

Lesson Plan

Synonym Study

Book: *Trustworthiness in Sports*

Series: Sports Build Character

Level: Beacon

Objective

To help students practice consulting reference materials to determine differences in the meanings of similar words and applying that understanding in context.

Supplies

- *Trustworthiness in Sports* book
- Whiteboard
- Merriam-Webster online dictionary
- Index cards

Before the Activity

Read through the *Trustworthiness in Sports* book, or assign it to students to read on their own.

Activity

Begin by asking the question, “What does it mean to be trustworthy?” Ask students to list some of the ways that this word is described or defined in *Trustworthiness in Sports*, and write their answers on the whiteboard. Answers should include some of the following:

- someone you can count on (p. 5)
- someone you can rely on for help (p. 5)
- people who do not lie or cheat (p. 6)
- people who admit when they are wrong (p. 6)
- people who do what they say they will do (p. 6)
- you have confidence in this person’s abilities (p. 24)
- someone who is honest and dependable (p. 25)
- people who show up when you need them (p. 25)
- someone who is honest (p. 26)
- someone who plays and acts fairly (p. 26)
- people who keep their promises (p. 26)
- someone you can depend on (p. 26)

Then conduct an activity to explore the synonyms for trustworthiness. Begin by choosing a student to look up the definition of *trustworthy* in the Merriam-Webster online dictionary and write that definition on the whiteboard:

- **trustworthy:** able to be relied on to do or provide what is needed or right; deserving of trust

Choose another student to scroll down to the “synonyms and antonyms” section of the dictionary page. Ask this student to write the synonyms for *trustworthy* on the whiteboard, too:

- **synonyms:** calculable, good, reliable, responsible, safe, secure, solid, steady, sure, tried, tried-and-true, true, trustable, dependable, trusty

One of the synonyms for *trustworthy* is *responsible*. Choose a third student to look up the word *responsible* in the Merriam-Webster online dictionary, writing down the definition from the “English Language Learners” section:

- **responsible:** able to be trusted to do what is right or to do the things that are expected or required; involving important duties, decisions, etc., that you are trusted to do

Then, have students listen while you read the way being responsible is described by the *Responsibility in Sports* book:

- “Every person is in charge of his or her own behavior. Nobody can make someone act a certain way. It is up to each person to do the right thing. Doing the right thing is the meaning of responsibility” (p. 5).
- “Responsibility usually comes down to small things. It means doing what you are supposed to do. And it means doing so without being asked. Showing responsibility means that you are reliable. Others know that you will not let them down” (p. 24).
- “Are you responsible? Ask yourself these questions and decide. Do I know what is expected of me? Do I do what I say I’m going to do? Do I always try my best? Do I admit when I’m wrong? Do I try to fix my mistakes?” (p. 26).

After reading these excerpts from the *Responsibility in Sports* book, ask the following questions, writing students’ answers on the whiteboard:

- What ideas are part of the meanings of both *trustworthy* and *responsible*? (Answer: Both words describe a person who can be relied upon to do what is right or to do a task well.)
- In what ways are the meanings of these two words different? (Answer: *Responsible* focuses more on the person’s ability to do what is required, while *trustworthy* focuses more on the idea that others can depend on the person.)

Give each student an index card. On this card, the student should write a definition for *trustworthy* and a definition for *responsible*. For both definitions, students should use their own words. Under each definition, students should use that word in a sentence. Collect the cards at the end of the activity.

Evaluation

Did the students accurately summarize the way trustworthiness was described in the book's text? Could they locate the appropriate sections of the online dictionary? Could they understand and describe the differences between the two words' meanings?

Give each student one point for accurately defining each word on the notecard and one point for using it in a sentence, for a total of 4 points.

Standards

This lesson may be used to address the Common Core State Standards' reading informational texts standards, grade 4 (RI 4.9), speaking and listening standards, grade 4 (SL 4.2), and language standards, grade 4 (L 4.4; L 4.5).