

Perseverance - Intermediate High

Positive Psychology Learning Outcomes: Students will learn about perseverance as a trait, learn from learning about exemplars of perseverance, and learn that focus, flexibility, and effort are key to perseverance. Perseverant people focus on what they can do. Language Learning Outcomes: Students will use synonyms to better understand words, ask questions about someone, and practice inference.

Lesson Information

Positive Psychology Learning Outcomes

Students will...

1. learn about perseverance as a trait.
2. learn from learning about exemplars of perseverance.
3. learn that focus, flexibility, and effort are key to perseverance. Perseverant people focus on what they can do.

Language Learning Outcomes

Students will...

1. use synonyms to better understand words.
2. ask questions about someone.
3. practice inference.

Materials Needed

- [The Lord Loves Effort](#)
- [Growth Mindset vs. Fixed Mindset](#)
- [Michael Jordan Failure Commercial](#)
- [A Lesson on Resilience](#)

Overview

- Explain that you will talk about perseverance today.
- Perseverance means persistence in doing something despite difficulty or delay in achieving success.
- Give students a few minutes to discuss the relationship between resilience and perseverance. Then discuss as a class. Your class may come up with some interesting connections. In short, you can't be resilient if you do nothing that you may have to bounce back from. You can't be perseverant without having resilience to try again.

Activate Background Knowledge

Put the students in small groups. Ask them to discuss what they remember *resilience* means.

- Ask groups to share what they remembered and talked about.
- Show the video (They may have seen this in an earlier lesson.)

[Learning from Failure](#)

- What did the man do after he failed?
- What can you learn from that?

Activity 1: Vocabulary

The objective of this activity is to help the student associate traits with perseverance. Understanding synonyms can help understand the word better.

- Put the students in small groups of 3 or 4.
- Give the students 2-3 minutes to come up with as many words as possible that they might associate with perseverance. You may want to model this activity with a similar concept like Happiness or gratitude. (Happiness→happy, smile, laugh, unhappy, kindness, peace, contentment, etc. Gratitude→giving gratitude, thankful, grateful, thankfulness, people, relationships, etc.)
- Use a whiteboard, chalkboard, or projector. Make a list of the words or phrases they associate with perseverance. Words may include the following.
 - brave, bravery
 - courage, courageous
 - self-regulation, self-regulated
 - disciplined, discipline
 - honest
 - hopeful
 - determined
 - faith, faithful
 - zest
 - persistence
 - persistent
 - relentless
 - goal
 - decision
 - resilience
 - diligence
 - dedication
 - tenacity
 - endurance
 - patience
 - resolve
- You may want to introduce some of the words listed above.
- Talk about how these words are connected and how they might help you better understand the meaning of perseverance.

Activity 2: Reading/Speaking

Students will be completing an information gap activity. Before handing out the activity, give them instructions and model the task for the students.

Instructions

- Each of you will be assigned a number.
- You will be given a handout with a list of famous individuals. The number you receive corresponds to the person you are going to learn about.
- Take 5 minutes to search for the person you are assigned to. For example, if the individual you have is *Albert Einstein*, search for *Albert Einstein failures* or *Albert Einstein perseverance*. (Teachers, you may want to demonstrate this.)
- In the two columns to the right of the name, you will write a note about what the failures were and what the success was.
- After five minutes of investigating, you will then have 5-10 minutes to ask your classmates about their assigned individual. You might ask questions like, "Who did you learn about? What were their failures or obstacles they overcame? What is the person known for today?" (Teachers, please model this conversation.)

[Perseverance and famous people.docx](#)

Activity 3: Speaking/Listening

Perseverance requires focus, flexibility, and effort. These are all connected. We will explore these in detail.

Group Discussion on Focus

What do perseverant people focus on?

(This might be a grammar opportunity. There is a difference between focus and focus on)

- In small groups have students discuss what they think the famous people focused on in reaching success. (2 minutes)
- Have the groups share with the class what they discussed. Drive the conversation to lead to something similar to this: Perseverant people focus on their goals and on their experience, not the failures. They learn from them and keep going. (Later we will talk about how they focus on effort.)

Listening Activity on Flexibility

Students will watch a short video about fixed and growth mindset. The video may be difficult for intermediate learners and lower because of the accent and pace. You may want to slow the speed down, enable subtitles, or watch the video several times.

- Ask the students what they know about growth mindsets vs. fixed mindsets. You may simplify this by talking about growth vs. fixed.
- Tell students to listen for definitions of a growth mindset and a fixed mindset. Play only the first minute of the video.

[Growth Mindset vs. Fixed Mindset](#)

- Have students discuss the definitions they heard in small groups.
- Review the definitions as a class. Focus on how perseverant people are flexible.

Listening Activity on Effort #1

As you talk about effort, you'll see that it is connected to the previous two principles.

- Tell students to look for connections between focus and effort and flexibility and effort.
- Skip to 1:30 in the above video.
- Ask students to listen to the examples of Jay and Anne. How are Jay and Anne different? How do they respond to failure?
- Watch the video until 3:20.
- Have students discuss what they heard in small groups.
- Discuss the concept as a class. Focus on how those with a growth mindset focus on effort.

Listening Activity on Effort #2

In this video, you will hear a few key principles regarding perseverance. They aren't explicitly stated so students will have to infer.

- Talk to students about what it means to infer. Remind them that they use information within the context and background information. The background information or scaffolding here is the conversation during class around perseverance. Students will need to listen to the context to understand and pick out a few key principles.

[The Lord Loves Effort](#)

- In small groups, have students identify principles or information about perseverance.
- Now discuss these as a class. Here are some key statements or ideas:
 - The Lord loves Effort
 - Effort brings rewards
 - Yes, it takes effort, a lot of hard work, a lot of study, and there is never an end. That's good. It means we are always progressing.
- (In my thinking we see someone who focuses on the journey and effort more than on the outcome or goal, especially by saying it never ends.)

Activity 4: Writing

Right down one way you can focus on focus, flexibility, and or effort in reaching your goals.

You may want to share an example.

Example: When I am not meeting my weight loss goal,

I'll focus more on the effort I put forth. If I need to exert more effort, I can be flexible and find new ways to work hard.

Example: When I get a bad grade on an assessment, I can focus on the end goal of my education and the effort that I am putting forth. I can resolve to try hard and keep going.

Homework

Have students write down two or three more baby steps they can accomplish to help them achieve their goals or overcome their challenges and complete at least one of them this week.

Follow-Up

Tuesday:

Have students search the definition for the word grit. Come up with a class definition.

There's a common idiomatic phrase we use to say "push past your limits."

- How can pushing past your limits be positive?
- How can it also be negative?

If students cannot think of any negatives, use something simple such as sports as an example. Sometimes not giving up can be bad--i.e. There was a girl on a soccer team who has very bad pain in her shin muscles but she continued to play for a few weeks, and because of that she broke the shin bones and could not walk to six months.

Wednesday:

Follow-up with homework discussion:

- Has anyone completed one of their baby steps yet? If yes, how was the experience? If no, why not? And when will you complete it this week?

Thursday:

Now that we've talked a lot about how to persevere in our own lives, it's time to think about how we can help others have grit and persevere.

- What can we do to help others persevere in their own goals?
- Do you have any strengths that can help them with their weaknesses?



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