



Content developed by

from Nemours

Learning Goals

- It's good to try new things, try your best, and try again.
- Trying helps you learn, get better at things, and succeed.

Print Out Before Class

Bring copies for everyone:

- *How Trying Helped Me* handout
- *Things to Know* handout
- *Tips From Michael Phelps* handout

Lesson 7: Try, Try, Try

TEACHER NOTE

This lesson opens a discussion of why it's good to try, what can stop kids from trying, and how kids can find ways to put mistakes behind them and try again to succeed. It encourages a growth mindset — the belief that when we try, we can always learn, grow, and improve.

QUICK TIPS

- *Every day, kids face new opportunities to try — at school, at play, and with peers. Kids who feel confident and capable face these opportunities more eagerly and easily.*
- *Kids who feel less confident or easily discouraged may be more reluctant to try. Fear of making mistakes or pressure to be perfect stop many kids from trying. As a result, they miss opportunities to develop persistence, grit, and resilience.*
- *Help kids talk about how it feels to try, how fear of mistakes can stop them from trying, and how to keep trying anyway.*

START THE DISCUSSION

1. It's good to put our best into things we do.

Instructor: All italicized text is intended as notes to teachers. All other text may be read out loud to your class.

If we want to learn or get better at something, we need to try. That's true of school, sports, playing an instrument — or anything we want to learn.

Today, we're going to talk about why it's good to **try new things, try your best, and try again.**



Take It Home!

Everybody fails sometimes. But to succeed and grow, kids must learn to pick themselves up and try again.

Kids will take home handouts that help them think about how to take advantage of the opportunities they have to try new things, try their best, and try again when they fail.

Resources

KidsHealth:

- Rejection and How to Handle It
- What if I Don't Like Sports?

(Lesson 7: [Try, Try, Try](#), continued)

2. Try new things.

Can you think of a time you tried something for the very first time? Maybe you tried a new food, a new sport, or making new friends. What about the first time you took a swim lesson. Can you remember how that felt?

When we try something new, we don't really know how it will go, do we? We might feel nervous or excited, or both.

It's natural to wonder whether we'll like it or be good at it. Or whether we'll be able to do it at all. The way to find out is to try it and see.

Think of a time you tried something new. Raise your hand if you weren't sure at first how it would go, but you tried it anyway.

Show of hands.

Keep your hand up if it turned out that you **did** like it or you **could** do it.

Show of hands.

Often, we find out that we do like a new thing we try. We find out we can do it. But it doesn't turn out that way every single time. No matter how it turns out, though, you can learn from trying something new.

You don't have to try *every* new thing. And of course you shouldn't try a new thing that seems dangerous or wrong.

But trying new things usually is good for you. It's a way to find out what you can do, and what you like. It feels great to discover what you can do — but you have to try things to find out!

3. Try your best.

You've probably heard the advice "try your best" plenty of times. Raise your hand if you think that's good advice.

Pause for show of hands.



(Lesson 7: [Try, Try, Try](#), continued)

Why? Why is it so important to try your best?

Let them answer.

- You do a better job.
- You get a good grade.
- You get a good score.
- You win more often.

What if you don't try very hard? What if you think, "Oh, well, it doesn't matter if I try my best on this. I don't really care about this book report, so I won't put much effort into it."

When you don't try your best, you might do a so-so job. You miss a chance to feel pleased and proud. You might even feel bored because it's not enough of a challenge for you.

When you try your best and see the results, you gain confidence. Trying your best helps you stay interested and keep getting better.

What if you're already pretty good at something? Or you have a natural talent and don't have to try very hard to do a pretty good job?

Even if something is easy for you, it's still good to try your best. No matter how good you are, you can always get better. In fact, when you try your best at something you're already good at, that's the way to go from being good at something to being GREAT at something.

4. Try again.

OK, what about this saying: "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again!" Raise your hand if you think that's good advice.

Show of hands.

Why?

Let someone answer.



(Lesson 7: [Try, Try, Try](#), continued)

- If you don't try again, you can't succeed.
- You might be able to do it this time.
- If you give up, you don't feel good about it.
- You'll never know if you could have made it.

Even when we try our best, we don't always do well the first time, or even the first few times. That's true of everyone — even Olympic athletes.

When you don't do well at first, you have two choices: you can decide to give up, or you can decide to try again.

If you give up, you'll never succeed. And you'll never know if you could have. When you try again, you have a new chance to succeed.

It takes determination to try again. You might need to shake off a mistake or failure and put it behind you. If you keep going when things are hard, it's called grit.

5. What keeps kids from trying?

Sometimes kids stop themselves from trying. Has this ever happened to you? What do you think can stop kids from trying?

Let kids answer.

- They think they can't do it.
- They are afraid to fail.

You won't succeed every time you try. Mistakes and failures are bound to happen.

Of course, no one wants to make mistakes. And no one wants to fail. But these things will happen when you try.

Sometimes kids get so afraid of making mistakes or failing that it stops them from trying at all. They may not realize that failures are just part of trying.

Has this ever happened to you? Have you ever felt afraid to try because you might make a mistake? Raise your hand if you've ever felt this way and are brave enough to admit it!





(Lesson 7: [Try, Try, Try](#), continued)

Pause for show of hands.

You're not alone. Almost everyone has felt this way. It's so easy to get worried about making mistakes. But thinking this way can hold us back. If we don't try, we miss chances for success and feeling good about ourselves.

Another thing that can keep people from trying is thinking they have to always be the best at something — like being the fastest runner, the best artist, the smartest kid in class.

Think to yourself about a time you stopped yourself from trying. Were you glad or sorry that you didn't try? Do you sometimes wish you had? We've all been there.

6. You can learn to handle mistakes and failures so you won't be afraid to try.

Mistakes and failures are a fact of life. So we all need to learn to handle them. But this is a skill that takes time and practice. It also helps to have support from others because it's easy to get discouraged.

Here's a tip: Use the word "yet" to help you. Tell yourself, "I wasn't able to do this YET." Or, "I'm not good at this YET." Let this word remind you that you can always improve as long as you try.

Remind yourself:

- Mistakes are part of trying.
- I can try again.
- I can get better and better.
- I didn't succeed at this — YET.

Ask yourself:

- What can I do to fix the mistake?
- If I can't fix it, can I try again or do it over?
- What do I need to get better at?
- Who can help me improve?

Then take steps to do these things!



(Lesson 7: [Try, Try, Try](#), continued)

7. Let's try it.

Give kids the handout called *How Trying Helped Me*.

Now, we're going to think about some times when we tried — and what we learned from trying. Take a few minutes to answer the questions.

8. What have we learned?

Trying is good for you because it helps you:

- discover what you are capable of
- do the best you can
- learn and get better at things
- see that your effort makes a difference
- believe in yourself

9. Take the next step.

Here are two more handouts. The first one is a recap of today's lesson. The other handout is *Tips From Michael Phelps*. Look at what Michael says about trying. Even as a gold medal swimmer, he has to try hard and work past mistakes.

When you go home, I want you to think about the ways you can try something new, try your best, or try again. Practice your "trying" skills when you're at school, at home, at practice, or with friends.