

## Lesson 9: Habits of Excellence: Perseverance

### PURPOSE

To help students understand and practice habits of excellence, especially the habit of perseverance.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand what habits are and how they are developed.
2. Understand the habit of perseverance.
3. Practice the habit of perseverance in their life.

### MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- Oreo Relay Game (Requires Oreos and plastic knives)
- What Does Perseverance Look Like? Worksheet + Answer Key
- You Can Do It: Perseverance Habit Tracker
- Perseverance Paper Fortune Worksheet  
[www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Cootie-Catcher-\(Origami-Fortune-Teller\)](http://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Cootie-Catcher-(Origami-Fortune-Teller))

### VOCABULARY

- Freedom for excellence: using one's freedom to make excellent choices
- Habits: behaviors acquired through regular practice that make it easier to do something
- Perseverance: persistence in pursuing excellence despite difficulty or delay in achieving success

### PROCEDURE

**Step 1:** Review the previous lesson. Recall the definition of a friendship of excellence. Recall how excellent friends act in different situations. Finish by emphasizing the importance of developing friendships of excellence in our daily lives.

Review the definition of freedom for excellence that they learned in previous lessons:

Using one's freedom to make excellent choices

**Step 2:** Introduce the idea of habits by asking students the following questions:

- » Do you think it's easier to develop an excellent habit or a non-excellent habit? (e.g. a habit of watching TV for hours or doing homework every day after school) [Developing excellent habits is usually more difficult...]
- » When you practice something difficult (e.g. learning a new sport, practicing homework regularly after school, etc.) does it eventually become harder or easier? [Easier.]
- » When you have been practicing something non-excellent for a long time (e.g. always going to bed after midnight, complaining when you are asked to help, etc.) is it easy or difficult to stop doing it? [Difficult.]

Explain that the more someone performs a certain action, the more that action becomes ingrained in their brain as a habit. This is true of both excellent and non-excellent habits. Habits are things that we do so often, they become natural to us. Habits are created through regular practice.

Write the definition on the board:

Habits: behaviors acquired through regular practice that make it easier to do something

Ask the students to name some excellent and non-excellent habits. Write a table with two columns on the board, one for excellent and one for non-excellent habits. Write down the examples that students share with the class.

The table can look like the one below:

| Excellent habits                     | Non-excellent habits |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Doing homework regularly             | Skipping homework    |
| Going to sleep on time               | Going to bed late    |
| Being kind to classmates             | Saying rude things   |
| Being truthful                       | Lying                |
| Avoiding gossip                      | Gossiping            |
| Being generous                       | Being selfish        |
| Being humble                         | Bragging             |
| Persevering in practicing new habits | Giving up too easily |

**Step 3:** Divide the students into two teams and play the [Oreo Relay Game](#). Give each group an Oreo cookie and a plastic knife. Have students race with the Oreo balanced on the knife, from one end of the room to the other and back, delivering the Oreo and the plastic utensil to the next person on their team. Continue until all members of the team have completed their part of the relay. If a teammate drops the Oreo, they have to return to the start line and begin again. The first team to complete the relay, wins. Encourage students to cheer on their teammates.

After finishing the game, have students return to their seats. Explain that an important part of developing any new habit is practice. However, there is one thing that every person needs if they want to develop an excellent habit. It's called perseverance.

Write the definition of perseverance on the board:

Perseverance: persistence in pursuing excellence despite difficulty or delay in achieving success

**Step 4:** Perseverance looks like a lot of things. Sometimes, perseverance looks like someone asking for help. If you want to be a starter on the basketball team, but you know you are not the best player, perseverance might look like asking the coach for pointers, attending every practice and even offering to help the coach set up or clean up after practice so that you prove to the coach you are serious about wanting to improve.

Perseverance can also look like trying again. Maybe you didn't get a good grade on a test. Perseverance looks like going to extra help, raising your hand in class to ask the teacher to look at your work and doing the homework the teacher assigns you for practice before you do anything else after school.

What does perseverance sound like? Have you ever watched a long-distance race, like a marathon? At the beginning, the runners are excited and eager. They look like they could happily run forever. Then, mid-way through the race, they're starting to slow. They are tired. Their muscles are sore. This is the part of the race where you see the runners look for their friends or family supporters. They need to hear words of encouragement to persevere!

Hand out the worksheet [What Does Perseverance Look Like?](#) Give students a few minutes to complete the worksheet. Once students are finished, ask volunteers to share their responses as you review the answers as a class using the [Answer Key](#) provided.

**Step 5:** Research shows that it takes 21–30 days to develop an excellent habit or break a non-excellent habit. Hand out the [Perseverance Habits Tracker](#). Explain that students will think about and write down an excellent habit they would like to acquire. Then, every day they persevere in sticking to their excellent habit, they will color in the number for that day. If they miss a day, they can resume the next day as the goal is to count how many days total out of the 30 that they persevered. Motivate the students by making it a student-teacher challenge to see who can get the most perseverance points in 30 days!

Remind students that to finish the challenge they will need encouragement! Hand out the [Perseverance Paper Fortune](#) worksheet to each student. Have students cut out the large square to begin. Then, fill in the blank number 6 and 8 with their own motivational saying or praise they would like to hear.

Follow the folding instructions for the Origami Fortune Teller found at this link:  
[www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Cootie-Catcher-\(Origami-Fortune-Teller\)](http://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Cootie-Catcher-(Origami-Fortune-Teller)).

Once students have completed their origami fortune teller, they can use their [Perseverance Paper Fortune](#) to tell the good “fortune” of others, with the following steps:

- Step 1.** Ask someone to pick one of the four words: Grit, Goals, Persevere, Excellence.
- Step 2.** Spell the word, opening and closing the origami with index fingers and thumbs for each letter.
- Step 3.** Ask the person to select a number from the inside. Count out that number, opening and closing the origami with index fingers and thumbs.
- Step 4.** Ask the person to select another number and count out this number.
- Step 5:** Ask the person to select a final number. Open the corresponding flap to reveal the inspirational “fortune” that person needs to hear!

**Step 6:** Summarize. Recall the definition of perseverance. Highlight the importance of perseverance as the starting point for developing any new skill or habit. Motivate students to begin their [Perseverance Habits Tracker](#) challenge!

**WHAT DOES PERSEVERANCE LOOK LIKE AND SOUND LIKE?**

Perseverance means sticking with something, even when it's hard, until you reach your goal.



Yes No

Read each statement. Does it sound like perseverance?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. "I did really badly on the test. I'm bad at math"   | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. "It's not that I'm so smart, I just work on the math problems longer."                            | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. "I'm pretty much the best on the team so I don't need to go to practice."                         | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. "The coach doesn't like me so I quit."  | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. "I can get this. Let me try it again."  | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. "Can you help me? I keep getting stuck on this part."   | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. "He's a genius. He doesn't have to study."  | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. "Would you want to study together? I could use the practice."                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. "I'll focus on practicing this part of the song slowly, since that's the part I keep messing up." | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |

Are you ready? This is going to take some focus! Unscramble the words and fill in the blanks to see what perseverance looks like!

- |                               |                           |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 10. OV__C____G F___T__T___    | OVCEMRONIG FTTRSURAOIN    |
| 11. _R_I_G A__I_              | RTYGIN AIGNA              |
| 12. F_N_IN_ A__T_ER W_Y       | FNIDGIN ATNORHE YWA       |
| 13. D_I_G O_E T_I_G A_ A T_M_ | DINOG OEN THIGN TA A TMIE |
| 14. A_K__G F_R H__P           | AKINGS ROF PHEL           |
| 15. D_V_L____NG _OO_ H_B_T_   | DNGVLEEOPI OGDO BHAITS    |

### What does Perseverance Look Like and Sound Like? - Answer Key



Read each statement. Does it sound like perseverance?

Yes No

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. "I did really badly on the test. I'm bad at math"   | <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. "It's not that I'm so smart, I just work on the math problems longer."                            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. "I'm pretty much the best on the team so I don't need to go to practice."                         | <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. "The coach doesn't like me so I quit."  | <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. "I can get this. Let me try it again."  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. "Can you help me? I keep getting stuck on this part."   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. "He's a genius. He doesn't have to study."  | <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. "Would you want to study together? I could use the practice."                                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. "I'll focus on practicing this part of the song slowly, since that's the part I keep messing up." | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |

Are you ready? This is going to take some focus! Unscramble the words and fill in the blanks to see what perseverance looks like!

- |                               |                           |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 10. OV__C____G F___T__T___    | OVERCOMING FRUSTRATION    |
| 11. _R_I_G A__I_              | TRYING AGAIN              |
| 12. F_N_IN_ A__T_ER W_Y       | FINDING ANOTHER WAY       |
| 13. D_I_G O_E T_I_G A_ A T_M_ | DOING ONE THING AT A TIME |
| 14. A_K__G F_R H__P           | ASKING FOR HELP           |
| 15. D_V_L____NG _OO_ H_B_T_   | DEVELOPING GOOD HABITS    |

# YOU CAN DO IT! PERSEVERANCE HABIT TRACKER

POSSIBLE IDEAS:

- READ A CHAPTER OF A BOOK EACH DAY
- LIMIT SCREEN TIME TO \_\_\_ HRS A DAY
- SAY THANK YOU AFTER SOMEONE MAKES A MEAL
- MAKE YOUR BED EVERY DAY
- EXERCISE FOR 60 MIN EVERY DAY
- PRACTICE MY INSTRUMENT
- NOT USE SOCIAL MEDIA

NAME

HABIT:

**ONE DAY AT A TIME**

AND THEN YOU'RE AT FIVE!

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

END OF FIRST WEEK

BET YOU CAN YOU DO ANOTHER 7 DAYS

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

KNEW IT!  
TWO WEEKS

PAPER FORTUNE SAYS: PERSEVERE!

IF YOU MISSED A DAY, PICK IT UP AGAIN

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

HELLO  
3 WEEKS!

FINAL STRETCH

YOU CAN'T GIVE UP NOW.

ONE MORE DAY.

JUST ONE MORE.

AND ONE MORE.

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

INCOMING!  
NEW HABIT FORMING

YOU ....

WIN!

29

30

YOU, MY FRIEND,  
ARE A PERSEVERANCE  
CHAMPION!

PERSEVERANCE POINTS:

/ 30 DAYS



Human  
Dignity  
Curriculum

**PERSEVERANCE PAPER FORTUNE TELLER**

|                 |   |   |  |
|-----------------|---|---|--|
|                 | <p><b>1</b></p>                                       | <p><b>2</b></p>   |  |
| <p><b>8</b></p> | <p>IT'S THE COURAGE TO CONTINUE<br/>THAT COUNTS</p>   | <p>DON'T THINK ABOUT THE<br/>MOUNTAIN YOU NEED TO CLIMB<br/>BUT THE NEXT STEP</p> | <p><b>3</b></p> <p>DON'T BE AFRAID TO BE SEEN<br/>TRYING</p> |
| <p><b>7</b></p> | <p>THE EXPERT AT ANYTHING<br/>WAS ONCE A BEGINNER</p> | <p><b>5</b></p> <p>FALL MEANS:<br/>FIRST ATTEMPT IN LEARNING!</p>                 | <p><b>4</b></p>  |
|                 | <p><b>9</b></p>                                       | <p><b>6</b></p>   |  |