



Content of Your Character

GRADES: 9 – 12

INTRODUCTION

In this lesson, students learn why it is important to have personal values. Students will identify a list of core values and discuss how to bring these values into their everyday life and communities.

Standards

INSS.SOCIOLOGY.S.10.1

Describe traditions, roles and expectations necessary for a community to continue.

INSS.ELA-WRITING.9-10.W.3.3 and

INSS.ELA-WRITING.11-12.W.3.3

Write narrative compositions in a variety of forms that:

- a. Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, a situation, or an observation, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters.
- b. Create a smooth progression of experiences or events.
- c. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plotlines to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
- d. Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole.
- e. Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.
- f. Provide an ending that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.

Themes

- Core Values
- Character Development
- Community Impact

OBJECTIVES

During this lesson, students will:

- Discuss the Special Olympics core values and reflect on how they can relate to their own lives.
- Create a list of core values and define them.
- Identify a core value to incorporate into everyday life.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONING

Students should be able to answer these questions by the end of this lesson:

- What is a personal/core value?
- Why is it important to have core values?
- What effect does the community around you have on your values?

MATERIALS

- Book: *The Parallel* by Carl Erskine

If *The Parallel* by Carl Erskine book is not available, watch the following video:

- In the Clubhouse With Carl Erskine:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oWXBWJ8yKQk>
 - 0:00–15:00 (About his childhood and playing with Jackie Robinson)
 - 33:40–37:10 (About his son, Jimmy, and the Special Olympics)

LESSON

Prerequisite: Students should have read *The Parallel* by Carl Erskine.

If the book is unavailable to you, watch *In the Clubhouse With Carl Erskine* provided in the additional resources section.

1. Begin with a review of *The Parallel* by Carl Erskine or the provided video. Focus on common themes that are evident in the lives of Jackie Robinson, Carl Erskine, and Jimmy Erskine.
2. Present the Core Values of Special Olympics. Talk about why it is important to have core values.
 - **Sportsmanship With Joy:** We believe in the transformative power of sports. We embrace the purity of sports at all levels as we witness incredible personal athletic triumphs that shatter stereotypes.
 - **Empowerment:** We empower athletes to be contributing and respected members of Special Olympics and society. We support athletes becoming leaders on and off the playing field.
 - **Unity:** We are united in our commitment to inclusion, respect, and dignity. We build communities of acceptance: loving families, inspired employees, coaches, volunteers, and fans. We are one movement, in every community and every country.
 - **Bravery:** We live our Athlete Oath: "Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt."
 - **Perseverance:** We are capable, tenacious and resilient. We don't give up on ourselves or each other.
3. Split the class into groups of 3 – 4 students. Have the groups create a list of values (and definitions) evident in the lives of Jackie Robinson, Carl Erskine, and Jimmy Erskine.
4. Come back together as a group and create a master list of values and definitions. The list could include the following:
 - Bravery
 - Compassion
 - Leadership
 - Courage
 - Selflessness
 - Loyalty
 - Independence
 - Responsibility
 - Consideration
 - Humility
5. Have students spend a few minutes reflecting on the list of values while considering the following questions:
 - What does it mean to have core values?
 - What are examples of these values?
 - What do these values look like in your life?
 - What influences are evident in these core values?
 - How would you change the definitions based off your life experience?

ASSIGNMENT

Students should pick one of the values they feel is important in their lives. In a personal narrative, students should answer the following based on the core value they chose:

- What does this character trait mean to you?
- What are examples of this in action?
- What does this look like in your life?

Example: Honesty

What does Honesty mean?

- Being sincere, telling the truth, being free of deceit.

Honesty in action?

- Honesty through kindness. Honesty on its own can hurt others. Kindness tempers the sting of the truth and allows the words or actions to be clearer.

Honesty in my life?

- When I have important conversations with my friends and family, I need to consider the words I use and the tone of voice to ensure I am allowing the truth to be communicated without judgment.

GRADING

Assignment rubric worth 25 points total.

ASSIGNMENT RUBRIC

	Meets All Criteria	Satisfactory	Minor Issues	Major Issues	Unacceptable or Missing
Content and Focus	10 Expresses opinions concisely and clearly, makes connections to topics. Insightful, clear, original presentation of information. Supports opinions with evidence from lesson content or other resources.	8 Clearly states opinions, usually related to topic. Clear, concise. Responses may lack originality. Supports statements with lesson content and other resources.	6 Offers facts supported by lesson content. Reflection is evident but lacks depth and meaning.	4 Unclear focus or connection to topic.	0 Does not respond to assignment; off topic.
Organization	10 Organization is excellent; ideas are clear and arranged logically; the transitions are smooth.	8 Organization is good; ideas are clear and arranged logically with smooth transitions.	6 Organization is good; ideas are usually clear and arranged in an acceptable sequence; transitions are usually smooth and effective.	4 Organization is minimally effective; problems in approach, sequence, support, or transitions.	0 Ideas are fragmented and undeveloped. Lack of organization makes paper unreadable.
Mechanics of Delivery	5 Grammar, punctuation, mechanics, and usage are correct; diplomatic and consistent with Standard American English. Correctly cites and references all sources, using APA Style format.	4 Grammar, punctuation, mechanics, and usage are good, mostly consistent with Standard American English; errors do not interfere with meaning; minor errors in citations or references.	3 Grammar, punctuation, mechanics, and usage are good, mostly consistent with Standard American English; errors do not interfere with meaning; inconsistencies in APA Style format for citations or references. Able to locate sources as cited.	2 Grammar, punctuation, mechanics, and usage are distracting and interfere with meaning or understanding; many errors in citations or references.	0 Grammar, punctuation, mechanics, and usage interfere with understanding; contains information that is not cited or referenced within the paper.

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

- Read the Special Olympics Mission and discuss how Carl Erskine lived his life in support of it: <https://www.specialolympics.org/about/our-mission?locale=en>
- Use an online dictionary to have students research the definitions of important terms: <https://www.dictionary.com/>

DIFFERENTIATION IDEAS

- Students can split into groups and work together as if they are on a team (e.g., swim team, dance team, eSports team). They should create a set of core values. For each value, they should provide a definition and how it applies to their team.
- Students can choose to draw a picture they feel depicts their chosen value. A paragraph explaining the image should be included.
- Students can find music lyrics that pertain to their value. A paragraph explaining the connection should be included.
- Students can record answers to each question at stations. They can use a large chart paper in addition to individual responses on their paper/clipboard. Each group may be able to blend their ideas and report their unified response on the chart paper. As the groups rotate, that can add to the responses to the questions at each station. This may help the students expand their thoughts and ideas.
- Students can share (verbally, visually, written form, etc.) with class their personal experiences regarding an example of applying their chosen core value with others.

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