

PERSEVERANCE

Introduction

'Counting on Katherine'
by Helaine Becker



The purpose of these lessons is to develop pupils' perception, knowledge and understanding of different character virtues through the use of stories. In this lesson, the **PERFORMANCE** virtue of **PERSEVERANCE** is explored, using the book, 'Counting on Katherine' by Helaine Becker. To accompany these Teacher's Notes, a pupil activity and a PowerPoint are downloadable via the Jubilee Centre website (jubileecentre.ac.uk/readgrowgo).

The following supporting documents are provided online:

- Read Grow Go Introduction
- Perseverance PowerPoint
- Perseverance Pupil Activity
- 'Counting on Katherine' Read-Along
- Other stories in the programme including: The Whopper, Dogger, What Grew in Larry's Garden, The Breaking News, Little People, Big Dreams: Greta Thunberg, Ada Twist – Scientist and Up the Creek.



BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS:

Perseverance is a performance virtue which can be defined as the steady persistence in a course of action, especially in spite of difficulties.

Aims of the lesson:

1. **Virtue Perception:** The lesson should allow pupils to notice situations within the story where perseverance is needed.
2. **Virtue Knowledge and Understanding:** The lesson should teach pupils the meaning of the term 'perseverance'. Pupils should be able to discuss why this virtue is important, both for themselves and others.
3. **Reflection:** Pupils should be given the opportunity to reflect on the story and how they can apply the virtue of perseverance to their own life.

Summary of 'Counting on Katherine'

Katherine Johnson was a skilled mathematician who dreamed of becoming a researcher. She faced many challenges in her life; as a black woman growing up in America in the first half of the 20th century, she had to be assertive to be taken seriously. Katherine and her family had to move town so that she could even attend school and when she began looking for work, she discovered that roles for women were limited. However, Katherine demonstrated perseverance by never giving up on her ambition to become a research mathematician. She was eventually hired by NASA and made significant contributions to successful moon landings in the 1960's.

The following lesson plan provides a guide for teachers and gives suggestions for how to teach the virtue of perseverance. It offers inspiration and is a suggested way to conduct a lesson to explore this virtue. Teachers are encouraged to adapt the plan to best suit the needs of their class and individual pupils. Pupils should become aware of the virtue of perseverance and its meaning; the story provides opportunities to discuss and reflect which will help to develop pupils' understanding of perseverance.

PERSEVERANCE

Lesson Plan

KEY VOCABULARY: Virtue, perseverance, persevere, not giving up, not quitting, being determined, trying, sticking at something, to keep going, difficult.

RESOURCES: 'Counting on Katherine' book or [read-along version](#) [available 12/20], Perseverance PowerPoint, Perseverance Pupil Activity, One Wonderful Word Perseverance card, resources for practical activities.

READ

10 MINUTES

Explain to the class that they are going to hear a special story which contains an important message. You would like them to try and work out what the message is but to keep it in their head until the end of the story. Explain that you are also looking for 'One Wonderful Word' – this is the virtue which is the theme of the story – PERSEVERANCE. Leave the questions on Slide 1 up on the screen as you read the story 'Counting on Katherine' by Helaine Becker or, alternatively, listen to the read-along version. The 'One Wonderful Word' Perseverance card should be accessible so that it can be revealed in the Grow discussion.

GROW

10 MINUTES

Discussion – ask the class to explain what they think the message of the story is. If not already mentioned, ask if they know what the 'One Wonderful Word' is. You can then reveal the PERSEVERANCE card which can be displayed in the classroom. Explain the definition of the term 'perseverance' using Slide 2. Use the Key Questions to discuss this virtue in relation to the story and the pupils' own lives. Allow the class the chance to share any real-life suggestions they have which require perseverance. If the class struggle with this, you could model by sharing a suitable suggestion you have which demonstrates perseverance.

15 MINUTES

Activity – The following list of practical activities are suggestions to encourage perseverance. The children could: practice throwing a ball into a high hoop, aim to throw a bean bag into a bucket, practice hula-hooping or skipping for a set amount of time, have an egg and spoon race, or complete a paper maze (see the Perseverance Pupil Activity sheet).

KEY QUESTIONS

- What made it hard for Katherine to become a mathematician?
- How did Katherine show perseverance?
- How do you think Katherine felt when she finally became a mathematician?
- Why is it sometimes hard to keep going with a difficult task?
- When have you had to show perseverance in your life?
- Why is it important that we never give up but instead persevere?

DIFFERENTIATION

The list of suggested practical activities can be completed in pairs, small groups or as a whole class, depending on the class's needs.

To challenge:

- Increase the distance between the pupil and the target.
- Increase the time spent hula-hooping or skipping.
- Increase the distance in the egg and spoon race.
- Decrease the size of the bucket.

PERSEVERANCE

Lesson Plan

GO

🕒 10 MINUTES

Bring the class together again so that they can share any difficulties they faced during the activities. Give pupils the opportunity to discuss how they persevered and how it felt when they were successful. Encourage pupils to persevere in school and at home when they find something difficult.

