

Determination

Syllables

de•ter•mi•na•tion

Pronunciation

dih-tur-muh-ney-shuhn

Definition

Staying with a plan even when obstacles get in the way; unwavering in purpose.

(Exhausted and aching, Jeff made it to the end of the marathon through sheer determination.)

Simply put: Sticking with it.

Related Terms

Adamant: Firmly resolved.

Fundamental Question:

If you think you can ... can you?

Students will investigate the idea that success often requires a great degree of determination.

Objectives

Each student will:

1. Consider the characteristics of a specific person who shows (or has shown) great determination in helping others, someone who is (or was) unwavering in his or her purpose; and
2. Update and personalize a popular story of determination and optimism.

Before you begin

- Print out one copy of *The Little Engine Could ...and So Can I* for each student; and
- Gather several books and other references (including Web addresses) about many different individuals who have shown great determination in making our world a better place.

Suggested Sidebars:

Speaking of Determination (Discussion Idea)

Do you agree or disagree with this statement: A person who is determined to achieve an honorable goal is a person of good character? Explain how you came to your decision.

Taking It to the Next Level

Take a pledge (to build peace, be drug-free, or another honorable goal) and remain determined to live up to your promise.

Determination

Procedure

1. On the board write *Mahatma Gandhi*, *Mother Theresa*, or the name of another person who has shown great determination in helping others *and who is very familiar to the students*. Ask the children what they know about this individual and record on the board any *character traits* or *attributes* that they mention. Do not write down other facts or information that is offered.
2. With the help of the students, locate and highlight (by underlining, with a star, or simply through discussion) the words on the board that are directly related to *determination*. Be sure that everyone understands how the terms are related.
3. Say: "Using the highlighted words as guides and these resources (books, URLs, etc.) for references, find another person who has shown great determination in bringing about good; someone about whom you would like to know more." Once the students have each located a determined person, distribute a sheet on which you have written:

Nomination Form for the Great Determination Award

This nomination is due on this date: _____

Determined Person (nominee): _____

Where can you find more information about your nominee?
(example: library)

Tell a little about your nominee.

Tell why your nominee deserves this award.

Nominator's name (you!): _____

4. Announce "storytime" and ask that the children indulge you as you read aloud *The Little Engine that Could* (also called *The Pony Engine*). A popular incarnation of the story is attributed to "Watty Piper," (The Platt and Munk Company, 1930), but there are several versions available. (Optional: Serve cookies and milk.)
5. **Follow-up:** Distribute the *The Little Engine Could ...and So Can I* sheets and review the directions with the class. (Optional: When they have completed their short stories, compile the pages in a binder for the students to share.)

Name _____

Reminder: Determination means staying with a plan even when obstacles get in the way.

The Little Engine Could ... and So Can I

Write a short story about dedication ... starring YOU! The first and last lines have already been done for you.

"I-think-I-can, I-think-I-can," I thought to myself one morning.

"I thought I could, I thought I could," I announced!

Today's Thought: *A failure establishes only this, that our determination to succeed was not strong enough.* — **Christian Nestell Bovee, author and lawyer**