Lesson | LIFE LESSONS FROM SPORTS

Inspire students to reflect on and write about sports lessons that matter both on and off the field.

Objective
Students will use critical thinking to define what being a good sport means, then plan and write an essay about why sports matter.

Standards
Common Core, ELA
• SL 4-5.1 Engage in collaborative discussions and express ideas clearly

SEL
• Responsible decision-making
• Relationship skills

Time
40 minutes, plus writing time

Materials
• How to Be a Good Sport mini-poster
• Are You a Good Sport? activity sheet
• Write About Why Sports Matter activity sheet
• Get in the Game choice chart
• A ball

Need more copies?
Printer-friendly versions are available online at scholastic.com/sportsmatter.

1 Conduct a classroom barometer activity by having students listen to a series of statements. Follow these activity steps:
• Read Statement 1 (below) aloud. Instruct students to stand at one end of the room if they agree and at the other end if they disagree.
• Toss the ball to a student. Have them explain why they agree or disagree, then toss the ball to another student to do the same.
• Invite students to change the side of the room they are standing on if their classmate’s explanation changes their mind.
• Have the last student toss the ball back to you, then read the next statement.

Statements:
1) There’s more to sports than winning.
2) Sports can change the world.
3) Playing a sport teaches you important life lessons.
4) Being a good sport matters on and off the field.

To support English language learners, post the following story aloud:

Did you know that sports teach important lessons? Here’s an example:

When Spanish runner Ivan Fernandez Anaya made headlines in 2012, it was not for winning. Instead, he was celebrated for choosing honesty over victory. During a race, he showed another runner the way to the finish line rather than passing him and earning first place. For Fernandez Anaya, it was an easy decision. The other runner was the “rightful winner,” he said. Ask students to share any similar stories they know of. Then ask whether the stories change where they stand on the statements.

2 Read the following story aloud:
When Spanish runner Ivan Fernandez Anaya made headlines in 2012, it was not for winning. Instead, he was celebrated for choosing honesty over victory. During a race, he showed another runner the way to the finish line rather than passing him and earning first place. For Fernandez Anaya, it was an easy decision. The other runner was the “rightful winner,” he said.

Ask students to share any similar stories they know of. Then ask whether the stories change where they stand on the statements.

3 Tell students that professional athletes are not the only ones who face sportsmanship dilemmas. Student athletes do too. Display the How to Be a Good Sport mini-poster and discuss the tips (applying them both on and off the field). Challenge the class to define the “Act With Integrity” tip. Arrange at a definition such as: acting honestly and sticking to your principles/values.

4 Hand out the Are You a Good Sport? activity sheet. Give students time to read each scenario and write about how they would respond. Then ask: Which situation was the hardest to answer? Why?

5 Divide the class into small groups. Give each group a sheet of chart paper, and have them come up with their own “Top Five Rules for Being a Good Sport.” Have groups share their rules with the class. Ask: How do the rules of being a good sport apply to other situations in or out of school?

6 Hand out the Write About Why Sports Matter activity sheet. Have students choose a prompt, then plan and craft a persuasive essay to submit to the contest.

Differentiated Extensions
Hand out the Get in the Game choice chart, which offers extension options for students to complete if they finish work early or between tasks. Display students’ work in a Why Sports Matter gallery in the classroom, hall, or gym.

Essay Contest
Submit your students’ persuasive essays on why sports matter by April 24, 2020.

You could win:
• $500 gift cards for the Grand Prize winning student and teacher!
• $250 gift cards for the winning students and teachers in both the grades 4–5 and grades 6–7 categories!

Go to scholastic.com/sportsmatter for more information.

ARE YOU A GOOD SPORT?

Explain how you would handle three sticky situations.

1. You’re at a swim meet after school. A kid on the other team keeps shouting insults about your teammates from the sidelines. What do you do?

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

2. You’re playing baseball and the game is tied. One of your outfielders misses a fly ball and the other team scores a run to win the game. You feel kind of mad at your teammate for messing up. What do you do?

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

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3. Jackson is organizing a game of basketball at recess with a few other boys. Camila runs over with her ball and says she’d like to join. Jackson tells her their game is just for boys. You’re standing nearby. What do you do?

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
The ball’s in your court! Choose one sports-related project from the options below.

1. **WRITE TO INSPIRE**
   Imagine that your team is about to play in a big game. Write a speech or cheer to motivate them.
   - You can include your school’s name, mascot, or team colors, and even add movements to the cheer!

2. **CREATE A PIECE OF ART**
   Make a painting, collage, sketch, sculpture, or digital drawing of a historic moment in sports. Then write a caption that explains the story behind your artwork.

3. **MAKE A GRAPH**
   Show sports stats in a graph. Ideas:
   - A bar graph of the number of championships each team in the NBA has won.
   - A line graph showing average baseball ticket prices over time.

4. **COMPOSE A SONG**
   Research an athlete who inspires you. Take notes on details about their life and include their achievements in your song (or poem or rap).
   - When you’re done, consider recording it.

5. **PLAN A PRESENTATION**
   Organize a short slideshow about one of these sports heroes: Muhammad Ali, Simone Biles, Roberto Clemente, Serena Williams, Wayne Gretzky, Michael Jordan, or Dara Torres.

6. **CREATE AN INFOGRAPHIC**
   Learn more about a sport that you’re not familiar with, then create an infographic about it.
   - You can include facts, statistics, charts, and images.
Follow the steps to focus your thoughts and knock your essay out of the park!

1 Pick a Prompt
   Persuade a reader why sports matter by explaining:
   - A: How has sports positively impacted you or someone important to you?
   - B: How has someone in the world of sports inspired you?

2 Narrow Down Your Topic
   Flip this page over and jot down a few ideas. Put a star next to your favorite one.

3 Plan
   List the ideas or events that affected you. What did you think or feel? Connect this to a persuasive explanation of why sports matter.

4 Craft Your Essay
   Write your first draft on a separate sheet. Ask a classmate for feedback, then revise!

Staple this sheet to your final essay, then give it to your teacher to enter in the Sports Matter Essay Contest! Fill out the following information.

Contact Information

YOUR NAME: ___________________________ GRADE: ______

TEACHER NAME: ______________________ TEACHER EMAIL: ______________________

SCHOOL NAME: _______________________

CITY: ___________________________ STATE: _______ ZIP: ___________
Use the criteria below to help guide you as you write your essay. The contest judges will use these criteria to pick the winning essays. Your teacher may also use this sheet to grade your work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
<th>POSSIBLE POINTS</th>
<th>POINTS EARNED</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOPIC</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay shows why sports matter, focusing on either the positive impact of sports or an inspiring person from the sports world.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>CLAIMS</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Persuasive claims about the essay topic are clear and powerful. Claims are supported with reasons and/or evidence.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ORGANIZATION</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ideas are organized in a clear, logical way.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>CONCLUSION</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay includes a persuasive conclusion that wraps up the ideas presented in previous paragraphs.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>LANGUAGE</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar show careful editing.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL POINTS</strong></td>
<td>50</td>
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GIVE IT
YOUR ALL

ACT WITH
INTEGRITY

HOW
TO BE A
GOOD
SPORT

Your actions
matter on the
field—and
in life!

HELP
OTHERS

BE A TEAM
PLAYER

Sponsored Educational Materials

SCHOLASTIC

DICK'S
SPORTS
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