

# Lesson 1.16 Cultivating Curiosity and Grit

**Objectives:** Students will be able to:

- 1) Describe personal qualities that help them to learn.
- 2) Identify the role and importance of obstacles and setbacks in learning.
- 3) Define and provide examples of perseverance and grit.
- 4) Assess their current level of grit and describe how they can increase it.

**Materials Needed:** □ Handout 1.16.1 abd 1.16.2 □ Speakers for video

**Bell Ringer**  
(Activity for before and after the bell rings)

Read the quote and answer the question:

*"Everyone is born with an intense drive to learn. Babies don't worry about making mistakes or humiliating themselves. They walk, they fall, they get up. They just barge forward."*  
— Carol Dweck, Ph.D.  
Author of *Mindset*

➤ Now that you are older, are obstacles and setbacks you face more of a **good thing** or more of a **bad thing**? Explain your answer.

School-Connect • Handout 1.16.1

## Bell Ringer

[Greet students as they come in the door. Ask them to take Handout 1.16.1 and get started on the Bell Ringer.]

*Everyone is born with an intense drive to learn. Babies don't worry about making mistakes or humiliating themselves. They walk, they fall, they get up. They just barge forward.* — Carol Dweck, Ph.D.

Now that you are older, are obstacles and setbacks you face more of a good thing or more of a bad thing? Explain your answer



2 m  
T=2

**Essential Questions**  
(Questions to guide the lesson but answer later)

- What role do obstacles and setbacks play in learning?
- What type of perseverance helps us to focus on, and reach long-term goals?
- How can we develop perseverance and grit?

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## Introduce Lesson and Essential Questions

Today we will explore the importance of curiosity, perseverance, and grit to becoming self-motivated and resilient learners.

[Ask one or more students to read aloud the Essential Questions.]

- What role do obstacles and setbacks play in learning?
- What type of perseverance helps us to focus on and reach long-term goals?
- How can we develop perseverance and grit?



1 m  
T=3

**Philosophical Chairs**  
(A respectful way to debate an issue)

➤ For the Bell Ringer, what did you choose?  
Obstacles and setbacks you face are:  
a) more of a **good thing** or  
b) more of a **bad thing**?

• Divide into two groups – Team A and Team B – for a Philosophical Chairs debate.

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### PHILOSOPHICAL CHAIRS RULES

- Each person gets to talk at least once.
- No one can speak again until at least three others have spoken.
- The teams go back and forth from one side to the other.
- Summarize what the person before you said before making your point.

## Philosophical Chairs

To answer the Bell Ringer: *Are obstacles and setbacks more of a good thing or more of a bad thing?*, we are going to break into two groups for Philosophical Chairs, a respectful way to debate an issue.

[Read the guidelines for a Philosophical Chairs debate. Divide the class into two groups, according to how they answered the Bell Ringer. If group size is uneven, ask for volunteers to debate the other side. After both sides have shared their opinions, ask the following.]

- Who can sum up the opposing sides?
- What have you concluded from this discussion?



10 m  
T=13

**Life From a Baby's Perspective**  
(How does our perspective change from baby days to adulthood?)

What qualities do you observe in babies?

➤ What qualities do these babies display in exploring their environment?

➤ How can we regain these qualities if we've lost them?

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## Video: Life From a Baby's Perspective

[Show video: "Life From a Baby's Perspective" (1:47).]

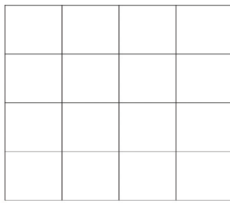
- What qualities do babies display in exploring their environment or learning to walk? (Curiosity, perseverance, undeterred by obstacles or setbacks)
- In what ways do you, or someone you know, display these same qualities?
- How can we regain these qualities if we have lost them? (Use a growth mindset, be more curious, cultivate enthusiasm for learning new things, practice perseverance and overcoming obstacles to learning, keep our goals in mind)



4 m  
T=17

### Activity: Count the Squares

How many perfect squares can you find?



➤ How many squares did you find?  
16 or more?  
20 or more?  
24 or more?  
28 or more?  
All 30?

➤ Why did some find a few squares while others found all 30? (Remember the mindset!)

➤ For those who tried the longest, what kept you going?

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## Activity: Count the Squares

[Ask students to find as many perfect squares as they can on their own (on Handout 1.16.1). Then, as a class, identify all 30 squares. (Look for four sets of 3 x 3 squares and nine sets of 2 x 2 squares.)]

- How many of you found 16 or more squares? 20 or more? 24 or more? 28 or more? All 30 squares?
- Why did some find a few squares while others found all 30? (Tried harder, didn't quit, used a growth mindset)
- For those who tried the longest, what kept you going?



5 m  
T=22

### Perseverance and Grit

(How can we focus and reach our goals?)

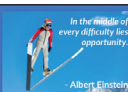
#### DEVELOPING PERSEVERANCE AND GRIT

1. Cultivate curiosity and a deep interest in what you are learning.
2. Increase your effort, don't blame your ability.
3. Learn from failure and apply its lessons.
4. Talk to yourself to guide your learning.
5. Learn from role models and mentors.

How often do you do each of the above?

- | 1     | 2         | 3           | 4     | 5             |
|-------|-----------|-------------|-------|---------------|
| Never | Sometimes | Half & Half | Often | Almost Always |

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Perseverance means to keep trying (persist) at a task.

Grit is a super kind of perseverance. Grit refers to having a passionate commitment to a long-term goal and showing unswerving dedication, e.g., becoming accomplished at a musical instrument, getting into college.

## Perseverance and Grit

Perseverance means to keep trying (persist) at a task. Grit is a super kind of perseverance. Grit refers to having a passionate commitment to a long-term goal and showing unswerving dedication to achieving it — whether by becoming accomplished at a musical instrument or getting into college.

### To develop perseverance and grit:

1. Cultivate curiosity and a deep interest in what you are learning.
2. Increase your effort, don't blame your ability.
3. Learn from failure, and apply its lessons.
4. Talk to yourself to guide your learning.
5. Learn from role models and mentors.

On the handout, rate yourself on how often you do each of the above. Think about what you need to improve upon to become “gritty”.

[CLICK to the next slide and discuss the “Ball and Egg” analogy.]



10 m  
T=32

### The Egg and Ball Analogy

(How can we persevere in the face of obstacles, challenges, and setbacks?)

#### The Egg and The Ball Analogy

- What happens when you drop an egg?
- What happens when you drop a ball?

#### Apply this analogy to challenges:

1. You blow a math test.
  - If you broke like an egg, what would you do?
  - If you bounced back like a ball, how would you respond?
2. You miss a game-winning opportunity.
  - If you broke like an egg, what would you do?
  - If you bounced back like a ball, how would you respond?
3. Someone says something that hurts your feelings.
  - If you broke like an egg, what would you do?
  - If you bounced back like a ball, how would you respond?

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## Video: Learning to Dance in a Year

[Show video about a young woman who taught herself to dance (3:54). Discuss it within the context of perseverance and grit.]



Video: Learning to Dance in a Year



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T=37

### Wrap Up

(What did we learn today?)

- What role do obstacles and setbacks play in learning?
- What type of perseverance helps us to focus and reach our long-term goals?
- How can we develop perseverance and grit?



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## Wrap Up

[Review the Essential Questions.]

- What role do obstacles and setbacks play in learning?
- What type of perseverance helps us to focus and reach long-term goals?
- How can we develop perseverance and grit?



2 m  
T=39

### Reflection/Application

(Applying knowledge to real life)

Do a “perseverance walk” by interviewing someone who overcame obstacles to achieve something positive.

- Answer the questions on Handout 1.16.1 in paragraph form. Write approximately 750 words.

We can do anything we want to if we stick to it long enough.  
— Helen Keller  
Author/Political Activist



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## Reflection/Application

Have students do a *perseverance walk* by interviewing someone who overcame obstacles to achieve something positive. Answer the questions on Handout 1.16.1 in paragraph form (approx. 750 words).

What did they want to achieve (their goal) and why?

What were the obstacles they faced and overcame?

What kept them going and on track?

How and when did they reach their goal? How did it feel?

What have been the benefits of reaching their goal?



1 m  
T=40