

Flexibility

Syllables
flex•i•bil•i•ty

Pronunciation
flek-suh-bill-i-tee

Definition

The ability to bend or change without breaking.
(It took great **flexibility** for Esther to change her project at the last moment.)
Simply put: like elastic

Related Terms

Resilient: Quick to recover.

Fundamental Question:

Am I a graceful green twig or a brittle brown stick?

Students will investigate the idea that like it or not, things change, but there are ways to cope with – and grow with – that change.

Objectives

Each student will:

1. Identify things that are within his or her control to change as well as those that are not.
2. Consider a wide range of options, wise and unwise (from looking for the good in changes to stubbornly holding onto the status quo with a death grip).
3. Will communicate the benefits of flexibility.

Before you begin

- Gather several thin, green twigs; several dry, brittle twigs; and several dry twigs that you soak in water for at least five hours prior to class.
- Print out a copy of *Pardon the Interruption, but There's Been a Slight Change in Plans* for each student.

Suggested Sidebars:

Speaking of Flexibility (Discussion Idea)

What are many and varied things that might be considered flexible? (examples: a gymnast, a Slinky, a schedule)

Taking It to the Next Level

Having a support system in place is one way to deal with change. Work with one or more partners to set up your own support systems in class.

Flexibility

Procedure

1. Say: "Suppose you were doing an art project using twigs and wanted to include a braid. Which do you think would be easiest to braid: a thin, green twig; a dry, brittle twig; or a dry twig that has been soaked in water for a while? Why?" Allow the children to experiment with braiding the twigs to see if their hypotheses were correct.

or

Have each child work with a partner. Distribute one protractor or other appropriate measuring instrument to each pair of students. Ask them to use the device to measure the flexibility of the thin, green twig; the dry, brittle twig; and the dry twig that was soaked in water in some way. Ask them to report their findings.

2. Ask: "How is the green twig like a limber gymnast?" (Both are flexible.) "Other than when performing as a gymnast, when are some times that people have to be flexible?" (There are many possible answers. A very important one is "When they are asked to change.")
3. Ask: "What are some changes that you might face?" (Answers might include moving to a new location, going to a different school, a last-minute change of plans, a new baby joining the family, and so forth.)
4. Ask: "What are some good ways to remain flexible in times of change?" (Responses might include understanding that some things are not within your control, asking for support from others, trying to keep things in perspective, figuring out your options, and others.)
5. Distribute the *Pardon the Interruption, but There's Been a Slight Change in Plans* activity sheets and review the instructions with the class.
6. **Follow-up:** Help your students gather the supplies listed on their activity sheets. Have them try out their new games.

Name _____

Reminder: Flexibility means the ability to bend or change without breaking.

Pardon the Interruption, but There's Been a Slight Change in Plans

Design a game that can be played in the classroom, gym, or outdoors. The game should encourage flexibility.

All the supplies you need to create and play your game are in the trunks below. Choose either Trunk A or Trunk B. You must use every item in the trunk at least once in your game.

Trunk A contains: 12 index cards; a pen or marker; a stop watch; a blackboard and chalk (or a marking board and marker); and a beanbag or foam ball.

Trunk B contains: two gymnastic floor mats; a balance beam; and a beachball.

I chose: Trunk A _____ Trunk B _____

What will your game be called? _____

What is the object of the game? _____

How many people may play at a time? _____ (Are they on teams? _____)

How does the game begin? _____

How is it played and how is each of the items used? _____

How does the game end? _____

How does the game promote flexibility? _____

With the help of your teacher, gather the supplies listed and try out your new game!

How flexible are you? Suppose you finished your game plan and were then told that the trunk you chose was no longer available ... and you'd have to redesign the game using the items from the other trunk. How might you feel? What could you do?

Today's thought: *The bend in the road is not the end of the road unless you refuse to take the turn.*
— **Anonymous**