

Lesson 3 | Tackling Challenges Through Storytelling

Use read-alouds to explore effective ways to handle challenging situations—in fiction and in real life.

Objective

Students will analyze a scene in which a character handles a challenging moment, then write a journal entry about a challenging moment in their own lives.

Standards

SEL

- Self-management
- Responsible decision-making

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Reading Passage 1 and/or 2 at [scholastic.com/experiencinghistory](https://www.scholastic.com/experiencinghistory)
- Chart paper

Want more materials?

Find printer-friendly versions of all lessons and activities online at [scholastic.com/experiencinghistory](https://www.scholastic.com/experiencinghistory).

1 Ask students to define the word *challenge*. Explain that the class is going to think about different challenges and how to deal with them.

2 Read aloud Reading Passage 1 or 2. First, set the stage by explaining what situation the character is in. (**Kit**: has to move into the attic room when her family must begin renting out her room to make money to survive.

Josefina: wants to be a curandera, a traditional healer in Latin American culture, like her aunt.) After reading, invite the class to reflect by asking:

- ◆ *Why is this a challenging moment for the character?* (**Kit**: is overwhelmed by the changes happening for her family; **Josefina**: is worried that she won't be able to become a healer, then makes a mistake that embarrasses her and will hurt her aunt.)
- ◆ *What does the character do to overcome the challenging situation?* (**Kit**: makes the most of the situation by designing a new room for herself; **Josefina**: owns up to her mistake and asks for another chance; does what she can to fix the situation herself by sweeping up.)

To increase the challenge, read both passages and ask students to compare and contrast.

3 Lead students in a discussion of a time when they overcame a challenging moment. Ask students to consider how they handled the situation at the time. Invite students to share with the class if they wish to do so.



4 As a class, brainstorm ways that students can deal with a challenging situation. Create an anchor chart for students to reference. Possible points:

- ◆ Adopt a positive mindset or attitude. (Consider discussing growth mindset.)
- ◆ Ask for help from a friend or an adult.
- ◆ Acknowledge mistakes and make a plan for how to do better.
- ◆ Use positive self-talk ("I know I can do this if I keep working at it").

5 Have students write a journal entry about a challenging moment they've encountered. Ask them to explain how they overcame the challenging moment or how they would like to deal with a similar situation in the future.

➔ EXTENSION

Connect to Lesson 2 by having kids think about the challenging moments that people would have come across as a result of the historical event they researched. Then have them write a journal entry from the POV of a young person living during that time period.

READING PASSAGE OPTION 1

Kit: Read All About It!, excerpts from pages 27-30

After dinner, Kit climbed slowly up the stairs to the attic. She looked around at the lumpy, dusty piles that surrounded her. Then she sank down to the floor, overwhelmed by sadness. When she'd been wishing for change so that she could have a dramatic headline, she'd never imagined *this*! Terrible changes! And so many! And so fast! Dad had lost his job. She had lost her room. And in a way, they were going to lose their house. They'd still be living in it, but it wouldn't be the same when it was filled up with strangers. Nothing would ever be the same.

Kit almost never cried. She bit her lip now and fought back tears. [...]

Kit looked around the long, narrow attic. The ceiling was steeply pitched. There were regular windows at each end of the room, and dormer windows that jutted out of the roof and made little pointy-roofed alcoves, each one about as wide as Kit was tall. The windows went almost all the way to the floor of the alcoves. Kit managed to open one of the heavy windows. She knelt down, stuck her head out, and came face-to-face with a leafy tree branch.

At that moment, Kit got a funny excited feeling. Suddenly, she knew exactly what she wanted to do.

Over the next few days, Kit was glad that no one seemed to care what she was up to up in the attic. When she wasn't helping Mother downstairs, she hauled buckets of soapy water up there and scrubbed the windows till they sparkled. She swept the floor and pushed the boxes far to one end of the room. Finally the cleaning was done, and the fun part began.

In one alcove, Kit put a desk and a chair and her typewriter. That was her newspaper office alcove.

In another alcove, Kit tacked up her photo of Ernie Lombardi. On a nail, she hung her catcher's mitt. That was her baseball alcove.

In the third alcove, Kit made bookshelves out of boards and arranged all her books on them. She found a huge chair that was losing its stuffing, and she shoved it into the alcove and softened it with a pillow. That was her reading alcove.

The last alcove was Kit's favorite. She put a lumpy mattress on an old bed frame and pushed the bed into the alcove with the pillow near the window. She surrounded the bed with some of Mother's potted plants. That was her tree house alcove.

READING PASSAGE OPTION 2

Josefina: Second Chances, excerpts from pages 23-26

While Tía Magdalena cleared up after their tea, Josefina went back to the storeroom to finish dusting. All the while, she was remembering what Tía Magdalena had said. How she wished there were some way to prove to Tía Magdalena that she was the right kind of person to be a curandera!

Josefina looked at the big blue-and-white jar on the shelf and thought about how it had been handed down from curandera to curandera. The jar was dusty. Surely Tía Magdalena would be pleased if she dusted it as a surprise for her. Josefina stood on her tiptoes to take the jar off the shelf. She could reach it with only one hand. She tapped the jar to move it to the edge of the shelf so that she could lift it off with both hands and . . . CRASH!

The jar fell to the floor and smashed into a thousand pieces. Josefina's heart stopped beating. For a terrible moment she stood still, staring in horror at what she had done. Then, without thinking, Josefina ran from the room. She flew past Tía Magdalena, out the door, and ran away as fast as she could.

Shame, shame, shame! The word pounded in Josefina's head with every step she took. Josefina ran all the way to the orchard. She climbed up into her favorite apricot tree. *How could I have been so clumsy?* she thought. *Tía Magdalena treasured the blue-and-white jar, and I destroyed it. Then I ran away! What a stupid, childish thing to do! I'll never be able to face Tía Magdalena again!*

[...]

[Josefina's Tía Dolores finds her and talks to her about what happened.]

She hugged Josefina and said, "You know what you must do right now, don't you?"

"Sí," said Josefina. "Sweep up the mess I made, and apologize to Tía Magdalena."

"And you must ask her to give you a second chance," said Tía Dolores. Josefina sighed hopelessly.

"Spring is the season for second chances," said Tía Dolores. "Didn't your mamá's flowers sprout again? Didn't Sombrita get another chance to live when you promised to take care of her?" Tía Dolores smiled. "We're all given second chances. We just have to be brave enough to take them."

Josefina hugged Tía Dolores. She hoped Tía Dolores was right. Oh, if Tía Magdalena would give her a second chance, she would be so grateful!

Tía Magdalena had only one thing to say after Josefina apologized. "The jar cannot be repaired," she said. "But perhaps your hopes can."

Whenever Josefina made up her mind to do something, it cheered her. She felt awful about what she had done at Tía Magdalena's. But she wasn't going to let her mistake kill her hopes.