

THE GRIT GAME SHOW

EDUCATOR RESOURCES



drama by george

DramaByGeorge.com
(502) 718-5090

Download this document as a PDF: dramabygeorge.com/gritresources



DISCUSSION GUIDE

Use these questions as the starting point for a class discussion about *The Grit Game Show*. The questions are designed to remind students of the principles they learned during the assembly.

1. What is grit?

It's **having the tools you need to fix problems and failures in your life, so that you can bounce back stronger than ever.** Brainstorm some of the traits and habits that are a part of grit with your students. You might use the following list as a starting point.

- A specific *goal*. (Visualize how good achieving your goal will feel—that will give you energy to keep going.)
- A willingness to do *hard work* to reach your goal.
- The time and patience to *practice* any new skills you might need.
- *Determination* to make a plan and stick to it, even when it's not fun anymore.
- *Perseverance* to keep working towards your goal when you encounter problems and failures.
- The *humility* to ask for help when you need it.
- Enough *courage* to try a different path to success if your first idea doesn't work out.

2. What's one way that you've demonstrated grit this week?

Encourage your students to reference the list of qualities that you brainstormed in question 1 for ideas. Have students share one way they've incorporated a "gritty" attribute into their lives. (First-person examples drawn from our list follow.)

- I set a *goal* to make the honor roll for the next grading period.
- I did the *hard work* of finishing my science fair project.
- I *practiced* my violin every day last week.
- I had the *determination* to make a plan to study for a big math test every day this week. I stuck to my plan, even though it was boring after a while.
- My *perseverance* helped me keep practicing my music for Chorus, even though I had to skip my after-school TV time to do it.
- I had enough *humility* to ask Ms. Jones to help me after school with percentages because I didn't understand the math lesson during class.
- When I realized my idea for a short story wasn't working, I had the *courage* to try a different plotline, even though I'd already spent an hour on the first idea.

3. In the game called "Choose Your Future," we saw that most jobs worth having require a lot of grit. What do you want to be when you grow up? How will you need to demonstrate grit in order to get that job?

For example, if a student wants to be a veterinarian, does she know what it takes to get there? How much college is involved? (Vets typically need a 4-year undergraduate degree, followed by a 4-year DVM [Doctor of Veterinary Medicine] degree. There's even more training involved if the student wants to specialize.) After she finishes her training, how does the job itself require grit? (A vet has to deal with difficult animals as well as difficult people. She'll probably need to put in long hours, and will sometimes have to perform emotionally-draining tasks, like putting a sick cat or dog to sleep.) The tween years are a great time for students to dream about the future, but they can also begin putting reality with their dreams by recognizing the work involved.

4. In “The Losers’ Club,” we saw that everyone — even famous, successful people — have to deal with problems and failures in their lives. What sets successful people apart from those who fail? Can you give an example from the life of someone you admire?

The ability to bounce back from problems and failures is what sets people who succeed apart from those who never get past their setbacks. Everyone has difficulties sometimes. When we respond to them with grit, we can overcome them and go on to success. Encourage students to share brief stories about how their personal heroes demonstrate grit.

5. In “Talking Back,” we learned that it’s important to think positively when we face setbacks. What’s one problem or failure that you’ve encountered this week? How can you change the way you’re thinking about it from negative to positive?

Encourage your students to share a setback they’ve faced recently. Help each tween find a positive way to reframe the situation—one that sees the setback as an opportunity to learn and grow. Here are some examples of setbacks, along with positive interpretations that a student might give each one.

- **I didn’t do as well on the test as I was hoping. I got a C instead of an A.**
A C isn’t what I wanted, but it isn’t the end of the world. If I study more for the next test, I can work my way up to an A.
- **I really wanted to be the Cowardly Lion in *The Wizard of Oz*, but the teacher cast me as a Munchkin instead.**
I can still learn a lot about acting by doing my best with the part I have. I can learn even more by watching the student who got the role of the Lion.
- **I had a really bad game in Little League. I struck out every time I was up to bat.**
Everybody has a bad game sometimes. This is a good reminder to practice batting with Dad, so that I can do better in the next game.

6. In “Real Life Grit,” George talked about having either a Fixed Mindset or a Growth Mindset. What’s the difference between them?

A Fixed Mindset assumes that nothing much can change in my life. I believe that I’ll be stuck in the same situation permanently. A Growth Mindset recognizes that I can learn and grow from every situation. I believe things can get much better when I work on them. Here are some examples of a Fixed versus a Growth Mindset.

- “I’m no good at math, and I never will be” *versus* “I’m not the greatest math student right now, but I’ll get better if I do my homework and study.”
- “I have to look smart all the time, so I can’t try anything that might be hard or make me look foolish” *versus* “Maybe I should try something more challenging so that I’ll learn more.”
- “The first thing I tried didn’t work, so I’m going to give up” *versus* “That didn’t work, so I’ll try a different way to reach my goal.”

7. Why is having a Growth Mindset so important?

Looking at everything in life as an opportunity to learn helps me have the courage to try new things and develop into a more successful person. In a study authored by Dr. Carol Dweck, students who were encouraged to have a Growth Mindset by being told “You must have worked really hard” improved their scores on a test by an average of 30%—the difference between a D and an A! Students who were encouraged to have a Fixed Mindset by hearing “You must be smart at this” saw their scores on a test drop by about 20%—the difference between an A and a C. The students who heard they were smart were driven to keep looking smart at all costs, even if it meant avoiding challenges. The Fixed Mindset students didn’t believe they could grow and learn. The students who heard they were hard workers were driven to keep trying and improving, even when it wasn’t easy. The Growth Mindset students believed they *could* grow and learn, and it made them more successful. The concepts of a Fixed Mindset and Growth Mindset come from the work of Stanford psychology professor Carol Dweck. For a brief introduction to her ideas, we recommend the video found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y19TVbAal5s>, and the article at <http://nymag.com/news/features/27840/>.



ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

Equip your students with grit using these in-class activities. They tie into the curriculum in the areas of Language Arts, Social Studies, and Practical Living.

1. Send a letter.

Assign your students to write letters that explain what they learned during *The Grit Game Show*. Send your letters to Drama by George, 743 East Broadway, Unit 270, Louisville, Kentucky 40202-1711. (George can't respond to individual letters, but if we receive your correspondence within a month of your performance, he'll reply to your class as a whole.)

2. Write a True Story.

Ask your students to write about a time when they showed grit. How did they overcome problems and failures to reach a goal? Each story should have at least three paragraphs:

- What's the goal you were trying to achieve? Why was it important to you?
- What specific things did you do to work towards your goal? What problems or failures did you encounter along the way?
- How did you overcome the problems and failures to achieve your goal? During your journey to success, what's the biggest lesson you learned about grit?

3. Create a Career Brochure.

Have your students do some internet research to learn more about careers that interest them. A good place to start is on the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' website at www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_nat.htm. Each student will use what she learns to create a brochure advertising one profession. In their brochures, students should include information that answers these questions:

- What sorts of things will you do in this profession?
- Why is it a fun, fulfilling, or worthwhile job?
- How much and what kind of education will you need to work in this field?
- What are some of the challenges that will require you to have grit while you're on the job?
- Roughly how much money will you earn per hour?
- What are at least two websites where people can learn more about this career?

4. Research a Person with Grit.

Instruct your students to research a famous person who suffered from setbacks on the way to success. Based on their research, students will prepare short presentations (about 3 minutes each) to be delivered orally to the class. They must include some of the problems or failures that the person faced, and the ways he or she overcome them to achieve success. We suggest asking your students to avoid pop stars and professional athletes when they choose individuals to research. Good candidates include the people who are featured in *The Grit Game Show*: Muhammad Ali, Amelia Earhart, Thomas Edison, Albert Einstein, Bill Gates, Helen Keller, Abraham Lincoln, Rosa Parks, Sacagawea, and Harriet Tubman.

5. Design a Poster.

This project can be completed either on paper or on a computer. Direct your students to divide a piece of paper in half. On one half, they should write a negative thought they sometimes have when trying to reach a goal, like "This project will take forever." On the other half, they should write a positive thought that can take its place, like "This project will take some time, but I can learn a lot from it. The sooner I get started, the sooner I'll get finished." They should also illustrate each attitude with an image. For example, they might draw a picture of a defeated-looking person above the negative statement, and a picture of a victorious person above the positive statement. Display your students' completed posters on a bulletin board.



THE GRIT QUIZ

Do you keep going when the going gets tough, or do you give up when things get hard? Take our quiz to find out how good you are at bouncing back from problems and failures. Of course, this quiz will only give you an idea of where you're at right now. You can always grow and learn . . . and that will make you grittier in no time!

1. Suppose you have a big test tomorrow. What will you do right after school?

- A. Study before I do anything else.
- B. Take a short break, but then get to work.
- C. Put off studying until Mom threatens to take away my screen time.
- D. Studying is for nerds. I'm gonna flunk that test with pride.

2. You're discouraged because you got a really small part in the spring play. What will you tell yourself when the cast list comes out?

- A. "I'm going to do the best I can with the part I have, and learn as much as I can by watching the other actors."
- B. "Well, at least I get to be in the play. Maybe I'll have fun, even with a small part."
- C. "This is so unfair—I'm way better than the kid who got the lead! I'm gonna make fun of her at every rehearsal."
- D. "I QUIT!"

3. You tried an experiment for your science fair project that didn't work at all. What will you do next?

- A. Learn from my mistake. I'll immediately go online to look for another experiment that I can use instead.
- B. Take the rest of the night off, but come back to my project tomorrow and see if I can figure out a better experiment.
- C. Whine and beg until my Dad finds a new experiment for me.
- D. Pretend I forgot all about the science fair and take a zero.

4. Mom forgot that she was supposed to drive you to baseball practice — she stayed late at work and you completely missed it. Now, the coach is mad at you. What will you say to him?

- A. "I'm sorry I didn't make it to practice. Can I do something extra to make up the time I missed?"
- B. "Sorry, Coach, but my Mom forgot."
- C. "It's all Mom's fault! Make her run laps, not me!"
- D. "I'm glad I missed practice, 'cause I got to play video games instead."

5. You have a big project due for school. When will you start working on it?

- A. The same day the teacher assigns it.
- B. I'll procrastinate for a while, but get started at least a few days before it's due.
- C. I'll wait until the night before I have to turn it in, then freak out and stay up half the night to finish it.
- D. I won't do it at all. I believe F stands for "Fantastic."

6. You just finished writing a short story for school, but you know it isn't your best work. What will you do?

- A. I'll take a short break, then come back and rewrite some sections until the story is stronger.
- B. I'll take a long break to clear my head. *Maybe* I'll come back to it later.
- C. It's good enough—I'll turn my story in the way it is.
- D. I'll tear up the story because it isn't any good, then tell the teacher that my iguana ate it.

Continued on next page →

➔ **Continued from previous page**

- 7. You don't understand how to graph equations, but it seems like everybody else in your math class already gets it. Will you have the courage to ask the teacher for extra help?**
- A. Of course. Part of grit is knowing when you need assistance.
 - B. Probably, but I'll be embarrassed if anybody sees that I'm staying after school for tutoring.
 - C. Probably not. If the other kids find out I don't understand this stuff, they'll make fun of me.
 - D. No way. It'll cut into the time I need to spend on TikTok.
- 8. You're afraid to start your report about dolphins because you're scared that it won't be good enough. What's your next move?**
- A. Conquer my fear and start the report anyway. If I spend enough time on it, it'll probably turn out really well.
 - B. Talk about why I'm scared with Mom or Dad, and see if they can help me feel better.
 - C. Put the paper off until I feel less scared. (Actually, that means I'll get more freaked out the longer I wait.)
 - D. Take the lazy way out: Don't do the report at all.
- 9. You made a plan to practice your clarinet every night this week. But after a couple of days, you get really sick of it. What will you do?**
- A. Keep practicing anyway. I made a plan and I'm going to stick with it.
 - B. Give myself one day off, but get back to practicing tomorrow.
 - C. After two days of practice, I'm a Clarinet Master. I can take the rest of the week off.
 - D. I never practiced in the first place. I just told my Mom I did so she'd get off my case.
- 10. You thought your social studies homework would only take you ten minutes. But this assignment is really confusing, and it's taking forever. What will you do when you look at the clock and see you've been working for 45 minutes?**
- A. Keep working until I get it done, no matter what.
 - B. Work on it for 15 more minutes. If I still can't figure it out, I'll ask the teacher for help tomorrow.
 - C. Quit right now and turn in an unfinished assignment.
 - D. Tell the teacher she's a loser for giving us such hard homework.

Scoring

Give yourself 3 points for each time you chose answer A, 2 points for each B, 1 point for each C, and 0 points for each D. Now, total your score and see how you did!

26-30: Grit Guru

Wow, you're full of determination and perseverance! However, remember that not everything has to be perfect—don't be afraid to cut yourself a little slack sometimes. While grit is extremely important, there's more to life than work. Doing your best doesn't mean you'll always be perfect. It means you'll always be growing into a more successful person.

21-25: Expert in Grit

You already know that hard work pays off. Stay gritty, my friend, and don't stop learning. Is there a specific area in your life where you could use a little more grit? How can you make it happen? For example, if you struggle with quitting when things get hard, what are some positive things you can tell yourself about how setbacks are an opportunity to learn and grow?

16-20: Student of Grit

All of us have times when we don't bounce back from problems as well as we should, but if you want to be successful, you need to keep getting grittier! Think about one of your goals. What can you do to make progress right now? For example, if you want to make the honor roll, what homework needs to be done? What test do you need to study for? Don't put it off—do it *today*.

0-15: Grit Beginner

The great thing about grit is that anybody can get more of it. Think about one problem or failure that you encountered this week. Now, what can you do to grow from your mistake? Maybe you failed a test—can you ask the teacher to help you understand what you did wrong? Take an action step *today* to turn your problem into an opportunity for growth!



HOW TO SET A GOAL

Do you have dreams about cool things you'd like to do with your life? If you want to make them come true, turn your dreams into goals! *A goal is a dream with a plan for making it happen.*

1. Decide where you want to go.

Pick a goal. Make it something that you'd really like to achieve in the next few weeks or months, like earning a solo in the next chorus concert. Think about how good it will feel when you reach your objective. Don't set a vague goal, like "I want to do better in school"—if you want to be successful, get specific!

My Goal: I want to make the honor roll by getting all As and Bs on my next report card.

2. There will be problems. Make a plan to beat them.

Any time you work towards a goal, you'll have some setbacks along the way. That's what it's important to have a plan for getting where you want to go. Your plan may have only one part—say, "I'm going to practice my music for chorus every day as soon as I finish my homework"—or it might have several parts. Either way, it should be as specific as possible.

My Plan for Getting All As and Bs: (1) I'm going to do all of my homework this grading period. I'll work on it every day as soon as I get home from school and eat a snack. (2) I'll ask my parents or teacher for help whenever I don't understand something. (3) I'll study at least 30 minutes the night before every test by reading over my notes.

3. Turn negative thoughts into positive ones.

As you work towards your goal, you'll probably catch yourself thinking dark thoughts. Sometimes, the voice inside your head may put you down or encourage you to quit. When that happens, *don't listen!* Setbacks are opportunities for growth in disguise. Whenever you have a negative thought about reaching your goal, replace it with a positive one instead. Think about some negative thoughts that you might have while you work towards your goal, and decide how to answer them.

Negative Thought: "I stink at math. I'll never manage to get a B." Positive Thought: "If I do my homework, even when it's hard, I'm going to get better. I think I can pull off that B!"

Negative Thought: "I don't understand this assignment. I give up." Positive Thought: "I'll ask the teacher for help tomorrow. I can do this if I ask questions and keep working hard."

4. Growth is hard work — but it's worth it.

No one else can give you grit—not your teacher, not your parents, and not your friends. You're the only one who can choose to keep going when the going gets tough. So get out there and put your plan into action! What are you going to do *today* to reach your goal?

My Plan for Today: As soon as I get home and have a snack, I'm going to do my homework. I'll also study for the language arts vocabulary test.
