

# WEEKLY MIDDLE SCHOOL LESSON

#KEEPLearning



## Week Eight: Importance of Grit

**Overview:** This lesson introduces students to the term grit. They will take an assessment to see where they currently land on the "grit scale" and learn why having grit is important to have in life.

**Preparation:** Review the activity and session materials. Make sure your students have all the needed materials to complete the lesson.

**Recommended Time:** 45-60 mins

**Materials:** Computer/Tablet with Internet  
Printer (Optional)  
Blank Paper  
Writing Utensil

**1) Presentation:** Begin by asking your students, "Does anyone know the difference between strengths and talents?"

- Talents are those things that we are inherently born with.
- Strengths, however, are the polished rock that becomes a diamond. With the right investment of time, practice, feedback, knowledge and skills, that dusty rock becomes a true strength.

Explain to your students that strengths are something they need to practice and, over time, they can turn a talent into a true strength. It takes grit. Ask your students if they know what grit means.

**2) Watch:** Have your students watch the video [Famous Failures](#)



**3) Discussion:** After you watch the video, ask the following questions. You can ask them verbally or have students write out their answers.

1. What does each of these people in the video have in common?
2. Why is it that these men and women are known as “famous failures?”
3. Can you think of a time when you experienced failure? How did you respond?
4. How does it feel to fail? What makes us want to try again at something we’ve previously failed at?

After allowing students to share their thoughts, provide them with the following definition of **grit** - *The combination of passion and perseverance over time, despite failures.*

#### **4) Activity: Grit Assessment**

Your students will each take the Grit Assessment, developed by Angela Duckworth for a study she conducted on students at West Point to determine how “gritty” they were and if that made a difference in whether they stayed in the program or dropped out.

#### **Grit Assessment**

##### **Directions for the assessment:**

1. Students should select the link above to start the assessment.
2. Before they begin, tell your students they will read each sentence and check off the box that makes the most sense to them.
3. Tell them to not overthink the questions. Instead, they should ask themselves how they compare – not just to their peers, friends, or family – but to “most people.”

##### **Grit Score:**

Once students complete their assessment, they will need to calculate their total grit score. They will do this by selecting "Get My Score" at the bottom of the quiz. The maximum score on this scale is 5 (extremely gritty) and the lowest possible score is 1 (not at all gritty).

Tell your students that they should keep in mind that their score is a reflection of how they see themselves right now. How gritty they are at this point in their life might be different from how gritty they will be in the future. And, if they take this assessment again in the future, they might get a different score.

Now tell your students that grit has two components: passion and perseverance. The passion questions were the odd ones and perseverance questions were the even ones. If students want to figure out how they scored on those two components, they can select the back button to get back to their quiz.

**Passion Score** – Students should add up their points (1 for not much like me at all, 2 for not much like me, 3 for somewhat like me, 4 for mostly like me and 5 for very much like me) for the odd numbered questions and divide by 5.

**Perseverance Score** – Students should add up their points for the even numbered questions and divide by 5.

If students score high on passion, they probably scored high on perseverance too. Still, for most people, the perseverance score is a bit higher than the passion score. This is because passion and perseverance are not exactly the same thing.

While taking the assessment, students might have noticed that their passion questions don't ask how intensely they are committed to your goals. Explain to them that, while this might seem strange to us, because when we hear passion described, we often hear it described in terms of intense emotions. However, when high achievers are interviewed about what it takes to succeed, they talk about **consistency over time** rather than intensity of commitment.

**5) Watch:** Have your students watch [USA Swimming Olympians Then and Now](#)

**6) Discussion:** Ask students the following questions. You can ask them verbally or have students write out their answers.

1. Did you see grit represented in this video?
2. How do you know these swimmers are "gritty?"
3. Does the fact that they are passionate about swimming make them good?
4. What makes them as good as they are at swimming?

**7) Overview:** Ask your students the following questions:

1. In regards to each of your own personal grit assessments, were any of you surprised?
2. Do you believe you are grittier than you may have been in the past?
3. Why might grit be important for you in the future?

End the lesson by telling your students, " One way to think about grit is to consider what grit isn't. Grit isn't talent. Grit isn't luck. Grit isn't how intensely, for the moment, you want something. Instead, grit is about having what some researchers call an "ultimate concern"— a goal you care about so much that it organizes and gives meaning to almost everything you do. And grit is holding steadfast to that goal. Even when you fall down. Even when you screw up. Even when progress toward that goal is halting or slow. Being naturally smart and talented are great, but to have true strengths and to thrive, we need the ability to persevere. Without grit, talent may be nothing more than unmet potential."

**The Money JAR** - Find your passion and work hard. This episode features Cody Coleman, who overcame significant barriers through mentorship, courage and grit. [Click here](#) to listen to this week's podcast episode on Using Grit – **Resilience Through Perseverance**

---

## **Bonus Activity: Create a Vision Board**

**Extended Activity:** 30 mins

**Materials:** Poster Board

Old Magazines

Scissors

Glue

Markers

**Overview:** Students will create their own personal vision board.

### **Directions:**

1. Have students look through old magazines and ask them to cut out pictures that represent their hopes and dreams for the next year.
2. Students should paste the pictures onto their boards and decorate them.
3. Ask students to share what the different pictures represent and how they plan to achieve these goals and dreams.