

Perseverance Lesson

I Know I Can!

Introduction:

With dedication and hard work, Jeannie Placek persevered to become a successful gymnast.

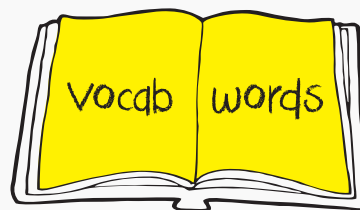
Essential
Question:

How do stories
about perseverance
help us?



Toys to tell story
(see list in procedure)

Box for storing story toys



challenge

perseverance

overcome

Pre-viewing:

The following can be asked/done before watching video.

- Tell students to think about something they could not do at the beginning of the school year but they can do now.
- Ask: Why can you do this now? What things did you have to do to master this skill?
- Point out what you notice about their current skills and how far they have come.
- Explain about perseverance: to keep working at something; sticking to it and never giving up, even when it gets hard.

Notes:

Discussion Questions:

The following can be asked/done after watching video:

- How did losing the competition teach Jeannie a lesson about perseverance?
- Why was it so painful for Jeannie to accept that she wasn't performing well during her competition?
- Have you ever experienced a situation similar to Jeannie's? Explain.
- How can you demonstrate perseverance at home, at school, and in your neighborhood?

Notes:

Procedure:

Prepare: A story box with the following materials/toys:

- A placemat or piece of cloth to be the stage area
- Something to go under the placemat or cloth to create a big hill (a rolled up or bunched up towel works well)
- Two train engines, preferably an old one and a new one
- Train cars, preferably ones you can fill with toy animals or paper animals. If you do not have train cars you can fill, cut out pictures of circus animals and tape them to the side of the train cars.

Notes about telling stories with toys:

- Introduce each item individually as you tell the story. This builds vocabulary and makes concrete associations between your words and the items.
- Lay the items on the stage as you tell the story. You also have the option of moving items when they ‘speak;’ moving the items when they speak is called object puppetry.
- Keep your hands as clear of the objects as possible during the story telling. This allows children to use their imagination and process the images with your words.
- Use different voices, facial expressions, and simple gestures to emphasize the characters, emotions, and actions of the story. The students will look at you as much as they look at the toys.
- Gather students in a circle facing you for a story. Stories with toys work best when students are in one layer, not in rows, but you can alleviate the blocking factor by placing the story stage area on a low desk or a low, long box.

Procedure Continued:

Introduction:

- Ask: Where do we usually keep the stories in our classroom?
- Explain that today's story is in the box on your lap. It is a story about perseverance.
- Shake the box and let them predict what will come out.

Direct Instruction (I do):

- Lay "stage" material on the storytelling area and explain that this will be the storytelling space. Only the teacher's hands are allowed on the stage area and on the things that go out on the stage area, even though students will want to touch them. They will be able to learn the opportunity to touch the story items later.
- Explain that you will need their help with some words and ideas during different parts of the story. (This is a good time to remind them of how to volunteer/answer questions.)
- Begin telling the story; plot points and moments for questions have been provided for you in the Guided Exploration section.

Guided Exploration (We do):

The Little Engine That Could Plot Points:

- Once upon a time there was a circus train. (Lay out train with OLDER engine leading the train cars.)
- It was filled with animals. What animals do you see? What other animals do you think might be inside the train? Who else from the circus might be in the train? How do you know?

Procedure Continued:

Guided Exploration (We do): continued...

The Little Engine That Could Plot Points:

- The train had to get to the town on the other side of the mountain by morning to set up for the circus. Lots of children were waiting for them. What do you think the children said to each other about the circus coming to town?
- The train started up the mountain, but suddenly there was a loud sound. What sound do you think it was?
- The engine said to the other train cars, “Oh, no, I’ve broken an axel! My wheels cannot turn anymore! I need a mechanic, but it’s too late at night to find one. What will we do? How will we get to the children on the other side of the mountain?”
- The animals in the train cars tried to think of ideas. What ideas do you think they had?
- Finally, one of the animals said, “What about another engine? We just passed a little engine in the train yard!” All the animals called to the little engine. Let’s all pretend to be the animals calling, “Little Engine!” (Pull out the Little Engine.)
- The Little Engine asked what she could do to help. The animals told her what had happened. What do you think they said?
- The Little Engine said, “We must get you to the other side of the mountain! The children need to see the circus!”
- So the Little Engine took the place of the Older Engine. The Older Engine said, “Good luck! It’s a heavy train, but you can do it!”

Procedure Continued:

Guided Exploration (We do): continued...

The Little Engine That Could Plot Points:

- The Little Engine started up the mountain, thinking to herself, “I think I can, I think I can...” But she slid back down on her first try. What do you think the animals said to her to help her?
- She listened to them and said to herself, “I think I can, I think I can...” Let’s all say that.
- This time, she got almost all the way to the top, but her wheels slipped and the whole train went backwards. What did the animals say? What will they do?
- The Little Engine gathered all her energy and said out loud, “I think I can, I think I can...” All the animals helped her. Let’s all say it.
- This time the Little Engine made it up to the top of the mountain! She rolled down the other side saying, “I thought I could, I thought I could!” Let’s all say that.
- When she arrived in the town, the children cheered. What did that sound like?
- They were ready for the circus all thanks to the “Little Engine that Could!”

Independent Practice (You do):

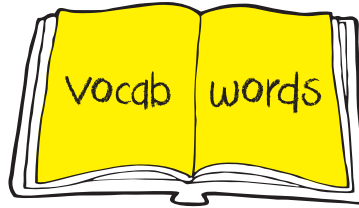
- Have students turn to a shoulder buddy and talk about the story. What happened? How did the Little Engine show perseverance? What did she say to make sure she persevered?
- Share their answers.

Procedure Continued:

Conclusion:

- Talk about the theme of perseverance in this story. Even when things become challenging, the Little Engine said, “I think I can,” to give herself a boost of perseverance. She never gave up!
- How can this phrase help us in school? In life?
- If there is time, select volunteers to help put the story toys back in the story box.
- Place the story box in a center area where students will be able to retell the story on their own.

Vocabulary & Definitions



challenge (n.) Definition: an activity, problem, etc., that tests strength, skill or ability, especially in a way that is interesting

Context: Vance enjoys the challenge of learning new math skills.

overcome (v.) Definition: to successfully deal with a feeling or problem that prevents a person from achieving a goal

Context: Shira rehearsed her speech in front of her parents in order to overcome her fear of public speaking.

perseverance (n.) Definition: overcoming challenges; the determination to keep trying to achieve a goal in spite of difficulties

Context: Octavius demonstrated perseverance by practicing his balancing skills until he could ride his bike without falling.