

Diligence

Grades 9-12

Segment Summary:

Justin Papadakis' diligent efforts to perfect his athletic skills require daily sacrifices of both time and energy and afford him the opportunity to play professional soccer in Europe.

At only 15 years of age, Justin Papadakis faces the opportunity of a lifetime. He was recently drafted by a professional youth soccer team. The catch, however, is that he'll have to move to Portugal, leaving behind his friends, family, home and school. Although it's a dream come true for any teen athlete, Justin doesn't take the decision to leave lightly. He's been working hard toward this goal since he was a child, and he has accumulated nearly a hundred trophies, which are a testament to his diligence and success. He has had to sacrifice spending time with his friends so he can maintain the strict regimen of working out with a trainer for several hours every day. And now that he's decided to go to Portugal, he's going to miss out on even more of the things most kids take for granted, like homecoming games and the senior prom. Even though Justin hopes his diligence and dedication will pay off, he understands there are no guarantees. He may be injured or replaced by a better player. But he doesn't want to look back at his life and say, "What if?" So he remains optimistic about his future and strives to be a champion each day.

Discussion Questions:

1. How does Justin exemplify the word diligence?
2. How do you think Justin is able to work so hard when he knows it may not pay off?
3. What factors do you think influenced Justin's decision to move to Portugal?
4. Is Justin someone with whom you would like to be friends? Why or why not?
5. Justin won't be able to see his friends or go to the prom if he moves to Portugal. What other sacrifices will he be making at school, at home, in his community, etc.?
6. Have you ever had to make a decision that would change the rest of your life? How did you handle it?
7. We all make sacrifices in order to reach our goals. What kinds of sacrifices are you willing to make at school, at home or in your neighborhood to achieve your goals?
8. How do you feel when you've worked as hard as you can and you don't succeed? How do you react?
9. Justin talks about instant gratification and delayed gratification. Do you think most people are willing to delay gratification? Support your answer.
10. What effect do you think mass media and advertising have on your ability to delay gratification?

Vocabulary Words and Definitions

Adversity (n.)

Definition: situation in which a person has a lot of problems that seem to be caused by bad luck

Context: Most people in leadership positions have had to face adversity head-on and overcome it.

Assiduous (adj.)

Definition: very careful to make sure something is done correctly or completely

Context: The assiduous study of new vocabulary words could help raise a student's SAT score by 50 points.

Conscientious (adj.)

Definition: showing a lot of care and attention

Context: We're making a conscientious effort to reduce our spending by sticking to our monthly budget.

Diligence (n.)

Definition: the act of working hard, carefully and thoroughly to reach a goal; a steady effort

Context: Amaya's diligence in spending five years writing her novel paid off when she won a Pulitzer Prize.

Initiative (n.)

Definition: a person's ability to make decisions and take action without waiting for someone to tell him or her what to do

Context: Workers who take the initiative to start projects usually impress their bosses.

Meticulous (adj.)

Definition: very careful about small details; always making sure that everything is done correctly

Context: Ramon is an excellent note taker because he is meticulous, paying careful attention to every detail.

Regimen (n.)

Definition: a regular course of action or strenuous training, generally designed to improve health

Context: In order to become a professional dancer, Marcus has to follow a regimen of daily dance classes and weight-lifting sessions.

Resolute (adj.)

Definition: marked by firm determination, generally due to strong beliefs or aims

Context: Janine remained resolute in her decision to graduate from high school, even though no one thought she could.

Tenacious (adj.)

Definition: determined to do something and unwilling to stop trying even when the situation becomes difficult

Context: As a social worker, Sheila is tenacious when she fights for the rights of the underprivileged.

Volition (n.)

Definition: the power to choose or decide to do something, without being forced to do it

Context: Kara's father was surprised when she cooked the family meal of her own volition.

Source: *Longman Advanced American Dictionary*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited. 2000

Activity: Crossword Crunch

Objectives:

Students will be able to

- Review vocabulary words and definitions
- Use context to define unfamiliar words
- Create a crossword puzzle

Materials:

- Pencils, pens
- Graph paper, colored card stock
- Chalkboard or overhead projector
- Rulers
- Computer access (if available)
- Newspapers
- ***Diligence Vocabulary Words and Definitions*** handout

Procedure:

In this lesson, students will use their knowledge of the vocabulary words to create crossword puzzles.

1. Ask students to find examples of crossword puzzles in the newspaper and to comment on the layout of each puzzle. Record their responses on the board or overhead, then discuss the basics of constructing a crossword puzzle by noting the following rules:
 - Each word must connect with another word.
 - The first square of each word, whether it appears across or down, must be numbered.
 - Each numbered word corresponds with the same numbered clue.
2. Tell students they will use their vocabulary words on the ***Diligence Vocabulary Words and Definitions*** handout to create a crossword puzzle.
 - a. First, students will need to make a draft of their crossword puzzle on graph paper, making sure all the words are included and that all words connect.

Note: It may take several attempts for students to master the task.
 - b. Once the draft is finished, students should begin writing their context clues. Context clues for the vocabulary words can be synonyms, antonyms, descriptions or abbreviated definitions.
 - c. Finally, students can use rulers and markers to draw their puzzles on the colored cardstock or they can rewrite the puzzles on a new sheet or graph paper. Encourage them to be creative with their puzzles.

Note: If computers are available, allow students to use them to produce their final designs.
3. Have students exchange crossword puzzles and try to solve each other's puzzles.

Note: You may want to laminate the final puzzle so that each can be solved over and over again using a dry-erase marker.