



## Character Education Infused English-Language Arts Lessons



### Integrity and a Boy Called Slow

**Grade Level: 5**

**Character Education Focus: Integrity**

#### Summary

After reading the story "A Boy Called Slow," students will take part in a discussion on how the main character felt about his given name, what he did to earn a new name, and how he showed *integrity*. Students will take the perspective of a Native American, think of a new name they would like to earn, and propose a plan to earn the new name. (45-60 minutes)

#### Materials Needed

Bruchac, J. (2003). A boy called slow. In J. Cooper & J. Pikulski, *Houghton Mifflin Reading: A Legacy of Literacy Theme 4 Grade 5* (pp. 470-485). Boston, MS: Houghton Mifflin.

#### Academic - Character Education Objectives

Students will:

1. Identify the character trait of *integrity* in the main character, Slow, in "A Boy Called Slow."
2. Recognize the significance of names and be able to explain the meaning behind their own name.
3. Participate in a discussion to determine what steps the main character took to earn his new name.
4. Evaluate their given name from the perspective of a Native American, and decide on a new name they would like to earn.
5. Write a five-paragraph essay describing their plan for earning their new name.

#### California English-Language Arts Standards Addressed

Reading

2.0 Reading Comprehension

- 2.3 Discern main ideas and concepts presented in texts, identifying and assessing evidence that supports those ideas.
- 2.4 Draw inferences, conclusions, or generalizations about text and support them with textual evidence and prior knowledge.

Writing

1.0 Writing Strategies

- 1.2 Create multiple-paragraph expository compositions:
  - a. Establish a topic, important ideas, or events in sequence or chronological order.
  - b. Provide details and transitional expressions that link one paragraph to another in a clear line of thought.
  - c. Offer a concluding paragraph that summarizes important ideas and details.

## Listening and Speaking

### 2.0 Speaking Applications

#### 2.3 Deliver oral responses to literature:

- a. Summarize significant events and details.
- b. Articulate an understanding of several ideas or images communicated by the literary work.
- c. Use examples or textual evidence from the work to support conclusions.

### Lesson Procedures

1. The teacher explains the purpose of the lesson, which is to use the story “A Boy Called Slow” to identify the character trait of *integrity* (*having the courage to do what is right, even when it’s hard*). His *integrity* was so strong that he changed his life and his name.
2. The teacher reads selected background information about Sitting Bull, a Lakota chief and holy man so students can know about the man Slow becomes. (See “Teacher Notes” section.)
3. The teacher reads aloud “A Boy Called Slow” and students take notes as they identify events in the story that provide evidence of Slow’s *integrity*.
4. The teacher provides a definition of a rite of passage (*something that marks an important change in one’s life*) and explains that there are many rites of passage in our lives. Have students brainstorm the rites of passage in their lives. Write several of their ideas on the board.
5. After an appropriate amount of time, highlight or add one of the most significant rites of passage to the list, our birth. Explain that most cultures recognize the birth of a child with a celebration and naming of the child. (See Extensions and Variations for mini-lesson on naming that can be inserted here.)
6. The teacher helps students understand the connection between Slow’s character trait of *integrity* and his courageous deeds. Point out that as a result of his actions, Slow earns a new and more respected name, Sitting Bull.
7. Students are instructed to take a perspective of a Native American and, after evaluating their own given name, decide on a new name that they would like to earn.
8. The teacher conducts a class discussion to help students focus on how they will act with *integrity* to earn their new name. Discussion questions may include:
  - *What can you do at school today, this week, or this month to demonstrate integrity?*
  - *What can you do to help yourself achieve your goal?*
  - *What can you do at home to show integrity?*
  - *Is there someone that can help you act with integrity or can you do it by yourself?*
  - *How do your actions fit into the character trait of integrity?*
  - *How will acting with integrity help you, as you grow older?*
9. Instruct the students on the following format for a five-paragraph essay using time order transition words *first*, *next*, *then*, and *finally*. Students can use this rubric as they develop their essays.

#### 1. Introduction

Write a general topic sentence

Write 2-3 subtopic sentences to be covered in supporting paragraphs

2. "First" begins first supporting paragraph  
Restate first subtopic  
Write 2-3 supporting details or examples
3. "Next" begins second supporting paragraph  
Restate second subtopic  
Write 2-3 supporting details or examples
4. "Then" begins third supporting paragraph  
Restate third subtopic  
Write 2-3 supporting details or examples
5. "Finally" begins the closing paragraph  
Summarize the main topic  
Write a sentence to summarize each subtopic

10. Students will share their writing in small groups. Using the format for a five-paragraph essay, students choose a well-written essay to read to the whole class.

### Academic – Character Education Assessment

*Academic Assessment:* Using the criteria provided for the five-paragraph essay, teacher can formally assess student's writing ability to relate traits of *integrity* to personal goals.

*Character Education Assessment:* Teacher can assess students' understanding of *integrity* through discussion of the definition and examples they provide in their writing.

### Reflective Journaling Prompts

Teacher may want to pre-select one or two journal prompts or quotes to use.

Read and choose one of the following thoughts about *integrity*; take a moment to reflect on its meaning in your life and write a response in your journal.

- *Integrity* means being what you say you are or think you should be. It means using your beliefs about right and wrong as the rules for your life.
- "Walk your talk." Show commitment and courage by doing the right thing no matter what.
- *Integrity* - your actions reflect what you say and value.
- Stand up for your beliefs openly and boldly.
- Listen to your conscience and act with honor.
- Have the courage to do what is right and try new things when it is hard.
- The best index to a person's character is (a) how he treats people who can't do him any good, and (b) how he treats people who can't fight back.
- Abigail Van Buren ("Dear Abby") advice columnist said, "*Integrity* is the willingness to do what is right even when no one is looking.
- *Integrity* is the hallmark of a person; we build our reputations on *integrity*.

### Extensions and Variations

*Set in Our Ways - A Listening and Speaking Activity*

Students can investigate their family's heritage and traditions. For activity directions go to:

<http://www.eduplace.com/rdg/hmr05/5/4/act2.html>

*What's in a Name?*

Students can investigate where their name comes from through interviews with parents and other relatives. Brainstorm with the class some questions for the interview, which may include:

*Who am I named after?*

*What nationality is my name?*

*Does my name have an English translation or a meaning in the language of my ancestors?*

**Teacher Notes or References**

For information on Sitting Bull go to: [http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/people/s\\_z/sittingbull.htm](http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/people/s_z/sittingbull.htm)

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