

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

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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 each statement on the board.

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. Arrive 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.

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.



Name _____

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?

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?

WRITE ABOUT WHY SPORTS MATTER



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!

Name _____

GET IN THE GAME



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.



**GIVE IT
YOUR ALL**



**ACT WITH
INTEGRITY**



**HELP
OTHERS**

**HOW
TO BE A
GOOD
SPORT**

Your actions
matter on the
field—and
in life!



**BE A TEAM
PLAYER**