
LESSON **1**

WHAT IS OVERCOMING OBSTACLES?

A G E N D A

- Starter
- Identifying Obstacles
- A Day in a Life
- A Day in My Life
- Conclusion
- Questions for Assessment

Objectives

Students will identify the specific skills they will learn and practice through the Overcoming Obstacles course.

Students will recognize how they will apply these skills to their everyday lives.

Materials Needed

- One copy of the “Table of Contents” activity sheet (#1) for each student (Parts I–III)
- One copy of the “A Day in a Life” activity sheet (#2) for each student (Parts II and III)
- Slips of paper with job titles students might hold in the future (Part III)
- A hat (Part III)

Starter (3 minutes)

Invite students to make a list of activities they enjoy doing that require practice to do well (e.g., playing a sport or musical instrument, ballet, tap dancing). Read the following scenario out loud:

At band practice, your teacher only talks about the song you're learning, but does so without explaining what he is doing. You're expected to learn by listening and watching. You never play an instrument until the day of the first concert.

Ask students to comment on the effectiveness of this method of learning. Ask students how well they think they'd do when asked to perform without practicing first. (*Students might respond: although you might learn some fundamentals, you can't learn just by watching; you need to practice to improve your technique; you need to know where your skills are weak so you know what to work on.*)

Point out that for many of the most important skills we need in life, we don't always get sufficient practice before we're expected to demonstrate them. Often, they are skills we learn by watching others, which students have determined is not the best way to learn. Invite the class to suggest what some of these life skills might be. If students are unsure, explain that this lesson will help them identify these skills and how they apply to students' lives now and in the future.

Explain to students that the Overcoming Obstacles course will give them an opportunity to learn and to practice skills they need to succeed in school, at home, in their communities, and on the job.

Part I Identifying Obstacles (10 minutes)

Purpose: Students analyze the program title "Overcoming Obstacles" by identifying common obstacles in daily life.

1. STUDENTS DEFINE "OBSTACLE" AND EXPLORE OPTIONS FOR DEALING WITH OBSTACLES.

Write "obstacle" on the board. Ask students to define the word. Relate the word to concrete experiences. Ask students to visualize a time when they were driving, hiking, or riding a bike and came upon something that was an obstacle to continuing on their way. Ask, "What did you do about the obstacle?" Invite students to share their experiences and solutions, such as moving the object, going around it, or finding an alternative route to reach their destination.

Explain to students that while they are likely to encounter such physical obstacles, they are just as likely to experience many "life obstacles," some of which can be very damaging. Brainstorm with students examples of these life obstacles, such as emotional roadblocks that they encounter in their

relationships with friends and family members. For example, have students identify an obstacle that may occur between friends that must be overcome for the friendship to continue. Write their responses on the board.

2. STUDENTS REVIEW THE TABLE OF CONTENTS FOR THE OVERCOMING OBSTACLES CURRICULUM AND DEFINE “LIFE SKILLS.”

Distribute copies of the “Table of Contents” activity sheet (#1) to students, and have them review it (or have them access through their electronic devices.) Explain to students that the table of contents lists skills that they will be developing and practicing in this class. Encourage students to comment on what is covered in the curriculum and why these topics are called life skills. Have students define the phrase “life skills.”

3. STUDENTS ANTICIPATE THE BENEFITS OF THE OVERCOMING OBSTACLES COURSE.

Ask students to consider why this course is called Overcoming Obstacles. Refer students to the list of obstacles they’ve identified on the board. Invite volunteers to suggest ways that the particular skills they’ll be learning can help them find ways around life’s obstacles, just as they’d find a way around a fallen tree or a concrete barrier in their path.

Part II A Day in a Life (20 minutes)

Purpose: Students explore the relevance of the Overcoming Obstacles curriculum by analyzing the activities and life skills that are part of a fictional student’s day.

1. STUDENTS REVIEW A FICTIONAL STUDENT’S DAY.

Have students work in pairs. Either give each student a copy of the “A Day in a Life” activity sheet (#2) or share electronically. Review the sheet with students to be sure they understand that it is the schedule for a fictional student, Camilla Juarez. Tell students that they will also need the “Table of Contents” activity sheet (#1).

Explain that most of our daily activities are a series of actions and decisions. Waking up in the morning, for example, requires deciding what hour to get up in order to get to school or a job on time and remembering to set the alarm the night before.

2. STUDENTS ANALYZE WHICH LIFE SKILLS ARE USED BY A FICTIONAL CHARACTER.

Ask students to analyze Camilla’s day. Next to each activity, they should list skills from the “Table of Contents” activity sheet that are relevant to that activity. If students are unsure about the specific content of some lessons, have them make their best guess. Suggest that they focus on the skills that may result in more positive outcomes for Camilla.

Ask students to share the specific skills they listed for each of Camilla's activities. Encourage discussion about the kinds of obstacles Camilla is facing on this particular day. Have them predict how practicing the skills that Overcoming Obstacles offers could help Camilla overcome her challenges and obstacles.

Part III A Day in My Life (20 minutes)

Purpose: Students explore the relevance of the Overcoming Obstacles curriculum by analyzing how the skills it offers are useful in their own lives.

1. STUDENTS RECOGNIZE HOW THE LIFE SKILLS THEY WILL LEARN THROUGH OVERCOMING OBSTACLES APPLY TO THEIR DAILY ACTIVITIES.

Have students repeat the previous activity, this time working alone and substituting activities in their own lives for Camilla's. Have students list on a sheet of paper 10 activities in their daily schedule. They may include some of the same activities from the "A Day in a Life" activity sheet (#2), but should also include at least two specific issues that they are dealing with at this time (e.g., getting a better grade on the next math test).

Ask students to jot down notes for each activity identifying the skills from the "Table of Contents" activity sheet that they would use to successfully complete it. Have them comment on how applying the skills they will develop through the Overcoming Obstacles course will help them to become more successful.

Invite students to share examples of ways in which the skills they will learn through Overcoming Obstacles apply to their own lives. Suggest that students save their notes and responses to this activity. As they progress through the curriculum, they can return to their notes from this discussion to check how their mastery of the life skills they are learning is deepening.

2. STUDENTS IDENTIFY SKILLS THAT WILL PREPARE THEM FOR POTENTIAL OBSTACLES THAT MAY ARISE ON THE JOB.

Give the class one minute to arrange themselves into small groups of three to five students. Place the slips of paper with the job titles in a hat. Pass the hat around, and have each student draw one slip.

Have students work in their groups to identify the jobs they have drawn, name obstacles they might face in those jobs, and identify life skills they will develop in this class that could help them overcome those obstacles. Encourage students to help each other identify obstacles and relevant life skills.

Conclusion (2 minutes)

Ask students to name some of the skills they will learn in this course. Elicit from students the following **key points** that were taught in this lesson:

- The Overcoming Obstacles course is about the life skills that are relevant to success at home, at school, with peers, and on the job.
- The Overcoming Obstacles course allows students to learn and practice these skills, helping them to overcome obstacles in their daily lives.
- The Overcoming Obstacles curriculum is relevant to students' lives now and in the future as adults.

Questions for Assessment

1. Describe an obstacle you have faced in your life. What skills helped you overcome this obstacle?
2. What skills would you most like to learn in this course?

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Extension: Using Quotations

Quote: “Practice makes perfect.” –Pablo Casals, world-famous cellist who practiced six hours a day

Activity: Have students write about why they think Casals practiced every day. As a class, discuss why it is important for students to practice the life skills they will learn through the Overcoming Obstacles course.

Extension: Addressing Multiple Learning Styles

Activity: Ask students to make a pie chart that shows how they allot their time in a typical day.

Have students identify the relevant skills they use during each activity represented on the chart.

Extension: Writing in Your Journal

Activity: Introduce students to the idea of a journal (if needed). Discuss the importance of writing down thoughts and feelings. Ask students to begin a journal with the following question: “What does Overcoming Obstacles mean to you?”

Have students discuss what they have written with a partner.

Extension: Using Technology

Activity: Ask students to research a profession of their choice on the internet. Ask them to identify the relevant life skills needed for that job.

Have students write the skills on an index card and share their work with the class.

Extension: Homework

Activity: Ask students to interview adults about their jobs. Students should find out which life skills the adults use on the job, how they learned these skills, and why these skills are important.

Have students compare the responses they receive with the “Table of Contents” activity sheet (#1).

Extension: Additional Resources

Activity: Have students read sections of *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank or *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou.

Have students identify the obstacles the people in these books faced and how they overcame those obstacles.

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A DAY IN A LIFE

Camilla Juarez is a high school senior. The following are the activities she has planned for today.

Where	Time	Activity	Related Overcoming Obstacles lessons
Home	6:15 A.M.	1. Wake up.	
	6:20 A.M.	2. Determine whether she or her brother (who leaves at the same time) gets into the shower first.	
	6:25 A.M.	3. Take a shower and get dressed.	
	6:45 A.M.	4. Eat breakfast.	
	6:55 A.M.	5. Get books and papers together for school.	
	7:00 A.M.	6. Leave for school.	
	7:00 P.M.	7. Complete homework.	
	8:00 P.M.	8. Decide how to spend or save her pay-check.	
	8:30 P.M.	9. Try to find a different job.	
School	7:45 A.M.	1. Meet with English teacher to ask him if she can retake a test she failed the first time.	
	9:00 A.M.	2. Take notes in her history class, where they don't have textbooks.	
	11:30 A.M.	3. Talk to her boyfriend at lunch about an argument they had yesterday.	
	1:00 P.M.	4. Complete a science project with her assigned group.	
Work	1:45 P.M.	1. Catch a bus to work.	
	2:00 P.M.	2. Check supplies inventory before her shift starts.	
	5:30 P.M.	3. Speak to her boss about a raise that was promised, but has not yet been received.	