

Trying Your Best



Concept
Learning Skills



Length
15-55 Minutes



Recommended
4th Grade

About This Lesson

In this lesson, students will discover the benefits of trying their best by celebrating their classmates' efforts, and reflecting on their own willingness to put their best effort forward. By sharing and exchanging their experiences and reflections with others, students will see ways they can improve their own behavior and support one-another in their efforts.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this activity, students will

- Describe what it means to try one's best;
- Assess their own efforts at school and elsewhere;
- Reflect on the benefits of trying their best;
- Use a rubric to evaluate levels of effort in some sample work.

Driving Question

Why should I make an effort in school?

Future-Ready Skills

Perseverance

Goal Setting

Self-Management

Lesson Breakdown

10-15
minutes

Activity 1 - The Effies!

In this activity, students tap into what they know about trying their best by nominating classmates for recognition for putting their best effort forward.

15-20
minutes

Activity 2 - When Do I Try My Best?

In this activity, students reflect on what it looks and feels like to try their hardest and assess their own effort.

15-20
minutes

Activity 3 - You're the Teacher!

In this activity, students use an effort rubric to "grade" some sample work.

5-10
minutes

Exit Activity - Trying Your Best Exit Slip

Students complete an exit ticket, reflecting on a past event where they did not try their best and predicting how they will use what they learned in the future.



Xello Entry Point

In the **School Subjects** section of the **About Me** page, students can rank 6 subjects from most to least favorite. Sometimes, interest and effort go hand in hand. This lesson can help students assess whether their interest in a school subject impacts their effort in the class.

Lesson Vocabulary

- Nominate
- Effort
- Self-assessment
- Believe
- Achieve
- Perseverance
- Fulfillment
- Satisfaction
- Success

ASCA Standards

M 5. Belief in using abilities to their fullest to achieve high-quality results and outcomes

B-LS 3. Use time-management, organizational and study skills

B-LS 4. Apply self-motivation and self direction to learning

B-LS 6. Set high standards of quality

B-LS 8. Actively engage in challenging coursework

B-LS 9. Gather evidence and consider multiple perspectives to make informed decisions

The Effies!



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Inquiry Prompts

- How do you know if you're doing your best?
- Why should you feel good about trying your best?
- Why should we celebrate others' best efforts?

Instructions

The purpose of this activity is to help students tap into what they already know about what it looks and feels like to try your best. They also have a chance to recognize a classmate who has tried their best at something.

- 1 Ask students to work with a partner for this activity. Hand out [Effie nomination slips](#) to each student.
- 2 Explain to students that they're going to nominate their partner for an Effie award. Effie awards recognize students who try their very best at something. This is all about effort, not necessarily results!
- 3 Give students some time to talk to each other and fill out their slips nominating their partners. Remind them that their answers should be different!
- 4 Collect the slips. Pull some from random and discuss as a class how the nominee has demonstrated their best effort.

Message for students: Being recognized for trying your best is just as important as winning or achieving something. Trying your best, even when something's hard, is an awesome achievement too!

Materials Required

- [Effie nomination slips](#)
- Pencils, colored pencils, or markers
- Computers (tablets, phones) with Internet access (if you want students to upload their artifacts)

Artifacts

Upload students' nomination slips to Storyboard, or post them in your classroom.

The Effies! - Nomination Slips



I nominate _____
for an Effie because they try their best at



I nominate _____
for an Effie because they try their best at



I nominate _____
for an Effie because they try their best at



I nominate _____
for an Effie because they try their best at



I nominate _____
for an Effie because they try their best at



I nominate _____
for an Effie because they try their best at



I nominate _____
for an Effie because they try their best at



I nominate _____
for an Effie because they try their best at

When Do I Try My Best?



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15-20 Minutes

Inquiry Prompts:

What can stop someone from trying their hardest at something?

- Is it only students who need to try their best at school? How do other people try their best in a school?
- How can someone commit to trying their hardest in the future?

Instructions

In this activity, students reflect on what it looks and feels like to try their hardest and assess their own effort.

- 1 Hand out the [effort self-assessment worksheets](#) to students. Ask them to fill out the assessment, and reflect on their results.
- 2 As a class, discuss the results of students' surveys. Come up with some benefits of trying your best at school.
- 3 Ask students to reflect on something they want to try harder at. How will they boost their effort in that area?

Message for students: Reflecting on how you feel about the effort you put into things can help you identify areas that you might need to work on. Ask yourself why you might not be putting your best effort towards a task or activity. Think about the help you would need to boost your effort, and ask for it.

Materials Required

- [Effort self-assessment worksheets](#)
- Pencils, colored pencils, or markers
- Computers (tablets, phones) with Internet access

Artifacts

Upload students' effort self-assessment to **Storyboard**. They can also use their answers as a basis for setting a goal about trying their best at a task in the My Goals section of Xello.

Effort Self-Assessment

Name: _____

Date: _____

Don't worry, this isn't a test. There are no wrong answers—just honest answers! Color in the answer that best reflects how hard you try at the following tasks.

	I don't try at all	I try a little	I try hard	I try my very best
I get my homework done on time.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I pay attention when the teacher is talking.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I respect my classmates. I treat everyone with kindness.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I come to school with a positive attitude.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I follow directions in class.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I control my emotions. I don't act out when things get tough.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I ask for help when I'm not sure about something.	☐	☐	☐	☐

Describe a time you tried your best at something. What happened after you gave it your best effort?

You're the Teacher!



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15-20 Minutes

Inquiry Prompts

- Why should someone put their best effort forth at school?
- What does it look like when someone makes an effort?
- What are the benefits of trying your best?
- Does effort always equal success (e.g. high marks)?

Instructions

In this activity, students use an effort rubric to “grade” some sample work. The objective is to ensure students can identify various levels of effort and interpret rubrics to gauge how they can try their hardest with their own work.

- 1 Hand out the [effort rubric](#) and [sample assignments](#) to groups of students. Students will need 2 rubric sheets so they can score both assignments.
- 2 Ask them to study the rubric. Use it as a guide for evaluating the amount of effort involved in the sample works. They can circle or color in the box with the score they want to give the work in each of the categories.
- 3 Encourage students to discuss the evidence they’ve found for their rating.
- 4 Ask groups to explain why they graded the work the way they did. Discuss why groups agreed or disagreed about the results.

Message for students: Sometimes trying your best means a higher mark or a big reward. But sometimes the rewards aren’t as obvious. In some cases, trying your best means you’ve challenged yourself, learned a lot, and prepared yourself to meet more—and maybe even bigger—challenges next time.

Materials Required

- [Two sample student assignments](#)
- [Effort rubrics](#)
- Pencils, colored pencils, or markers
- Computers (tablets, phones) with Internet access (if you want students to upload artifacts)

Artifacts

Upload students’ effort self-assessment to Storyboard. They can also use their answers as a basis for setting a goal about trying their best at a task in the My Goals section of Xello.

Student Work Sample #1

Name: _____

Date: _____

Teacher's Instructions:

Illustrate a professional in their workplace and describe some characteristics about their career.

Student #1 Illustration:



Student #1 Written Work:

- Construction managers plan and oversee building projects.
- They spend most of their time in an office creating schedules and budgets.
- This job is part of the health career group.
- They use Language Arts skills to read reports on factory costs and production.

Student Work Sample #2

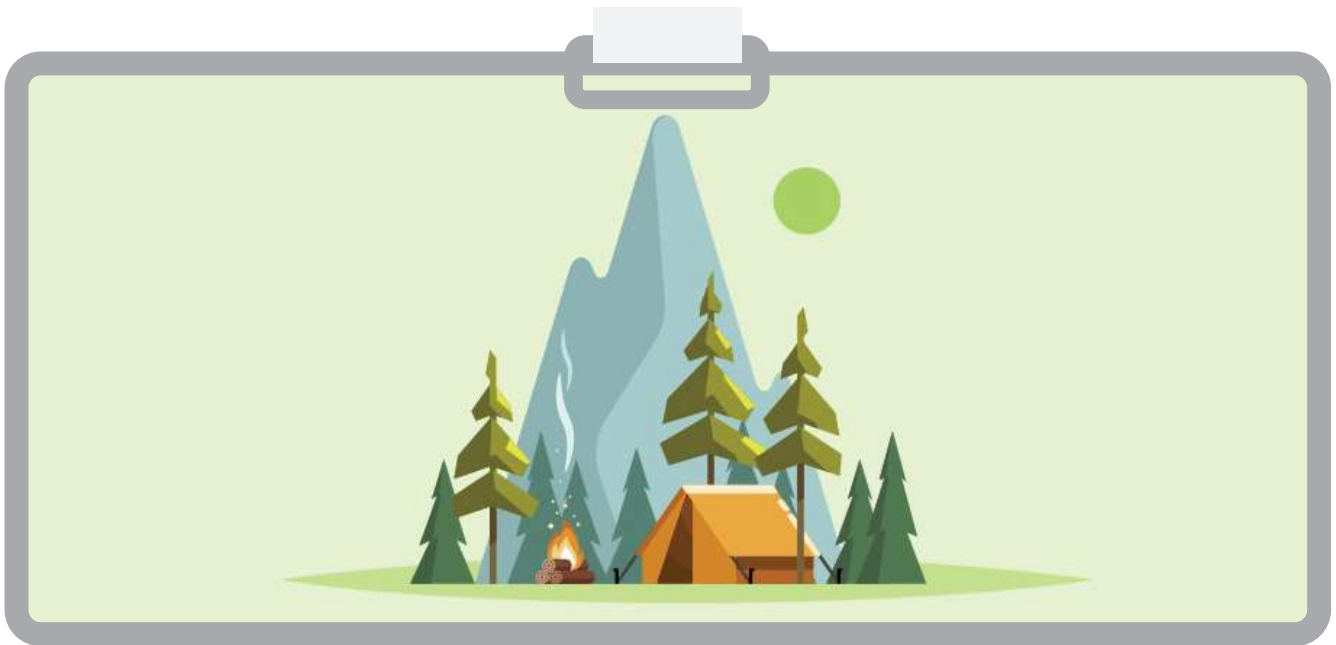
Name: _____

Date: _____

Teacher's Instructions:

Illustrate a professional in their workplace and describe some characteristics about their career.

Student #2 Illustration:



Student #2 Written Work:

Environmental Techs work hard to keep pollution out of the air, water, and soil. Without them we would not be able to enjoy camping in the wilderness. We can help environmental techs by making sure harmful waste, like batteries, are thrown away properly. To become an environmental tech you must like science and math because you need to understand how pollution affects our planet and use measurement skills when doing lab experiments. This career is part of the nature career path because environmental techs focus on taking care of the earth.

Effort Rubric

Student Sample # _____

Criteria	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Illustration quality - Color scheme - Detailed shapes and lines	Chosen shapes, lines, and color scheme express the scene with little effectiveness.	Chosen shapes, lines, and color scheme express the scene with some effectiveness.	Chosen shapes, lines, and color scheme express the scene with considerable effectiveness.	Chosen shapes, lines, and color scheme express the scene with a high degree of effectiveness.
Illustration content Includes a professional at their workplace	Illustration of the workplace is inappropriate for that career and/or does not include the professional.	Illustration includes a few details about the workplace environment, such as tools or equipment they might use. The professional is inappropriately dressed for their career.	Illustration includes some details about the workplace environment, such as tools and equipment they might use. The professional is adequately dressed for their career.	Illustration includes many details about the workplace environment, such as tools and equipment they might use. The professional is appropriately dressed for their career.
Writing quality - Paragraph structure - Complete sentences - Punctuation	Written description does not use paragraph structure, and sentences are often incomplete and punctuation is not used.	Written description does not use paragraph structure, but includes complete sentences, and appropriate punctuation.	Written description uses appropriate paragraph structure, including complete sentences, and punctuation most of the time.	Written description uses appropriate paragraph structure, including complete sentences, and punctuation throughout.
Writing content At least 4 accurate career characteristics	Written description includes 1 accurate characteristic about the career.	Written description includes 2 accurate characteristics about the career.	Written description includes 3 accurate characteristics about the career.	Written description includes 4 or more accurate characteristics about the career.

Name: _____

Exit Slip: **Trying Your Best**



Name: _____

Date: _____

Connect it to the **PAST**

Had I tried harder in the past, I
might have:

Connect it to the **FUTURE**

Now that I know why I should
try my best, I'm going to:

Name: _____

Date: _____

Connect it to the **PAST**

Had I tried harder in the past, I
might have:

Connect it to the **FUTURE**

Now that I know why I should
try my best, I'm going to:

Name: _____

Date: _____

Connect it to the **PAST**

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might have:

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try my best, I'm going to:
