

Famous Failures

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Time Frame 85-120 minutes (2-3 class periods)

Essential Question(s)

How can our thoughts and beliefs about failure affect our success in school and life?

Summary

Failure is not easy as we go through it, but it can be an important learning opportunity with the right perspective. By approaching these moments with a positive mental attitude, it is possible for someone to take these moments of failure and turn them into the foundation for later success.

Learning Goals

- Recognize when a fixed mindset has been reformed into a growth mindset.
- Reevaluate a current challenge that can be approached with a growth mindset versus a fixed mindset.
- Determine how the lessons from the Famous Failures apply to personal challenges.

Attachments

- Activity Slides—Famous Failures.pptx
- Digital Research Poster Guide—Famous Failures - Spanish.docx
- Digital Research Poster Guide—Famous Failures - Spanish.pdf
- Digital Research Poster Guide—Famous Failures.docx
- Digital Research Poster Guide—Famous Failures.pdf
- Growth Mindset Goal Activity Sheet—Famous Failures.pdf
- S-I-T—Famous Failures - Spanish.docx
- S-I-T—Famous Failures - Spanish.pdf
- S-I-T—Famous Failures.docx
- S-I-T—Famous Failures.pdf
- Sign-Up Sheet—Famous Failures.docx
- Sign-Up Sheet—Famous Failures.pdf

Materials

- Activity Slides (attached)
- Sign-Up Sheet (attached)
- S-I-T handout (attached; one per student)
- Growth Mindset Goal Activity Sheet (attached; one per student)
- Paper (one for the Research Posters; one for the Airplane Landing activity)
- Pens/pencils
- Crayons/colored pencils/markers
- Personal student devices for research
- Internet access

Engage

Teacher's Note

This activity can be used in conjunction with the "What's Mindset Got To Do With It?" lesson.

Use the attached **Activity Slides** to guide the activities and instruction. Display **slides 3–4** to share the essential question and learning objectives with students. Review these with the group to the extent you feel necessary.

Move to **slide 5**, share the S-I-T (Surprising, Interesting, Troubling) strategy, and pass out the attached **S-I-T** handout. Move to **slide 6** and share the Famous Failures video with students:

Embedded video
https://youtube.com/watch?v=zLYECljmnQs

After the video has played, provide students with some thinking time, and potentially replay the video a second time if students need to rewatch it. Allow students some time to share their thoughts with a partner and then the class.

Explore

Move to **slide 7** and share the link to "48 Famous Failures Who Will Inspire You to Achieve." Provide students with time to preview the list on the website, explore some of the different Famous Failures, and think about which one they want to research further.

Display **slide 8** and provide students with time to explore the website and narrow down their interest to one "famous failure" that they would like to learn more about. A 20-minute timer has been included on the slide, but depending on the needs of students you can select an alternate timer on the K20 Center Timers playlist on YouTube.

Teacher's Note: Choosing a Famous Failure

To ensure you don't have an entire class of students researching the same individual or Famous Failure, consider having a sign-up list for students. Attached is a master list of **Famous Failures** that you can print and use to have students sign up with. You may also consider crossing off individuals who were highlighted in the video or don't align with the needs of your class.

Move to **slide 9** and share the requirements for the research posters that students are creating for their Famous Failure. Provide them with the necessary tools such as paper/poster, pens/pencils, crayons/markers, etc., as well as time for them to work on the specific research for their posters and the time to create their posters.

Explain

Display **slide 10**, and review what students will be sharing with their small groups.

Move to **slide 11**, remind students of the S-I-T strategy from earlier in the lesson, and divide students into small groups of no more than five.

Teacher's Note: Grouped Presentations

Depending on your allotted time with students, you may wish to have them share their posters to the entire class, or share only with a small group.

Display **slide 12**, and have students share their posters. Once everyone has had a chance to share their Famous Failure with their group, provide them time to share some things they found surprising, interesting, and troubling with the class.

Alternative to Presentations

You can use an application such as Padlet to have students record themselves sharing their research posters. Create a board and share with students to post their videos to.

Display **slide 13** and share the difference between growth and fixed mindset.

> A growth mindset means that you believe your intelligence and talents can be developed over time. A fixed mindset means that you believe intelligence is fixed—so if you're not good at something, you might believe you'll never be good at it. - Jennifer Smith

Take some time to talk through as a whole class the connection between growth mindset and the Famous Failures that they researched and shared with their group.

Extend

Move to **slide 14** and share the "John Legend: Success Through Effort" video with students.

Embedded video
https://youtube.com/watch?v=LUtcigWSBsw

Now that students can identify a growth mindset and the situations or experiences that impact it, it is time for them to identify when they have a fixed mindset. If we can name it, we can change it!

Using the attached **Growth Mindset Goal Activity Sheet**, have students brainstorm a few situations or experiences they approached with a fixed mindset. This activity is most effective if the statements are personal internal or external struggles, obstacles, or challenges they have encountered. However, if they cannot think of any personal examples, they may use statements or ideas explored throughout the lesson. An example is attached. Once the fixed mindset examples are recorded, they rephrase and reframe them to construct a growth mindset. They should create a goal for how they plan to overcome that fixed mindset.

To help guide students through the process, display the steps on **slide 15**:

1. THINK of a situation or experience that you approach with a fixed mindset.
2. WHY does that situation or experience keep you from success or how does it challenge you?
3. WHAT can you do to approach the situation or experience with a growth mindset?
4. WHO might help you succeed? WHO might hinder your success?
5. WHAT other strategies could you apply to accomplish this growth mindset?
6. CREATE a growth mindset goal statement.

As students adapt their mindsets and begin to shift from fixed to growth, they can revisit their statements on the Student Growth Mindset Goal Activity Sheet and celebrate their growth. Each time they work to develop their own growth mindset they should color in one of the wrinkles on the brain. The goal is for students to work throughout the year, across all subjects, to develop a growth mindset. Developing a growth mindset is a journey. Students should recognize the growth and change within their mindsets and celebrate it. This would be similar to celebrating one's success in academics or extracurricular activities.

Possible Student Responses

1. THINK: I am going to fail the upcoming test.
2. WHY: I forgot to bring my notes home or I didn't take good notes during class.
3. WHAT: I could get in the habit of putting my notes in my bag at the end of class.
4. WHO: Friends from class, my teacher, or my parents could maybe help me.
5. WHAT: I could call a friend from class and they might send me a copy of their notes. Then I'll have more information with me to study before the test.
6. CREATE: To be successful on the upcoming test, I will take better notes, ask questions when I am unsure about the content, and bring my notes home to study each night.

Evaluate

Before displaying **slides 16–17,** share with students that sometimes Famous Failures don't just come from celebrities, politicians, writers, actors, singers, etc. Sometimes failures of an everyday normal person become the catalyst that makes them famous. In the end, it's how you approach failure and how you move forward. Play one of the clips of the airplane landing on the Hudson River to share just how that can happen. There are two clips for you to choose from (one from the 2016 movie Sully and a news clip), but if you have time both paint a complete picture of the Miracle on the Hudson.

Embedded video https://youtube.com/watch?v=fJ5ZLdJDBrg
Embedded video https://youtube.com/watch?v=JItbos1tYZs

Finally, display **slide 18**, share the Airplane Landing strategy with students, and instruct them to summarize what they're taking away from the failures. Let them know they're doing this to honor Captain Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger and his "famous failure."

Once students have completed their summary, have them fold up their paper into an airplane and "fly it into the Hudson" (the front of the room).

Research Rationale

Regardless of the focus of the extracurricular activity, club participation can lead to higher grades (Durlak et al., 2010; Fredricks & Eccles, 2006; Kronholz, 2012), and additional benefits are possible when these clubs explore specific curricular frameworks. Club participation allows students to acquire and practice skills beyond a purely academic focus, as it also affords them opportunities to develop skills such as self-regulation, collaboration, problem-solving, and critical thinking (Allen et al., 2019). When structured with a strong curricular focus, high school clubs can enable participants to build the critical social skills and "21st-century skills" that better position them for success in college and the workforce (Allen et al., 2019; Durlak et al., 2010; Hurd & Deutsch, 2017). Supportive relationships between teachers and students can be instrumental in developing a student's sense of belonging (Pendergast et al., 2018; Wallace et al., 2012) and these support systems help enable high-need, high-opportunity youth to establish social capital through emotional support, connection to valuable information resources, and mentorship in this club context (Solberg et al., 2021). Through a carefully designed curriculum that can be implemented within the traditional club structure, students stand to benefit significantly as they develop critical soft skills.

Resources

- *Growth mindset vs fixed mindset: How what you think affects what you achieve*. (n.d.). Mindset Health. https://www.mindsethealth.com/matter/growth-vs-fixed-mindset
- Kanaat, R. (2020, November 6). *48 famous failures who will inspire you to achieve*. Wanderlust Worker. https://www.wanderlustworker.com/48-famous-failures-who-will-inspire-you-to-achieve/
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- Trader, J. (2017). *Sully 2016 Plane Crash Scene Landing in the Hudson River* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fJ5ZLdJDBrg