

## Character Traits to Emphasize in Class

- Integrity
  - Look for instances when people told the truth, even when it was painful or led to punishment
    - Example: Abraham Lincoln was known for his integrity and humility.
    - Opposite: Benedict Arnold betrayed the Continental Army.
    - Opposite: Joseph McCarthy claiming to have names of communists working the government but never producing any evidence.
- Perseverance
  - Look for instances where people fought through a bad or unfair situation or insurmountable odds and didn't give up
  - Look for those who failed but didn't give up
    - Example: Thomas Edison invented the lightbulb after hundreds of failed attempts.
    - Example: Teddy Roosevelt was active despite asthma.
    - Example: Holocaust survivors such as Corrie Ten Boom did not give up.
- Respect
  - Look for instances where others respected those who didn't agree with them
  - Look for instances where respect helped bridge the gap between two people
    - Example: Thomas Jefferson and John Adams were strong political opponents but ended up becoming great friends later in life.
    - Example: Ulysses S. Grant treated Robert E. Lee and his men with great respect when they surrendered at Appomattox.
    - Opposite: George Custer did not respect the strength and battle tactics of his enemy and therefore was slaughtered at Little Big Horn.
    - Opposite: Andrew Jackson threatened to hang his Vice President John C. Calhoun for disagreeing with him about the Tariff of 1828.
- Responsibility
  - Look for instances where someone screwed up but faced the consequences of his/her actions
    - Example: Robert E. Lee lost almost 7,000 men in an hour because of Pickett's Charge at the Battle of Gettysburg. Lee said it was his fault and sent his resignation to Jefferson Davis.

- Self-control
  - Look for instances where people could have taken advantage of others for their own gain but didn't
    - Example: George Washington was asked to be king in the Newburgh letter. He turned it down and stated, "No incident in the course of the war in me triggers painful feelings as your message, that such ideas are circulating in the army, as you expressed it."
    - Opposite: The lack of self-control by the colonial mob outside of the customhouse led to the Boston massacre.
- Patience
  - Look for people who had to wait a long time for justice to take place
    - Example: Non-violent protestors in the civil rights movement were often bullied and pick on, but their patience paid off.
    - Opposite: John Brown murdered random men in Pottawatomie Massacre because he was angry about slavery.
- Gratitude
  - Look for instances where people were in bad circumstances but still found things to be thankful for
    - Example: Frederick Douglass being thankful for kindnesses shown to him in the midst of his life of slavery. "From Mas'r Daniel I got protection from the bigger boys, and from Miss Lucretia I got bread by singing when I was hungry, and sympathy when I was abused by the termagant in the kitchen. For such friendship I was deeply grateful, and bitter as are my recollections of slavery, it is true pleasure to recall any instances of kindness, any sunbeams of humane treatment, which found way to my soul, through the iron grating of my house of bondage. Such beams seem all the brighter from the general darkness into which they penetrate, and the impression they make there is vividly distinct." – *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*
    - Example: Anne Frank's diary mentions many things about the beauty of the world and the goodness in it despite living in hiding during the Holocaust.
- Initiative
  - Look for individuals who worked to solve a problem or took action because it was the right thing to do
    - Example: Benjamin Franklin invented the Franklin stove which was more efficient than other stoves and gave away his plans for free so that others could build their own.
- Courage

- Look for scary situations that people faced because it was the right thing to do
- Remind students that courage is NOT the absence of fear but acting in spite of fear
  - Example: Harriet Tubman risked capture and went back into the slave states to lead others to freedom.
  - Example: American troops held the city of Bastogne during the Battle of the Bulge and refused to surrender despite being surrounded and cut off
  - Opposite: KKK members wore sheets to hide their identity while they harassed and killed opponents.

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