



Resilience in Reading

A series of middle school ELA lesson plans that use fables from *Bend in the Wind* to practice reading comprehension skills and learn about resilience.

Note: the theme of resilience is present in many other novels and short stories, so these lessons and graphic organizers can be used with other texts as well.

STANDARDS

- RL.8.1 - Cite textual evidence to support analysis of text
- RL.8.2 - Determine a theme of a text and analyze it for characters, setting, and plot
- RL.8.3 - Analyze how particular lines in a story or events reveal aspects of a character
- RL.8.4 - Determine the meaning of unknown words

LESSONS

Building Vocabulary and Analyzing Character

1 class period

Character and Connection

1-2 class periods

Analyzing Plot and Theme

1-2 class periods

VOCABULARY

resilience, mental agility, connection, self-awareness, self-regulation, optimism, strength of character, context clues, textual evidence

resilience, connection, textual evidence

plot, exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution, conflict, theme, setting

MATERIALS

- Copies of *Bend in the Wind* or other text with a resilience theme
- highlighters, pencils, document camera/projection
- Anchor Charts

Prior knowledge:

Students should be able to use context clues and outside information to define, identify, and analyze new vocabulary

Prior knowledge:

Students should be comfortable listening to and reading texts to analyze for meaning

Prior knowledge:

Students should be able to define, identify, and analyze figurative language (imagery and perspective).

Teacher testimonial: "The beautiful thing about reading is that you can use it as a vehicle to tackle any topic. Stories about resilience are a powerful way to examine how we hold onto hope despite trying circumstances across time and space. I hope these lessons will give students a window into how humans and the natural world share a meaningful capacity for resilience against all odds while reinforcing the reading comprehension skills that we are always spiraling back to in our work."

Cristina Quattrone, middle school teacher and author of these lessons.



Resilience in Reading

LESSON 1: BUILDING VOCABULARY AND ANALYZING CHARACTER

Introduction: Choose an engaging method to review the six roots of resilience and their definitions at the start of class. **Note:** This lesson can be used with other fables or any other text with resilient characters. A list of fables and their corresponding roots of resilience can be found at the end of the activity booklet.

Activity 2:

1. Teacher reads *Gilbert the Grouper* from *Bend in the Wind* aloud (or listens to the author read it). Teacher instructs students to annotate for any examples of characters embodying the roots of resilience (that they notice), and additional vocabulary words they do not recognize or understand. Note: There may be multiple different examples of the same Resilience Root.
2. While reading, teacher pauses to model annotating for roots of resilience. For example, teacher can underline the moment that Gilbert's parents advise him to flee to the mangroves (pg. 10). Think-aloud could include something like: "Hmm, let me highlight this evidence from the text: 'Gilbert my son! Seek shelter! Go to the mang...' and later 'Gilbert trusted his father's final words. At the crack of dawn the next day, Gilbert would set off on a journey all the way to shore.' This really reminds me of our conversation yesterday about how a network of friends and family can help humans become more resilient. **This quote proves that** Gilbert needs his **Connection** to his loved ones; he might not have survived if not for their crucial last words. I'm going to write 'Connection to family = survival' in the margins."
3. Ask volunteers to list any vocabulary words they did not recognize at the end. Teacher may need to guide students through defining other words in the story, prompting students to find text features & context clues.

Activity 3:

1. Direct students to the Evidence Tracker worksheet. In groups, students will work together to identify other roots of resilience demonstrated by characters on pgs 11-12 of the fable. They will find and record exact textual evidence to support their analysis on the worksheet, and explain how this evidence relates back to the Root of Resilience. Teacher can model recording the textual evidence from the think-aloud in the chart if further clarification is needed. Remind students that there may be multiple examples of one Root of Resilience demonstrated by several characters or instances in the story. This activity reinforces returning to the text and reviewing annotations before answering a question. Teacher circulates and listens to group work.
2. Teacher calls the class back together to review student answers to provide feedback to the whole class.

Answers may vary but could include examples of **Mental Agility** as Gilbert learns new hunting methods, examples of **Connection** when Sheila and Shane befriend him and give him pointers, or examples of **Connection** when Cornelius saves his life and offers to mentor him.

CONCLUSION (Student exit ticket)

Release students to complete the third row of the Evidence Tracker worksheet independently. They will look back to pg. 13 of *Gilbert the Grouper* for examples of roots of resilience and support their analysis with evidence from the text.

Answers should include that Gilbert embodies **Optimism** on the final page of the fable. Evidence may vary but could include, "...he was ready to take this knowledge to the next chapter of his life. And with all the wisdom he learned, Gilbert the Grouper knew he would never be HOOKED." This proves Gilbert is looking to the future with hope, armed with his new knowledge.



Resilience in Reading

WORKSHEET FOR LESSON 1: Analyzing Character Worksheet

Directions: After reading the story, think about which roots of resilience you noticed the characters embodying. Go back to the text and find evidence to support your claims, then explain how this evidence relates to the Root of Resilience you identified.

First, try working with a partner:

Character	Root of Resilience	Textual Evidence	This proves...

Now, try one on your own:

Character	Root of Resilience	Textual Evidence	This proves...