity and precision:</b> Clearly formulating each opinion in the Gemara and Rishonim so that one can start to contemplate the Sevara behind their opinions.</li> <li>2. <b>Thinking Flexibly:</b> The ability to defend the logic behind one Amora in an argument and then to go back and defend the logic behind the opposing Amora in the argument. The ability to see the entire Gemara through the prism of one Rishon's interpretation and then to go back and see the entire Gemara through the prism of another Rishon's interpretation.</li> <li>3. <b>Creating, Imagining, Innovating:</b> Trying to develop a chiddush that will explain the Nekudat haMachloket between the Tannaim, Amoraim or Rishonim.</li> </ol>	<p>Gemara, Rashi, Practical Talmud Dictionary by Rabbi Frank, Talmud Dictionary by Dr. Marcus Jastrow, Gemara Berura, Tosfot, Meiri, Rashba, Ritva, Ran</p>

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<p><b>12<sup>th</sup> Grade:</b></p> <p>1. To relate each Gemara to other parallel Gemaras throughout Shas.</p> <p><b><u>Questions one would ask</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is this same topic presented differently elsewhere in Shas?</li> <li>• Is this a Machloket Hasugyot or is there a unifying strand that runs throughout the different sugyot?</li> <li>• How do the major Rishonim like Rashi and Tosfot deal with the same topic in different Gemaras?</li> </ul> <p>2. To discover how this Gemara is brought down Halacha Lemaaseh.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do the different opinions throughout Shas on this topic come down in the halachic works of the Rambam, Rosh, Tur, and Shulchan Arukh?</li> <li>• How does the halachic process work?</li> <li>• How does the opinion we follow today reflect the chain of mesorah from the Mishnah through the Gemara, Rishonim, and Acharonim.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The ability to summarize the main points in each Gemara and Rishon.</li> <li>2. Comparing and contrasting different Gemaras in order to reach a greater conception of the Emet.</li> <li>3. Using the Mesorat Hashas as a navigational tool to discover parallel sugyot throughout Shas.</li> <li>4. Using the Ain Mishpat Ner Mitzvah as a navigational tool to discover where this Gemara is cited by the halachic codes.</li> <li>5. Using the Bar Ilan Responsa Program to find other instances in Rabbinic literature where this Gemara appears.</li> <li>6. Learning how to develop Halacha systematically from the Gemara to the Rambam and Rosh, to the Tur and Beit Yosef, to the Shulchan Arukh, and to the modern works like the Arukh Hashulchan and Mishna Berura.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Being open to Continuous learning:</b> Constantly seeking to know new information about a topic through looking at parallel Sugyot in Shas and tracing the development of the Halacha from the Talmudic times to the modern day.</li> <li>2. <b>Applying past knowledge to new situations:</b> Applying past knowledge of the sugya to new Gemaras and halachic codes that one comes across.</li> <li>3. <b>Creating, Imagining, Innovating:</b> Developing original halachic works based on a thorough researching of a topic both through the parallel sugyot and through the chain of the Mesorah to the modern halachic codes.</li> </ol>	<p>Gemara, Rashi, Practical Talmud Dictionary by Rabbi Frank, Talmud Dictionary by Dr. Marcus Jastrow, Gemara Berura, Tosfot, Meiri, Rashba, Ritva, Ran, Rambam, Rif, Rosh, Tur, Beit Yosef, Shulchan Arukh, Mishna Berura, Bar Ilan Responsa Project.</p>