

CHARACTER EDUCATION

"Perseverance" Grades 5-8

DEFINITION:

Perseverance means to keep going and never give up, even when things are hard. It is the ability to last or continue despite pain, fatigue, or hardship.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES:

- Discuss the following synonyms of perseverance:
 - Diligence
 - Persistence
 - Determination
 - Commitment
 - Hard work
 - Endurance
 - Dedication
- Use stories such as the "Tortoise and the Hare" or "The Little Engine that Could" to create a class definition for perseverance.
- Use these quotations as discussion starters or journal entries:
 - "Victory belongs to the most persevering." Napoleon Bonaparte
 - "To persevere, trusting in what hopes he has, is courage to a man." Euripides
 - "You may be disappointed if you fail, but you are doomed if you don't try." Beverly Sills
 - "All things will come round to him who will but wait." Longfellow
 - "Work hard and give it your best shot; never be a quitter." Charley Taylor
- Have students write in a journal about difficult situations they have faced and how they handled them without giving up.
- Discuss tasks that demonstrate perseverance:
 - Giving up TV time for study time
 - Trying a new sport (musical instrument, skateboard trick, etc.) that is very difficult and staying with it
 - Working hard to complete missing work after an absence from school
 - Saving money and making sacrifices to buy something but deciding to give the money to charity instead
 - Holding one's tongue when something upsetting occurs
 - Finishing what one starts
- Use literature circles with young adult fiction to look at perseverance thematically in literature. Groups could compare/contrast authors' approaches to the topic after presentations.
Recommended reading:

- The Acorn People, Ron Joles
 - Bucking the Sarge, Christopher Paul Curtis
 - Children of the River, Linda Crew
 - Chinese Cinderella, Adeline Yen Mah
 - The Curse of the Gloamglozer, Paul Steward and Chris Riddell
 - Dear Austin, Elvira Woodruff
 - Devil on My Heels, Joyce McDonald
 - Midnight Over Sanctophrax, Paul Steward and Chris Riddell
 - Peeling the Onion, Wendy Orr
 - Red Palms , Cara Haycak
 - See You Down the Road, Kim Ablon Whitney
 - A Single Shard, Linda Sue Park
 - Wrestling Sturbridge, Rich Wallace
- Research/Discuss the difficulties the following people had to overcome to be successful:
 - Beethoven (composer) deaf
 - Ray Charles (musician) blind
 - Thomas Edison (inventor) learning disability
 - Albert Einstein (scientist) learning disability
 - Terry Fox (runner) amputee/cancer
 - Stevie Wonder (musician) blind
 - James Earl Jones (actor) stutterer
 - Helen Keller (author) blind and deaf
 - Marlee Matlin (actress) deaf
 - Franklin D. Roosevelt (US President) paralyzed by polio
 - Vincent Van Gogh (artist) mentally ill
 - Woodrow Wilson (US President) learning disability
 - Itzhak Perlman (concert violinist) paralyzed
 - Stephen Hawking (physicist) Lou Gehrig's disease (ALS)
- Encourage students to participate in volunteer activities to develop perseverance.
 - Volunteer to work in the library, at a nature center, or in an animal shelter doing tasks that require a great deal of patience and persistence.
 - Organize a campaign to promote good study habits in your school.
 - Help with a recycling project in your school or community.
- Have each member of the class tell a story of a time when he or she persisted and was rewarded. Discuss:
 - Why do some people fail to have perseverance?
 - How can you become more persistent?
- Consider the following writings:
 - Author Dorothy Baughman's article about importance of perseverance in writing www.writersweekly.com/print/success_stories/002161_11032004.html

- Computer chip maker Jen-Hsun Huang's perseverance in the workforce
- Las Vegas mother Debbie Oliver's perseverance in securing help for her daughter, born with a cleft palate www.lasvegassun.com
- Artists and perseverance www.constable.net/arhistorylwri-inspiration.html
- Indianapolis linebacker Gary Brackett and his personal losses that required perseverance

- Review activities in grades K-4 to adapt activities.

- Read excerpts from Unstoppable: 45 Powerful Stories of Perseverance and Triumph from People Just Like You, by Cynthia Kersey

SOURCES:

Kersey, Cynthia. Unstoppable: 45 Powerful Stories of Perseverance and Triumph from People Just Like You. Emmaus, Pennsylvania: Rodale Books, 2005.

www.brainyquote.com

www.k12.hi.us/~mkunimit/perseverance

www.k12.hi.us/~perseverance

www.randomhouse.com/teachers/themes

www.writersweekly.com/print/success_stories/002161_11032004.html

www.constable.net/arhistory/wri-inspiration.html

www.humanityquest.com

www.quote-garden.com/perseverance

www.thesaurus.reference.com/roget

<http://www.goodcharacter.com/ISOC/Diligence.html>

<http://www.goodcharacter.com/NCC/DoingRight.html>

<http://www.randomhouse.com/teachers/junieb/character.html>

http://humanityquest.com/topic/art_activities/index.asp?theme1=perseverance

<http://www.teachervision.fen.com> (lesson options)