

# Schools Tree Day – Growing Grit – Secondary

## Teacher preparation

### Learning Intentions:

- Students will understand what grit is.
- Students will know some of the features of a formal interview.
- Students will understand strategies to be gritty and how to use them to achieve goals.



### Success Criteria:

Students can...

- ...define and provide examples of grit.
- ...draft, conduct and report the findings from a formal interview.
- ...identify personal strategies that enable them to behave in a gritty way.

### Teacher content information:

#### Growing Grit

This lesson introduces the concept of grit and explores some of the benefits of and ways to develop this character trait. Find out more about grit, and other character strengths at [Character Lab](#).

Grit: the power of passion and perseverance | Angela Lee Duckworth |

TED (<https://youtu.be/H14bBuluwB8>)

What are the links between time outdoors and grit? It could be said that many people use time outdoors and connection with nature as a strategy for coping with setbacks and persevering to achieve their goals. Time outdoors and in nature is a great way to recharge, rejuvenate and find inspiration to pursue our passions in a gritty way.

**Planet Ark Schools Tree Day provides a great opportunity for you to take you class outside.**

[Click here to read Planet Ark's 2017 Research Report: \*Learning from Trees: Life Lessons for Future Generations\*](#). You will also find the Key Findings report and the "What can Nature Teach Us" two-minute video.

[Click here to download the Planet Ark Think Outside the Box - Outdoor Learning Can Grow So Much Poster](#), and display it in your staffroom.

A report titled [Adding Trees - A Prescription for Health, Happiness and Fulfilment](#), found:

- Just 10 minutes' relaxing outside is enough to significantly reduce blood pressure.
- Time in nature reduces a person's chance of developing a range of diseases, including diabetes by 43%, cardiovascular disease and stroke by 37% and depression by 25%.
- Nature induces positive feelings through a number of physiological mechanisms, including activating the brain's dopamine reward system.
- Students who take part in outdoor learning programs perform better in reading, writing, maths and science, with 77% of teachers reporting student improvement in standardised tests.
- A strong connection to nature makes people more likely to feel passionate about relationships with their friends and family.

Read more about the intellectual, psychological, physical and mental health benefits of contact with nature for children here: [Planting Trees:](#)



## [Just What the Doctor Ordered Research Report](#)

### **Benefits of Learning Outdoors**

Steve Parish talks about National Tree Day  
(<https://youtu.be/Cux6TKh6WJE>)

- [Tips for making outdoor learning easier.](#)
- [Why teach outdoors?](#)

## Teaching sequence

**Work through this resource material in the following sequence:**

20 minutes – Part A: Activating Prior Knowledge about Grit

60+ minutes – Part B: Finding Out More about Grit

20 minutes – Part C: Sharing Learning

20 minutes – Reflection

### Part A: Activating Prior Knowledge about GRIT

**Step 1.** This part of the lesson involves class, group and pair discussion – so is a perfect opportunity to go outdoors and reap the benefits of doing so. Ask students to take a pen, as well as a book or clipboard to write on. Ensure that you have one copy of the Student Worksheet and the definition of Grit from the [Character Lab website](#) (print only page 1) printed for each student.

**Step 2.** Ask students to form a large circle and distribute a copy of Character Lab's definition of grit and the Student Worksheet to each student. Invite the class to listen while you or a volunteer student read out the definition.

**Step 3.** Ask students to complete a Think-Pair-Share visible thinking routine to explore the question: What does grit look like in action?



## THINK PAIR SHARE

THINK PAIR SHARE IS A COLLABORATIVE LEARNING STRATEGY IN WHICH STUDENTS WORK TOGETHER TO SOLVE A PROBLEM OR ANSWER A QUESTION.

**THINK** – STUDENTS INDEPENDENTLY THINK ABOUT AN ISSUE OR QUESTION AND RECORD THEIR THOUGHTS.

**PAIR** – STUDENTS WORK IN PAIRS TO DISCUSS THEIR IDEAS AND RECORD NEW THOUGHTS.

**SHARE** – STUDENTS SHARE THEIR THOUGHTS WITH THE WHOLE GROUP OR WITH OTHER PAIRS TO REACH CONSENSUS.

There is space on the Student Worksheet for students to take notes during this routine.

**Step 4.** Once students have completed the routine, and the class has shared their ideas, summarise the discussion by sharing the following:

Grit is displayed when we persevere and use passion drive us to achieve our goals. Grit can look like:

- Completing what you start
- Maintaining commitment to goals
- Trying, even after setbacks or when you feel like giving up
- Keeping at a project or activity for more than a few weeks

**Step 5.** Ask students if they can think of any specific examples of when they or a person that they know has displayed grit in their lives. Then, invite students to pair with a person across the circle and share their example.

**Step 6.** Summarise this part of the lesson by reinforcing the idea that



there are many ways a person can be 'gritty', and that at the heart of grit is persevering to overcome obstacles to achieve a goal.

## Part B: Finding Out More About Grit

**Step 1.** Introduce this part of the lesson by informing students that their goal is to find out more about grit and what it looks like in real life. They will do so by speaking to a person who they think is gritty to find out about the goal/s they have achieved and how they did so.

**Step 2.** Ask students to think about a person in their lives who has achieved a goal (such as working in their dream job, buying their favourite car, starting their own business, attaining a qualification etc.). Inform students that their challenge is to seek more information from that person about:

- The goal that they set for themselves.
- The setbacks and difficulties that they faced – and how they overcame them.
- The rewards they gained from being 'gritty'.

THE BENEFITS OF TIME OUTDOORS CAN BE LINKED WITH THE CONCEPT OF GRIT. MANY PEOPLE USE TIME OUTDOORS AND CONNECTION WITH NATURE AS A STRATEGY FOR COPING WITH SETBACKS AND PERSEVERING TO ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS. TIME OUTDOORS AND IN NATURE IS A GREAT WAY TO RECHARGE, REJUVENATE AND FIND INSPIRATION TO PURSUE OUR PASSIONS IN A GRITTY WAY.

**Step 3.** Highlight for students that this challenge is a great opportunity to practise setting a small goal (i.e. finding out more about grit) and applying grit to achieve it. This task also gives students a chance to practise drafting, then conducting a face-to-face interview – skills which

are really useful and can be applied in a range of different situations.

**Step 4.** Distribute a copy of the [How to Design and Facilitate an Interview Factsheet](#) to each student, as well as an [Interview Template](#). Read through the factsheet as a class, encouraging students to ask any clarifying questions and make extra notes on the information as required.

**Step 5.** Encourage students to add their own questions the interview questions to the interview template.

**Step 6.** Invite students to form pairs and practise their interview technique as well as their extra questions. Encourage students to provide each other with feedback that is constructive and delivered in a kind way.

**Hot tip:** Encourage students to take advantage of the fact that they are outside – they could spread themselves out a little more while practising their interview skills. Remind students that they should stay in your line of sight.

**Step 7.** Once students have made any recommended adjustments and are confident in their questions and interview technique, set the date that they should conduct their interview by. Inform students that they should aim to take a photo of themselves with the person they interview, and collect copies of photos or other artefacts that are shared during the interview.

**Step 8.** Foreshadow with the class that they will be sharing what they find out in their interviews with each other as a way of increasing and diversifying their understanding of the benefits of grit. To be prepared to share what they find, they should organise what they hear from their interviewee into three sections:

- The goal their interviewee set for themselves.
- The setbacks and difficulties that the interviewee faced – and how they overcame them.

- The rewards the interviewee gained from being 'gritty'.

## Part C: Sharing Learning

**Step 1.** This part of the lesson is another great opportunity to take your class outside – students will be required to move around to illustrate the passing of time that occurs when a gritty person pursues their goals. Invite the class to join you outside in your chosen area of the school. Students should bring their completed interviews with them. Ask two students to help you by bringing out two chairs. Place one at one end of the space. It will represent the 'setting of the goal'. Place the other chair at the other end of the space. It will represent 'attaining the goal'.

**Step 2.** Ask students to gather around you and explain what the chairs represent. Inform the class that the space between the two chairs represents the time between setting a goal and attaining a goal.

**Step 3.** Explain to students that in this part of the lesson, they will share what they found out from their gritty interviewee. While recounting what they heard, students should move to a position between the two chairs that they think represents how close their interviewee was to attaining their goal at that point.

For example: When recounting the part of the story where the interviewee is setting their goal, they should be close to the chair that represents 'setting the goal'. Students should move closer to the 'attaining the goal' end of the line as the story goes on. Remind students that when they recount any setbacks in the interviewees' story, they should move back toward the start of the line to physically represent that setback.

**Step 4.** Once students have finished sharing, ask the class to form a large circle. Invite students to think about one thing that they learned about the benefits of being gritty, then work around the circle to hear from each student.



## Reflection

Invite students to find their own space, and spend some time on a written reflection responding to the following questions (they are also on the Student Worksheet):

### **Thinking about grit:**

- What was one of the strategies that your interviewee outlined when you asked them about overcoming obstacles?
- What was the most difficult thing that you experienced when planning for and/or interviewing a person?
- How did you overcome that difficulty?
- What does this say about your ability to overcome obstacles and setbacks?

### **Thinking about outdoor learning:**

- What did you notice about being outdoors?
- What other activities that you normally do indoors could you swap to do outdoors?

### **Forming links:**

- What is your view about the link between the benefits of time outdoors and being able to cope when faced with obstacles in life?
- What are three strategies that you have heard throughout this lesson that you would consider trying when faced with your own obstacles in life?

## Get involved in Schools Tree Day

Get your students outside in nature for Planet Ark Schools Tree Day - the largest nature-care event in Australia!

- Click [here](#) for more information and to register your school for



Schools Tree Day.

- Find more Schools Tree Day lessons [here](#).
- Find a lesson on how to plant, and care for a seedlings [here](#)!
- Find more outdoor learning lessons [here](#).

## Differentiated Learning

**Extension:** Students could create a presentation that details what they found out during their interview. They should aim to tell the story of their interviewee's attainment of a goal, including what drove them to set the goal, the setbacks they experienced, how they overcame them and the rewards that came with achieving their goal. Students could present the story in a Prezi presentation, using an Adobe Spark page, creating a poster that details the story, creating a short comic, or any other presentation mode they choose.

**Provisions for Learning Support:** Students who are unable to find a person to interview could request an interview from a teacher in the school or find information online about their favourite celebrity, including goals they attained and the setback they have faced.

Before heading outdoors for this lesson, foreshadow that you will be doing so with students who require time to adjust to changes in routine.

## Teacher Reflection

**Take this opportunity to reflect on your own teaching:**

- What did you learn about your teaching today?
- What worked well?
- What didn't work so well?
- What would you share?
- Where to next?
- How are you going to get there?