Dear Educator,

Is there a more iconic example of perseverance than good old Charlie Brown? We know he’s going to miss that football, yet he tries anyway—and we can’t help but admire him for it. He’s persistent, thoughtful, and always optimistic—traits we hope to see in ourselves and in our students.

The award-winning curriculum specialists at Young Minds Inspired (YMI) have developed this program to help students in grades 6 through 8 learn what it means to persevere by looking to the example of the Peanuts gang, adding a deeper dimension—and a bit of fun—to your language arts curriculum.

Please copy and share this copyrighted program with other teachers at your school. Visit ymiclassroom.com/feedback-peanuts to give us your comments. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Dr. Dominic Kinsley
Editor in Chief
Young Minds Inspired

Program Objectives
- To teach students the importance of setting goals.
- To remind students that it’s OK to fail and ask for help.
- To inspire students to be positive, try again, and persevere.

Target Audience
Students in grades 6-8.

How to Use This Program
Review, photocopy, and distribute the reproducible activity sheets for each activity. Modify the activities as necessary to meet the needs and abilities of your students. Visit ymiclassroom.com/peanuts for standards alignment.

Activity 1
You Gotta Believe, Charlie Brown!

Work with students to compile a list of character traits that they think make someone a good friend, e.g., loyalty, good sense of humor, kind, etc. Point out that we naturally gravitate toward people with a positive mindset who believe in themselves and in the positive qualities of others. Why can a positive mindset help a person succeed in life? Cite Charlie Brown as an example: He keeps failing to kick that football, but continues to try anyway. How does that persistence help him face other trials in his life?

Divide students into small groups, and assign each group two or three of the traits listed earlier. Have each group share their thoughts about how those traits contribute to a positive mindset, and ultimately, to the potential for success in life.

Now distribute the activity sheets. After students solve the crossword puzzle, have them choose the five words they think are most important in meeting goals and write a paragraph on the back of the paper defending their choices.


Activity 2
What’s the Plan, Charlie Brown?

Ask students to give you a “thumbs up” if they have at least one short-term goal, then a “thumbs up” with the other hand if they also have at least one long-term goal. Let a few students share their goals; if they wish. What do they need to achieve their goals in addition to a positive mindset? Answers might include gaining knowledge, developing a skill, acquiring resources, planning, and practicing. Even armed with all that, setbacks can happen. When they do, it’s important to ask for help instead of just giving up.

Distribute the activity sheets and have students consider Schroeder’s and Lucy’s goals. Schroeder wants to be a famous composer like his idol Beethoven, and Lucy wants to be president. If they both have confidence and persistence, what next steps could they follow? Possible answers for Schroeder could include taking lessons in composition and, for Lucy, volunteering for a student council or other leadership position.

Ask students to consider a goal they may have achieved in the past and write a paragraph about what it took for them to reach that goal, including steps they took to overcome obstacles. Then have them list a current goal, steps that would help them meet that goal, and whom they might ask for advice when and if they are tempted to give up. Ask volunteers to share their thoughts if they wish.

Activity 3
I Can Do It, Charlie Brown!

Part 1: Distribute the activity sheet and ask students to list the name of someone they know whom they admire and could interview, and why they admire them. Have students brainstorm and then record on the sheet interview questions they might ask, such as how long did it take for the person to achieve success, what setbacks did they encounter, whom did they go to for help, and what was the biggest surprise they experienced. When they conduct their interviews, students should also record advice that person might give them to help them meet their own goals. Afterwards, ask students to share highlights of their interviews in class.

Part 2: Tell students that Charlie Brown always talks to himself to build himself up before he tackles a task, such as flying his kite or kicking that football. Then tell students that, like Charlie Brown, they are going to write a motivational message to themselves as a reminder to persevere when things get tough. Share some quotes to help give them ideas—a Google image search using “motivational quotes for students” will provide many examples. After they compose their motivational messages, have students cut off the bottom of the sheet and post it in their lockers or bedrooms at home. Alternately, post the messages around the classroom as inspiration for students.

Questions? Contact YMI toll-free at 1-800-859-8005 or by email at feedback@ymiclassroom.com.
Activity 1

YOU GOTTA BELIEVE, CHARLIE BROWN!

Charlie Brown has a positive mindset that helps him persevere in the face of obstacles. Think about the character traits you discussed in class that foster a positive mindset. Then use your own positive mindset to help Snoopy, the world-famous detective, and his sidekick Woodstock complete this "positive mindset" crossword puzzle with words that define these character traits. Use the word bank if you need help.

Now choose the five words you think are most important in developing a positive mindset and write a paragraph on the back of this sheet defending your choices.
Activity 2

WHAT’S THE PLAN, CHARLIE BROWN?

Schroeder and Lucy have big goals! Schroeder wants to be a great musician like his idol Beethoven. Lucy wants to be president of the United States. They both have the positive mindset to achieve their goals, but what steps can they take to see their dreams come true? Write down some suggestions for Schroeder and Lucy based on what you discussed in class.

Schroeder ____________________________________________
__________________________________________
__________________________________________
__________________________________________

Lucy ____________________________________________
__________________________________________
__________________________________________
__________________________________________

Have you succeeded at meeting a goal in the past? Write about that goal, what you did to achieve it, and how you overcame any obstacles.

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

Now write one of your current goals here:
_____________________________________________________________________________________

What steps can you take to help meet that goal?
1. ____________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________

Now list three people you can ask for help and advice when you are tempted to give up. (You can write “teacher” or “parent” if you don’t want to list specific names.)
1. ____________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________
**Part 1:** We all have people we admire—teachers, coaches, family members, or friends who inspire us by working to achieve their goals. Write the name of someone you admire and why you admire them:
_____________________________________________________________________________________________

Now plan to interview the person you admire. What questions can you ask that person about how their mindset, attitude, and actions helped them persevere in achieving their goals? Write your questions below, then interview the person and write their answers below each question. Use the back of this sheet if you need more space.

1. _______________________________________________________________________________________
   Answer: _______________________________________________________________________________

2. _______________________________________________________________________________________
   Answer: _______________________________________________________________________________

3. _______________________________________________________________________________________
   Answer: _______________________________________________________________________________

4. During your interview, did the person you admire give you any advice to help improve your mindset and perseverance to succeed? Write it here.
   _______________________________________________________________________________________

**Part 2:** Charlie Brown looks for the positives in others and in himself. In fact, he tells himself that he can do anything, and even though he often fails, he never gives up. Use this space to write yourself a motivational message, just like Charlie Brown.

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
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