

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.
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.
- 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 Dependability (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.)

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

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

[illegible]

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