

Lesson Plan: Perseverance

Key concepts:

Perseverance
Resistance
Denial
Racism
Bias
Antisemitism

Materials:

- White board, chalkboard, overhead projector or easel with chart paper
- Downloadable testimony clips:
Testimony - Perseverance
- TV and DVD player and/or a computer with a broadband connection is recommended for viewing directly from the online resource *Creating Character*
- Student Handouts:
Viewing Guide – Perseverance
Web of Perseverance
Independent Practice – Perseverance
(Possible alternative: use a transparency of the above student handouts in lieu of individual copies.)

Time Required:

1-2 Days

Objectives:

- Students will develop an understanding of the concept of perseverance.
- Students will identify examples of perseverance from their own lives.
- Students will explain the importance perseverance plays in their actions and in the actions of others.
- Students will identify ways they can exemplify perseverance in their lives.
- Students will work with visual history testimony.
- Students will use visual history testimony to identify examples of perseverance in the lives of Holocaust survivors.

Procedures:

1. Instruct students to quickly write responses to the following questions on a spare piece of paper:
 - Describe a time in your life when you worked especially hard to accomplish a goal.
 - Why was it important for you to keep working toward this goal?
 - Describe the times when you felt like giving up.
 - What motivated you to keep going?
 - Which people or events helped you?
 - What made it difficult for you to continue?
 - How did it feel to continue your work when it was difficult to do so?
 - How did you feel when you had accomplished your task?
2. Conduct a large group discussion based on student responses to the previous questions. Inform students that they will be returning to their responses later in the lesson.
3. Inform students that they are about to watch testimony clips taken from testimonies given by Holocaust survivors and witnesses. Explain to students that the following clips are brief excerpts from longer interviews.

*NOTE: Some background knowledge of the Holocaust is necessary for students to understand the context of the visual history testimony clips. Some general resources are available on the USC Shoah Foundation Institute website at www.usc.edu/vhi or in the bibliography listed in the Additional Resources section. In addition, comprehensive classroom lessons that provide historical context on the Holocaust are included in **Echoes and Reflections – a multimedia curriculum on the Holocaust**, available at www.echoesandreflections.org.*

4. Distribute copies of the Student Handout: *Viewing Guide – Perseverance*.

*ALTERNATIVE: You may want to display a transparency of the **Viewing Guide** using the overhead projector and allow students to create their own replica.*

Lesson Plan: Perseverance

5. Play testimony clips: *Testimony - Perseverance*.
6. Inform students that as they are watching the video, they should look for examples that each survivor describes regarding perseverance. Students should write these examples in the “examples” column.

NOTE: For clarification, you may want to pause the video after playing each testimony clip or play the clips more than once.

7. After viewing the four testimony clips, students should write the survivor’s viewpoint regarding perseverance. Students should record their answers in the “viewpoint” column.
8. Distribute copies of the Student Handout: *Web of Perseverance*. Inform students that they should complete their web based on the incidents they described in their response at the beginning of class.

*ALTERNATIVE: You may want to display a transparency of the **Web of Perseverance** using the overhead projector and allow students to create their own replica.*

9. Once students have completed their webs, allow them an opportunity to share their examples with the whole class.
10. Conduct a large class discussion using some or all of the following questions as a guide:
 - What are the similarities between the examples of perseverance provided by the students and those provided by the survivors in the testimony clips? In what ways are these examples different?
 - Why do you think some people *always* fail to accomplish their goals?
 - What general statements can be made about the importance perseverance can have on a person’s life?
 - What general statements can be made about the outcome perseverance can have on a person’s life?
11. For homework or independent practice, assign one or more of the following activities:

ALTERNATIVE: Have students choose the activity they would like to do for homework or practice.

- Distribute the Student Handout: *Independent Practice - Perseverance*. Respond to each question by writing a few sentences that explain why you agree or disagree with each of the given statements.
- Write a journal entry or reflection on the following prompt:
How were the examples of perseverance in the testimonies similar to your own examples of perseverance? What can you learn about the importance of perseverance from the examples discussed in the testimony clips?

Lesson Plan: Perseverance

- Choose one of the following quotes and write a response to its author that explains why you either agree or disagree with the quote. In your response, reference your own experiences, the experiences exemplified in the testimony clips viewed, and/or the outcomes and insights garnered from class activities and class discussions of perseverance.
 - **“To be nobody but yourself — in a world which is doing its best, night and day, to make you everybody else — means to fight the hardest battle any human being can fight, and never stop fighting.”**
— *ee cummings* (American poet and playwright)
 - **“This thing that we call “failure” is not falling down, but the staying down.”**
— *Mary Pickford*
 - **“Many of life’s failures are people who do not realize how close they were to success when they gave up.”**
— *Thomas Edison*

Extension Activities:

1. Develop a class awards program for perseverance. Students should nominate other students, a current public figure, and a historical figure who demonstrate perseverance. In the nomination itself, students must explain how each of the nominees exemplifies perseverance and why he or she deserves such recognition. Decide as a class how to best honor these individuals.
2. “The Little Engine That Could” is a well-known children’s story about the power of perseverance and the power that positive messages have in supporting perseverance. Divide the class into several student teams. Each team will create a motto or slogan that will help encourage others to achieve their goals. Goals might include: academic improvement, winning a competition (athletics, band, etc.), self improvement (controlling anger, losing weight, etc.), avoiding peer pressure (drugs, sex, crime), relationship improvements (family, friends, etc.), getting a job, etc. Teams will design an advertising campaign to promote their perseverance message on campus. Have each team present or “pitch” their ideas to the class or to a neighboring class. Select one campaign to propose to the student leadership council as a school spirit campaign for the school campus.

Viewing Guide: Perseverance

Name _____

As the testimony clips for *Perseverance* are viewed, complete the two columns below:

Interviewee

Example of Perseverance

Viewpoint on perseverance

Alicia Appleman

Esther Jungreis

Dorothy Greenstein

Viewing Guide: Perseverance

Teacher's Answer Key

Name _____

As the testimony clips for *Perseverance* are viewed, complete the two columns below:

Interviewee

Alicia Appleman

Example of Perseverance

Alicia continued to find a way to attend school even after she was banned from attending.

She climbed a tree outside her classroom window so she could continue learning.

Viewpoint on perseverance

School was so important to her that she vowed that if she survived, she would go back to school and continue learning forever.

Esther Jungreis

Esther's brother climbed over the fence of the ghettos to buy supplies for his family and for others in need.

Esther says they fought and resisted their persecution by supporting each other.

She believes that in times of crisis, the Jewish people reached out to each other.

Dorothy Greenstein

Dorothy explained how they were encouraged to get married and have children in order to show the Germans that they did not succeed in killing off the Jewish people.

She states that survival is a very strong drive.

Even though it pains her, she believes that "life must go on, no matter what."

Web of Perseverance

Name _____

Use your answers from class to complete the web below.

Events or people who supported my perseverance:	Events or people who hindered my perseverance:	How I resisted the events or people who hindered my perseverance:
My motivation to keep going was:	Example from my life:	The outcome of my perseverance:
The importance of perseverance:		How I felt about my accomplishment:

Independent Practice: Perseverance

Name _____

Respond to each statement by writing an explanation as to why you agree or disagree.

1. You need a positive attitude to persevere in difficult situations.

I agree/disagree because:

2. Having a goal in mind helps a person persevere.

I agree/disagree because:

3. People fail because they give up too easily.

I agree/disagree because:

4. It is important to resist people who might prevent you from accomplishing your goals.

I agree/disagree because: